



**Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram,
Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations,
at the Security Council Briefing on Afghanistan
(29 August 2022)**

Mr. President,

The Pakistan delegation congratulates you, and the Chinese delegation, for a very successful Presidency of the Security Council during this month.

2. We are also grateful to you for convening this timely discussion on Afghanistan, one year after the withdrawal of foreign forces and the Taliban's takeover in Kabul.

3. It can be said of this long war, as of all the wars in Afghanistan that it could not be won and should never have been fought.

4. The withdrawal of foreign forces was inevitable. The important issue was what was left behind. A comprehensive political solution among all the Afghan parties, and between them and the foreign presence, would have been the best way to end this twenty year conflict. Unfortunately, despite the efforts made, especially by Pakistan, such an outcome proved elusive.

5. The Security Council, Afghanistan's neighbours, and the international community are obliged to deal with the realities in Afghanistan, not with subjective perceptions and desires. What could not be imposed by force is unlikely to be secured by sanctions, asset freezes or travel bans.

6. Regardless of the ideology and internal policies of the Afghan interim government, the primary interest of the international community, of Afghanistan's neighbours, especially Pakistan, is the restoration of sustainable peace and security in Afghanistan. This implies, first and foremost, avoiding another civil war. It would be irresponsible for anyone, neighbours or not, to encourage and sponsor any insurgency, or any terrorist group, in Afghanistan.

7. Secondly, it is vital to continue humanitarian and economic assistance to Afghanistan in order to avoid another civil war, arrest the rise of terrorist groups, like Daesh, prevent economic collapse, a humanitarian crisis and another refugee surge from Afghanistan.

8. Even as Pakistan and its people grapple with the devastating impacts of unprecedented floods that have ravaged my country, we urge the international community to fulfill the UN Secretary-General's call for \$4.2 billion in humanitarian assistance and economic support to the people of Afghanistan. Pakistan helps to Afghanistan will continue. Similarly, we call for the release of

all of Afghanistan's frozen national reserves and the creation of effective mechanisms for their disbursement to and use by the Afghan people. Without such support, economic collapse and chaos may be the consequence. The early resumption of reconstruction and implementation of the shovel-ready connectivity projects with Central Asia and other neighbours including the extension of Pakistan-China Economic Corridor to Afghanistan can consolidate economic stabilization in Afghanistan.

Mr. President,

9. We are disturbed by the disagreement within the Council on the resumption of the travel ban exemption for the 13 Taliban leaders. We hope this does not signify a geopolitical divergence on Afghanistan between major powers. This would have serious implications for Afghanistan and the entire region.

10. The isolation of the Afghan Interim Government is not in the interest of either the Afghan people or the international community. While we appreciate the frustration of many governments with the non-fulfillment of early promises made by the Taliban on girls and women's education, human rights, inclusivity and counter-terrorism, isolating the Kabul leadership is unlikely to persuade it to change its policies, much less its ideology. It is only through sustained engagement that we can advance the objectives of the international community in Afghanistan; that is respect for human rights; political inclusivity and counter-terrorism.

11. Despite the difficulties, Pakistan believes that the Council, the international community and UNAMA, should develop a clear pathway to advance these three objectives. Pakistan hopes that the new SRSG will be appointed soon and hopes that UNAMA's constructive engagement with the Interim Government will be maintained. We agree with the representative of the United Arab Emirates that the OIC has special role to play in developing such a pathway towards normalizations. We have presented the OIC's views to this Council previously.

12. On human rights and girls' education, the OIC countries will seek to make an advance inter-alia, through conversations between the Taliban and delegations of Islamic scholars and Ulema. Pakistan has initiated such exchanges. We are hopeful that progress can be made through this process.

13. Similarly, the OIC, as well as Afghanistan's neighbours, hope that progress can be made on the issue of political inclusivity. Perhaps, in the first instance, this could be promoted at the functional level. Any encouragement of dissident groups can reverse the efforts to promote political inclusivity and reconciliation.

Mr. President,

14. For Pakistan, and for most of the international community, the greatest concern is to prevent terrorism from and within Afghanistan. We expect the Afghan Interim Government to prevent Afghanistan's territory from being utilized for terrorism against neighbours or any other country. In particular, eliminating the threat posed by ISIL-K (Daesh), the TTP, ETIM and IMU, as well as Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups, is of vital importance. Pakistan will support all sincere efforts by the Afghan Interim Government to neutralize and eliminate these terrorist groups while fully respecting Afghanistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Certain spoilers however, who wish to encourage terrorism against Pakistan from Afghan soil must be vigorously dissuaded. The objectives are focus on a strategic advantage against Pakistan and its friends, we will resistant vigorously.

15. In response to its cooperation on terrorism, human rights and political inclusivity, it is natural that the Afghan Interim Government desires reciprocal steps, including humanitarian economic and financial assistance, early removal of sanctions and eventual diplomatic recognition. These steps must not be perceived in Kabul as a "bridge too far". It is only through continued engagement and mutual accommodation that peace and security will be restored in Afghanistan. Pakistan will continue its endeavors to this end within the format of Afghanistan's six immediate neighbours plus Russia; within the OIC; with UNAMA, with the EU and other friendly countries, and, if so desired, within the platform of the Troika plus Pakistan.

I thank you.