

**Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations in the Security Council Public Meeting on Afghanistan to endorse the Berlin Declaration (6 April, 2004)**

Thank you, Mr. President,

I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate you on Germany's assumption of the Presidency for the current month in which the Council will consider issues of vital importance for international peace and security. I would also like to thank Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sabliere and the French delegation for the exemplary manner in which they conducted the Presidency of the Council during the month of March.

2. I would like to thank Mr. Guehenno for his comprehensive briefing on situation in Afghanistan and to thank you, Mr. President, for your briefing on the Berlin Conference.

3. We would also like to thank the German government for hosting last week's Berlin Conference, along with Afghanistan, Japan and the United Nations. Our Foreign Minister participated actively in the Berlin Conference. We are most satisfied with its outcome. Pakistan has an abiding interest in early return of peace and stability in Afghanistan. We are linked by history, geography and faith with Afghanistan; we share a common destiny, and we share aspirations of the Afghan government and President Karzai, for peace, stability and prosperity for Afghanistan.

4. The Berlin Conference reaffirmed the commitment of its participants to "rebuilding and reforming the political, social and economic structures of Afghanistan, with the aim of creating lasting peace, stability, and economic development, and with a view to offering all Afghans in equitable manner tangible prospects for a brighter future." The process which was initiated at Bonn will now continue beyond the present transition process in Afghanistan through a lasting partnership between Afghanistan and the international community.

**Mr. President,**

5. While the key issue of security is, ultimately, the responsibility of the Afghans themselves, this cannot be achieved in the immediate future without the active military and political support of the international community. We therefore, endorse the commitments in the Berlin Declaration to the continuation of international military assistance "until such time as the new Afghan security forces are sufficiently constituted and operational." We are also pleased with the decision by NATO, as mentioned in the Berlin Declaration, to expand ISAF's mission by the establishment of additional Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). We endorse the need for additional such teams. We would, nevertheless, continue to encourage for a larger presence and role for ISAF in Afghanistan's security.

6. The Berlin Declaration also stresses the need to implement vigorously the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programme with the

completion of its first phase by the end of June, 2004. The Work-Plan of the Afghan government endorsed by the Berlin Conference also provides for concrete steps that the Afghan government will have to take not only with regard to the DDR, but also in terms of reforms in the Afghan National Army and police, and the reforms in the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defence and National Directorate for Security (NDS) which ensures national representation. Along with progress in the extending the authority of the Afghan central government, these are measures which deserve the continued involvement and support of the international community.

7. The Berlin Declaration identifies drug production and trafficking as “a serious threat to the rule of law and development in Afghanistan as well as to international security. The Berlin’s Conference endorsed the concrete steps that the Afghan government plans to take as part of its Work-Plan, for implementing its National Drug Control Strategy. We also attach importance to the comprehensive Declaration on Counter-Narcotics signed in Berlin by Afghanistan and its six immediate neighbours. As one of the signatories, Pakistan looks forward to working with our partners to strengthen our collective efforts to control this drug menace.

8. The drug problem in Afghanistan is not only an Afghan problem. It affects us all. It is imperative, therefore, that the Afghans and the international community must do everything, in the words of the Berlin Declaration, “do everything – including the development of economic alternatives – to reduce and eventually eliminate this threat.”

**Mr. President,**

9. Pakistan has welcomed the decision by President Karzai to hold presidential and parliamentary election in September this year. In its Work-Plan the Afghan government has welcomed the support of the governments of Pakistan and Iran to allow the participation of refugees in their countries in the elections. Pakistan has allocated \$5 million for this purpose and is extending full cooperation to the Afghan authorities and UNAMA in this regard. We hope that the registration of voters would accurately reflect the ethnic and regional balance of Afghanistan’s population. This is essential for the legitimacy and credibility of the entire election process.

**Mr. President,**

10. Peace will not come to Afghanistan without development. This must remain the focus of the international community. We welcome, in this regard, the pledge made at Berlin of US \$8.2 billion in reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan over a three year period. Afghanistan is a landlocked country. But it can emerge as a transit route linking South Asia and Central Asia. It is, therefore, essential for Afghanistan’s economic recovery and development to integrate this country with its two neighbouring regions. In this regard, we encourage the international community to support the construction of roads as well as gas and oil-pipelines, and other trade links, connecting Afghanistan with these two regions. Regional economic integration would mutually benefit Afghanistan and its neighbours.

**Mr. President,**

11. Pakistan has always supported and will continue to support as well as participate in President Karzai's endeavour to build state institutions which are an essential pre-requisite for the success of the political and reconstruction processes in Afghanistan. Our participation in the Berlin Conference has been a strong testament to our commitment. We strongly urge the international community to continue to provide the necessary assistance to help Afghan government meets its goals, especially those outlined in its Work-Plan.

12. Finally, Mr. President, we hope that the spirit of Berlin does not diminish over time. Afghanistan needs years if not decades of political and economic engagement. Berlin is only the beginning of the post-Bonn Process commitment of the international community to Afghanistan. We, the international community, must now redouble our collective efforts and remain committed to peace, stability, reconstruction and development of Afghanistan for the long term.

**I thank you, Mr. President.**