

Statement by Ambassador Asoke K. Mukerji, Permanent Representative at the Security Council Debate on United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan (UNAMA) on September 17, 2015

Mr. President,

Thank you for giving me the floor in this open debate on the United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan [UNAMA]. We thank the Secretary General for his report on the situation in Afghanistan, and SRSG Nicholas Haysom and Ambassador Zahir Tanin for their briefings.

2. India is proud to call itself Afghanistan's first strategic partner. India stands ready to do whatever is possible within our capacities and our means to work with the Afghan Government, and its peoples, to realize our common vision. We share the Afghan people's vision of a strong, independent, united and prosperous state.

3. We are happy to note that Afghanistan's historic political transition remains on course. The patience, forbearance, courage and democratic aspiration of the people of Afghanistan have strengthened this process. We are also happy to note that in accordance with President Ghani's instruction to Cabinet on 23 April, all Ministries and executive branch bodies presented 100-day strategies during the reporting period, with the exception of the Ministry of Defence.

4. Unfortunately, there is much that needs to be done on the security front. The UNSG's report substantiates our view that it is terrorism, and not tribal differences or ethnic rivalries, which is the main source of insecurity and instability in Afghanistan. The UNSG's report mentions that the reporting period witnessed a significant increase in reports of intra-insurgent violence between the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and its affiliates with the Taliban. In addition, the Secretary General's report states that the majority of alleged ISIL affiliated fighters appear to be drawn from disaffected former members of the Afghan Taliban, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, or groups previously associated with Al Qaeda, such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. This is indeed alarming and the Council must act against this threat with a sense of urgency.

Mr. President,

5. This spurt in violence is taking place at a time when Afghanistan is in the midst of a sensitive and historical political transition under the leadership of H.E President Ashraf Ghani and H.E. Chief Executive Dr. Abdullah Abdullah. Given the critical phase that the political transition has entered, and the deteriorating security situation, we feel there is a strong case for the international community to take a fresh look at the manner

in which the drawdown of the international military presence in Afghanistan is happening. We would also urge the Council to look into ways to curb terrorist organizations and blocking the transfer of finances from the illegal narcotics trade.

Mr. President,

6. President Ghani has taken brave steps to launch a Reconciliation process to bring peace to his country. However, these efforts are being repeatedly rebuffed. The UNSG's latest report mentions that the deadly attacks in Kabul, which coincided with the emergence of a new Taliban leadership in early August, led President Ghani to call for urgent action by Pakistan against the Taliban, in particular to prevent use of its territory to prepare Taliban operations. India continues to support a truly Afghan-led and Afghan owned reconciliation process within the framework of the Afghan constitution and the internationally accepted red lines.

Mr. President,

7. In view of the fragile security environment, it is important for Afghanistan to have a supportive stable political environment for growth and development. Afghanistan is faced with huge developmental challenges. Eradication of poverty is a key priority for the Afghan government. World leaders would be adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in a few days from now, ushering in a new chapter in our collective fight for a sustainable world without poverty and hunger. It would be useful for the Council to see how UNAMA can act to help Afghanistan achieve the objectives set out in the 2030 Agenda.

Mr. President,

8. In our view, UNAMA must continue to play a leading role in shaping and coordinating the international community's efforts to assist Afghanistan's political and economic reconstruction process. UNAMA must also focus on the important role it plays in ensuring delivery of valuable humanitarian and development assistance to Afghanistan
