

**Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent Representative of Pakistan
in the Plenary of 60th Session of the UN General Assembly on the situation in
Afghanistan and its implications for International Peace and Security; Emergency
International Assistance For Peace, Normalcy and Reconstruction of War-Stricken
Afghanistan Agenda Items 17 And 73 (E), 29 November 2005**

Mr. President,

With the successful holding of the parliamentary and provincial council elections in September, Afghanistan has passed the last major milestone in the Bonn political process. The forthcoming inauguration of the new parliament, we hope, augurs Afghanistan's continued progress towards durable peace and stability.

2. Pakistan and Afghanistan are inextricably bound by history, culture, faith and mutual interdependence. The spirit of the relationship between our peoples was demonstrated by the generous and immediate assistance provided to us by brotherly Afghanistan in the wake of the tragic 8 October earthquake.

3. We commend our Afghan brethren for their steadfast commitment to peace, reconciliation and development. A peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan is in the best interest of Pakistan, indeed of the entire region. Peace will enable the safe and dignified return of the 3 million Afghan refugees still in Pakistan. Economic revival in Afghanistan will accelerate the already burgeoning trade and economic cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Peace in Afghanistan will also open up the shortest transit routes for trade in energy, raw materials and goods between Central Asia, South Asia and the world, with enormous economic benefits for Afghanistan, Pakistan and all the countries of the region. Pakistan and Afghanistan are both members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). Earlier this month, Pakistan actively supported, and warmly welcomes, Afghanistan's entry as a member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

4. The close bilateral relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan are marked by frequent exchange of high level visits, progressive institutionalization and cooperation in diverse fields, record level of transit trade, and bilateral trade which reached \$1.2 billion last year. Pakistan is actively participating in Afghanistan's reconstruction. During the visit of our Prime Minister to Kabul in July this year, additional assistance of 100 million dollars was committed. These funds will be utilized in consultation with and on projects identified by the Afghan Government. Of the 100 million dollars pledged earlier by Pakistan at the Tokyo Conference, almost 50 million has been utilized for humanitarian assistance, projects in infrastructure, health, education and transport sectors, and capacity building of state institutions. Pakistan is also providing training to Afghan officials in several fields including diplomacy, judiciary, police, counter narcotics, agriculture, customs and banking. A brief overview of Pakistan's contribution to reconstruction in Afghanistan is being circulated with my statement.

Mr. President,

5. Sustaining the progress made by Afghanistan over the past 4 years requires the continued support of the international community to overcome the remaining daunting challenges faced by Afghanistan - terrorist threats, narcotics and drug barons, warlords and illegal armed groups, reintegration of Afghan Military Forces, development of institutions, rule of law and justice sector reform, fight against corruption, promotion of national reconciliation, safe and orderly return of Afghan refugees, human rights, and above all economic and social development and reconstruction. The conference planned for early next year in London should reaffirm the international community's support for the post Bonn phase of nation building in Afghanistan. The United Nations must continue to play a vital role in Afghanistan's stabilization and development.

6. The draft resolution (A/60/L.27) under consideration today presents a broad overview of the situation in Afghanistan. We thank the delegation of Germany for coordinating the formulation of the draft resolution, which has been introduced by Ambassador Pleuger (Germany). Pakistan is a co-sponsor of the draft resolution which we hope will be adopted by consensus.

7. Insecurity remains a major challenge to Afghanistan's stabilization and reconstruction. We condemn the recent attacks in Afghanistan. The causes of insecurity are several and complex: terrorist and extremist elements, criminal activity and illicit production and trafficking of drugs, besides the perennial problems of poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment. The Afghan government must continue to receive the support of the International Security Assistance Force and the Operation Enduring Freedom coalition in building security. Pakistan supports the presence of international forces in Afghanistan, and their strengthening as necessary, until peace and stability are fully restored and a viable Afghan National Army can assume full responsibility for the country's security.

8. For its part, Pakistan has mounted a determined campaign to eliminate Al-Qaeda and Taliban elements on our side of the border and to prevent illegal cross-border movement. The Afghanistan-Pakistan-U.S. Tripartite Commission coordinates this cooperative campaign. We have deployed 75,000 troops and established 700 posts along the border. Another 4000 troops were added for interdiction duties in the run-up to the Afghan Parliamentary elections. We have also proposed partial fencing of the border to minimize chances of illegal movements.

9. I should recall that Pakistan's operations have killed or captured over 700 of Al-Qaeda and Taliban terrorist elements. As a result of our efforts Al-Qaeda's command and control structure has been largely dismantled. Our forces have unfortunately suffered more than 200 casualties in these operations. It is most disappointing that these Pakistani efforts and sacrifices fail to find mention in the Secretary General's report. May I note here that Pakistan's troop strength on the border with Afghanistan far exceeds the combined strength of the national and international military presence within Afghanistan.

10. Narcotics remains a major and pervasive problem in Afghanistan. As a recent survey has shown, much more needs to be done to overcome this challenge to both security and development. Promoting alternative livelihoods is the key to moving away from a drugs based economy. Considerably more assistance needs to reach farmers directly as a disincentive for poppy cultivation. Efforts are also required to reduce the demand for drugs in destination countries and to combat illicit trafficking of precursors. To coordinate efforts for the interdiction of narcotics and precursor chemical flows, a Counter-narcotics Working Group, comprising officials of Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Coalition Forces, has been established.

Mr. President,

11. Pakistan continues to look forward to the voluntary return, in safety and honour, of the three million Afghan refugees we still host, without any appreciable international assistance. Their orderly return and effective reintegration will contribute to the stability of Afghanistan and the region. Greater international assistance is needed in this context, including through the extension of the UNHCR sponsored voluntary repatriation programme for Afghan refugees in Pakistan which is due for termination next March. The figures from the census of Afghans living in Pakistan held in February-March 2005 underscore the need for concerted efforts to increase Afghanistan's absorptive capacity in areas of potential return, by introduction of employment generating reconstruction schemes as well as provision of land and shelter, apart from assuring security. We support and appreciate the recent call by High Commissioner António Guterres to take into account the needs of the repatriating refugees in the development plans to be considered at the forthcoming London Conference. The international community must also assist Pakistan in rehabilitation of the refugee impacted areas of Pakistan.

Mr. President,

12. Success in Afghanistan requires long-term commitment and a comprehensive strategy to address the security, political, economic and social objectives. As the Secretary-General has observed in his report, even without the burden of violent insurgency, the reconstruction of Afghanistan faces a truly formidable combination of challenges, including the pervasive drug economy and some of the lowest social and economic indicators in the world. The discussion of the post Bonn agenda provides a unique opportunity for a broad dialogue between Afghanistan and the international community. Pakistan stands ready to play its part in that process. We urge the international community to stay the course until durable peace and enlarged prosperity is achieved in Afghanistan.

Thank you.

Annex

PAKISTAN'S PARTICIPATION IN RECONSTRUCTION OF AFGHANISTAN

At the Tokyo Conference (January 2002), Pakistan pledged US\$ 100 million for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. A sum of US\$ 49 million has already been utilized, whereas the remainder has been earmarked for agreed projects in infrastructure, health and education sectors, as well as for capacity building of Afghan State institutions. During the Prime Minister's recent visit to Afghanistan on 24th July, an additional allocation of US\$ 100 million was announced. Pakistan's support for Afghan reconstruction is need-based, and focused on areas prioritized by the Afghans themselves. The Pakistan-Afghanistan Joint Economic Commission provides an institutional mechanism for streamlining the decision-making process concerning Pakistan's participation in Afghan reconstruction.

2. Some of major past and present initiatives for support to Afghanistan and Afghan nationals are as under:

I. Budgetary Support

3. Pakistan provided, in April 2002, a grant US\$ 10 million as budgetary support to the Government of Afghanistan. Pakistan was one of the first countries to channel funds directly to the Afghan Government.

II. Infrastructure Development

a) Rehabilitation of Torkhum-Jalalabad Road

Work on the 75-Km road commenced in February 2004 and was expected to be completed by June 2005. However, it has fallen behind schedules, partly on account of security concerns. Following some recent administrative changes, work on the project is expected to pick pace. The Frontier Works Organization which has taken over the project (March 2005) is expected to complete it in 12 to 15 months.

The National Highway Authority of Pakistan is also undertaking rehabilitation of some local roads in Jalalabad.

b) Chaman-Kandahar Rail Link

The feasibility study for the Chaman-Kandahar Rail Link (106 Km at an estimated cost of \$110 million) has been completed by Pakistan Railways. During the Prime Minister's visit to Kabul, it was decided to commence work on the 11 KM Chaman-Spin Boldak segment of the rail track, which will be constructed by Pakistan at an estimated cost of about US\$ 7 million.

c) Supply of Electricity to border areas of Afghanistan

The proposal envisages supply of electricity from Pakistan's tribal areas to the border areas of Afghanistan. WAPDA is preparing a feasibility study for supply electricity from North Waziristan to the adjoining Khost City in Afghanistan.

III. Education Sector

a) Printing of 10 million textbooks

In 2003, 5 million Dari and Pashto language Afghan textbooks were printed in Pakistan and distributed for use by Afghan school children. At the request of Afghan authorities another 5

million textbooks are being printed in Pakistan, of which 1.4 million have already been dispatched for distribution.

b) Gift of School Kits

80,000 school kits for Afghan school children was recently handed over to the Afghan authorities.

c) Rehabilitation of Rehman Baba High School, Kabul

On the request of Afghan authorities, Pakistan will provide assistance in rehabilitation of Rehman Baba High School in Kabul (Rs. 120 million, Ministry of Foreign Affairs' funds). Work on the project has already commenced.

d) Faculty blocks at Kabul, Nangarhar and Balkh Universities

Pakistan will construct the 'Allama Iqbal Faculty of Arts' at Kabul University, an Engineering bloc at Balkh University, Mazar-e-Shareef and a faculty block at Nangarhar University, Jalalabad. NESPAK has prepared feasibility studies for the projects. These are at initial stages of implementation.

e) Scholarships for Afghan nationals

Hundreds of Afghan nationals including doctors, engineers, etc regularly enroll in Pakistani Institutes of Higher Learning. The Government of Pakistan offers a total of 22 annual scholarships for Afghan refugees in the fields of Medicine, Engineering, Dentistry and Pharmacy. 10 additional scholarships have been offered to Afghan nationals in the fields of Business Administration and Information Technology.

IV. Health Sector

a) Medical and Eye Camps

Pakistan has so far conducted two free Eye Camps in the Afghan City of Jalalabad. In the last Camp held in February this year, a total of 357 patients were operated upon free of cost, and 4127 glasses distributed. Another Eye Camp will be held in August in Kabul. Additional Eye and Medical Camps are being planned for other locations in Afghanistan.

b) Jinnah Hospital in Kabul

Pakistan will establish a 100-150 bedded General Hospital in Kabul, including a 50-bed Thalaecemia Centre. Site for the project has been identified. Work is expected to commence shortly.

c) Kidney Hospital in Jalalabad, Artificial Limbs Centre in Mazar and General Hospital in Logar
Work on the above medical facilities, which will be constructed in Afghanistan with assistance from Pakistan is at preliminary stages of implementation.

d) Gift of Ambulances

Pakistan has supplied 45 fully equipped ambulances to various hospitals in Afghanistan.

e) Mobile Medical Units and Maternity and Child Care Centres

Pakistan would gift to Afghanistan fourteen fully equipped Mobile Medical Units and establish Child Vaccination and Maternity Centres at various locations in the country.

V. Broadcasting and Communications

a) Repeater Station

A repeater Station for the Kabul-Peshawar digital Radio link was installed near Jalalabad in June 2003.

b) FM Radio Transmitters

Two FM Radio transmitters fabricated by the Pakistan Broadcasting Cooperation were gifted to Afghan authorities early this year for installation at Kabul.

c) TV Transmitter

A TV Transmitter worth Rs. 3 million would be gifted shortly for installation at Kabul.

VI. Transport Sector

a) Trucks

To mitigate the needs of Afghanistan's transport sector, last year, Pakistan gifted 200 trucks to Afghan authorities.

b) Buses

Pakistan has gifted 100 locally assembled wide-body buses to Afghanistan. The buses have been tailored to cater to Afghanistan's specific needs and road conditions.

VII. Humanitarian Assistance

4. Pakistan's assistance to Afghanistan has a strong humanitarian dimension. Assistance of a purely humanitarian nature is frequently dispatched to Afghanistan often on the request of Afghan authorities. Some of the examples are listed below:

a) Commodity Assistance

In 2002, 50,000 M. tons of Wheat worth US\$ 8.12 million were dispatched to Afghanistan.

b) Facilitation of Hajj by Afghan nationals

On a special request made by the Afghan President, Pakistan operated four chartered flights to transport Afghan pilgrims from Kabul to Jeddah and back in 2002.

c) Donations made by our Ambassador in Kabul

Our Ambassador in Kabul has been distributing a wide range of items of necessity in different areas of Afghanistan. These include bicycles, sewing machines, blankets and shawls, stationery for schoolchildren, sports items, medicines, computers, generators and other equipment. Donations have been distributed in Kabul, Parwan, Paktia, Logar and Kandahar Provinces.

d) Food Relief

50, 000 packets of food, each weighing 35 Kg and containing 11 items were dispatched to Afghanistan recently. In addition, In response to requests by Afghan authorities, Pakistan dispatched Rs. 10 million worth of food assistance for people of Ghazni Province in August 2004.

e) Supply of Tents

Heavy rainfalls and floods rendered many Afghans homeless last year. This year, Pakistan has supplied 9,600 tents worth Rs. 1 million to Afghanistan.

VIII. Agricultural Sector

a) Supply of Plant Saplings

On the request of Afghan authorities, Pakistan donated more than 200,000 plant sapling to Afghanistan for plantation during the 2004 spring plantation season.(Ministry of Foreign Affairs' funds).

b) Rehabilitation of Olive Orchards

Pakistan will assist in rehabilitation of the Olive Orchards in Afghanistan's Nangarhar Province.

IX. Capacity Building

5. We are extending training facilities to Afghanistan for capacity building of State institutions. We are training Afghan diplomats, police and customs officers on a regular basis. In addition, we have offered to Afghan nationals training facilities in a wide range of other fields including postal services, audit and accounts, payment systems and taxation and banking and finance. More than a hundred Afghan officials have already received training in Pakistan, details of which are given hereunder:

a) Diplomats

Nine Afghan diplomats were trained at the Foreign Service Academy, Islamabad in 2003, five in 2004 and another five this year.

b) Judicial Officers

Twenty Afghan judicial officers received training in 2003 at the International Islamic University, Islamabad. Pakistan has offered to train more

c) Customs Officers

CBR trained twenty-two Afghan Customs officials in Pakistan last year. Two senior officers of Pakistan Customs have been posted in Kabul to assist in rehabilitation

d) Police Officers

Pakistan has offered to provide training to 1250 Afghan police officers of various ranks. Thirty-seven senior Afghan police officers recently completed a nine-month training at the National Police Academy, Islamabad in January. Another thirty senior-level police officers are currently undergoing training at the Academy.

e) Agriculturalists

40 Afghan agriculturalists have recently completed short duration training courses at NWFP Agricultural University on 'Irrigation and Water Management Practices' and 'Post Harvest Management and Marketing'. The courses were held in collaboration with an American University.

f) Counter-Narcotics

With the collaboration of UNODC, 25 Counter-Narcotics personnel were trained in Pakistan in 2004.

Section 1.01 Transit Trade

Pakistan has taken a number of steps to facilitate Afghan transit trade. These include deletion of all but 3 items from the Negative List and reduction of port charges by 50% and railway carriage charges by 25%. (Additional 3 items (tyres and tubes, tv sets and telephones) were removed from the Negative List at the fifth Session of the JEC 23-24 July 2005). Port Qasim has been notified as an additional entry-point for Afghan transit goods. In addition to Pakistan Railway, NLC has been authorized to transport Afghan transit goods. Moreover, Afghan cargo has been exempted from inspection by Pakistan Customs. As a result, the value of Afghan transit trade has doubled in three years, from Rs. 10.27 billion in 2001 to Rs. 22.86 billion in 2004.

In addition, arrangements are underway for processing of Afghan import documents at Port Qasim beside the facility already available at Karachi port. The transit facilitation procedure for non-commercial cargo has been simplified. Arrangements have also been made to ensure expeditious clearance of perishable commodities.

Section 1.02

Section 1.03 Bilateral Trade

Bilateral trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan has registered a steady increase. Trade volume rose from US\$ 169 million in 2000-2001 to US\$ 540.3 million in 2003-2004, and touched US\$ 1.2 billion in 2004-05.

Some of the steps taken to encourage bilateral trade include reduction in duty on import of Afghan fruit from 25% to 5%, and the establishment of additional customs stations at Ghulam Khan and Shahi. Eight more stations are being set up in the border areas. In addition, we have proposed negotiations on Preferential Trade Agreement, which could be an important step toward Free Trade Agreement between the two countries.

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