



**Press Release**

**Ambassador Mohammad Aamir Khan, Acting Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, delivered statement on behalf of Pakistan at the General Assembly Plenary Session on the Situation in Afghanistan.**

**New York – November 10, 2022**

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Pakistan and Afghanistan are inextricably bound by the bonds of culture, faith, ethnicity and common geography: Ambassador Aamir Khan, Deputy Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the UN said in the General Assembly while the General Assembly was discussing Situation in Afghanistan under Agenda item 34: report of the Secretary-General (A/77/340).

"For last forty years, the people of Afghanistan have endured prolonged sufferings from foreign interventions, civil war and terrorism", he said.

He said that "As Afghanistan's immediate neighbor, Pakistan has a vital stake in peace and stability in Afghanistan; in an Afghanistan which is at peace with itself, which is at peace with its neighbours and which is at peace with the wider international community; an Afghanistan which respects and nurtures all its citizens, irrespective of gender, ethnicity or religion; an Afghanistan which is free of terrorism; and a prosperous Afghanistan integrated into the international community".

"One year after the withdrawal of foreign troops and assumption of power by the Taliban government, the first priority remains the prevention of a humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. Ninety-five percent of Afghanistan's people live in extreme poverty. And, another winter is coming": he recalled.

"To prevent another humanitarian crisis, the international community must respond positively to the UN Secretary-General's call for \$4.2 billion in humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan" he warned.

Ambassador Aamir Khan said further that

"Despite its own calamity from the epic flood disaster this year, Pakistan has kept open the land, air and sea corridor to and from Afghanistan and to provide such support as we can to our Afghan brothers and sisters. And, even after 40-years, Pakistan continues to host and support over 3 million Afghan refugees".

He insisted on reviving the Afghan economy, especially the banking system, without which commerce and investment has been frozen. "The urgent release of Afghanistan's national reserves – held abroad – will be crucial to revival of the banking system and to promote normal business activity" he urged.

"The early resumption of reconstruction in Afghanistan and implementation of the shovel-ready regional connectivity and infrastructure projects with Central Asia as well as extension of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor to Afghanistan can contribute immensely to development and peace in Afghanistan and the adjacent regions": he added.

"It is also critical to avoid actions that could ignite another internal conflict within Afghanistan. Regardless of ideological considerations, the world must

welcome that – after 40 years – one authority controls the entire territory of Afghanistan; and that there is no credible challenge to its authority. It is essential to ensure that “spoilers” – within or outside Afghanistan – are not able to foment instability, insurgency or terrorism in Afghanistan. The role of spoilers especially the one from our region who wishes to aid and abet terrorism against Pakistan from Afghan soil must be checked and the terrorist networks it has established must be dismantled in Afghanistan and the region" he expressed concern.

“It is in the vital interest of the entire international community to effectively end the threat of terrorism within or from Afghanistan posed by ISIL-K/Daesh, the TTP, ETIM, IMU and other terrorist groups. We must develop a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy. To do so, engagement with the de-facto government is essential. Pakistan will support counter-terrorism efforts while respecting Afghanistan’s sovereignty and territorial integrity" he suggested in this regard.

"Pakistan fully shares the international community’s desire to ensure full protection of human rights, especially women’s rights and greater political, social and gender inclusion".

"These objectives are more likely to be achieved through greater and sustained engagement with Afghanistan and its de-facto government. It is worth repeating: what could not be realized through force cannot be achieved through isolation, sanctions or financial coercion".

He suggested a coercive approach that could lead to renewed violence and conflict, strengthen terrorist groups and generate a new flow of Afghan refugees – which none of Afghanistan’s neighbours are in a position to accommodate.

On human rights and girls’ education, he said that "Pakistan, along with other OIC countries, remains engaged, through conversations between Taliban and delegations of Islamic Scholars and Ulema, to address questions of Sharia and its interpretation, particularly with a view to facilitating education prospects for Afghan women and girls. It is important that we continue to build upon these initiatives with patience and perseverance".

As regards political inclusion, he mentioned the efforts by the de-facto Afghan government to encourage the return of former Afghan officials, and announcement of general amnesty, must be welcomed and built upon to promote greater inclusivity in the governance of Afghanistan.

He welcomed the announcement by the de-facto government of a ban on poppy cultivation. To succeed in imposing this ban, he urged the international community to support efforts to promote alternate crops that can support the livelihoods of Afghan farmers.

"We trust that UNAMA will maintain its close engagement and build a relationship of mutual trust with the de-facto government of Afghanistan. We welcome the appointment of the new SRSG, H.E. Roza Otunbayeva. We hope UNAMA's composition will become aligned with the new realities in Afghanistan" he said.

Finally, he urged the international community to must build a realistic and pragmatic path towards normalization in Afghanistan – one which addresses the concerns of the world community – human rights, inclusion, terrorism – while also accommodating the legitimate expectations of the de-facto Afghan government.

"Pakistan will continue its endeavour to this end within the format of Afghanistan's six immediate neighbours plus Russia, within the OIC and with other friendly countries" he expressed resolve.