



**Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent  
Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, at the  
Security Council's UNAMA Briefing on Afghanistan  
(20th December 2022)**

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**I thank you Mr. President,**

Let me begin by first congratulating Ambassador Kamboj and the Indian delegation on the skillful guidance of the Security Council during the current month.

2. Pakistan welcomes the discussion on Afghanistan and we would like to thank the Secretary-General for his latest report as well as SRSO Otunbayeva as well as Under Secretary Martin Griffiths and the briefings of the distinguished citizens of Afghanistan.

3. Afghanistan is our immediate neighbor. Our contiguity is physical; not aggressively aspirational. We share deep bonds of faith, ethnicity and history with Afghanistan. Pakistan has suffered grievously over the past four decades from the fallout of foreign interventions and civil war in Afghanistan. Peace and stability in Afghanistan is a political and strategic compulsion for Pakistan.

**Mr. President,**

4. We are deeply concerned by the challenging situation in Afghanistan outlined in the Secretary-General's report. Yet, we continue to believe that engagement with the interim Afghan government is the best option to promote peace and stability in Afghanistan and the region and to realize the shared objectives of the international community: respect for human rights, especially women's rights, inclusive governance and the elimination of terrorism within and from Afghanistan. Coercion and isolation have not proved successful in the past; they will prove to be counter-productive now and in the future as we have just learnt.

5. We need a coherent and practical plan to realize the objectives of the international community through patient engagement with the interim government.

6. The collapse of the Afghan economy is due to the cutoff of external economic and financial support on which Afghanistan had become dependent for 75% of its economic activity. Our first priority must remain to reverse the current humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, where 95% of the population exists in extreme poverty. We welcome the Security Council's resolution 2615 which has done a humanitarian carveout of the Council's sanctions regime. We support the assistance being provided through UNAMA and other UN and international agencies

as well as civil society organizations and commend their help to the Afghan people despite the difficult circumstances in which they operate. We urge that the Secretary-General's response plan of \$4.4 billion be fully funded and that the UNDP's special window and other avenues to maintain economic and financial activities be maintained and strengthened.

**Mr. President,**

7. Secondly, we have to revive the Afghan economy, and especially its banking system. For that purpose, it is imperative that the issue of international financial transactions and Afghanistan's frozen assets held abroad are addressed. The Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) have given some careful thought to help revive the Afghan economy. The key is to inject the financial assets of Afghanistan, especially the \$7 billion that are held abroad, into the Afghan financial system and thus revive economic and commercial capacity.

8. For their part, the interim authorities have demonstrated a capacity for efficient management to raise revenues through trade and transit as we have just heard. Third, reconstruction projects must be restarted, including reconstruction of infrastructure that was destroyed in the last 20 years of conflict. Also, the implementation of the major connectivity projects, such as the CASA electricity grid, the Uzbekistan railway, the TAPI gas pipeline, which are all shovel-ready, and can be a central component of an economic revival strategy for Afghanistan. All of Afghanistan's neighbors are willing to implement these projects. Pakistan and China have also expressed the desire to extend the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor to Afghanistan. The international banking systems and international companies should not be discouraged from supporting these connectivity projects.

**Mr. President,**

9. In her recent visit to Kabul, Pakistan's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Ms. Hina Rabbani Khar, conveyed our assurances that Pakistan will continue to extend all possible humanitarian assistance for Afghan refugees, trade prospects, transit access and technical assistance to Afghanistan. However, she also made it clear to the leaders of the Afghan Interim Government that we will not compromise on the issue of women's rights to education and work and other human rights. During her visit, she met with the Afghanistan Women's Chambers of Commerce. We will

encourage the strengthening of ties between the respective Women Chambers of Commerce of our two countries. And, we will also continue, together with other OIC countries, to share best practices of women's role in Islamic countries which are consistent with the Sharia and we will share them with the interim Afghan authorities in trying to persuade them to join the right path. In this context we are extremely disturbed by the latest announcement on restrictions on higher education for women in Afghanistan. But we continue to believe that it is through methods of persuasion and cooperation and not coercion that we can succeed in overcoming the impediments to ensuring women's rights in Afghanistan and these impediments are cultural. These are not religious impediments.

**Mr. President,**

10. There is no credible challenge within Afghanistan to the control of the Afghan interim government. Yet, greater political inclusion will serve to advance the goal of peace and stability in Afghanistan. The interim authorities are, obviously, averse to sharing power with their erstwhile adversaries. However, they could benefit, including in improving governance, if they would include the participation of Afghan expats who possess the expertise required to transform Afghanistan into a functioning a modern state. A concerted effort to bring this about can be part of the process of engagement with the interim government.

**Mr. President,**

11. Obviously, a major concern for the international community, and especially for Afghanistan's neighbours, is the rise of terrorist violence within and from Afghanistan. While the international media attention has focused on a much-diminished Al-Qaeda, the major threat today emanates from ISIL-K and the TTP, the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan.

12. ISIL-K has recently launched attacks against the Russian Embassy, against Chinese personnel in Kabul and against Pakistan's Head of Mission, in which he was injured and a security guard critically wounded. We have strongly condemned this assassination attempt and called on the interim government to apprehend and punish the perpetrators.

13. ISIL-K (Daesh) remains a potent and growing threat for two reasons: one, it continues to receive funding from outside Afghanistan

and is thus equipped to attract recruits; and two, it offers an alternate home to all those terrorist and other groups which are opposed to the interim authorities in Kabul. The international community needs to work in tandem with the interim government to eliminate these “advantages” of Daesh/ISIL-K and to devise a strategy to effectively neutralize its terrorist capabilities.

14. The TTP, Mr. President, is perhaps the largest terrorist group within Afghanistan. Its safe havens are located in Nangarhar province, close to Pakistan’s borders. Pakistan continues to suffer cross border attacks by the TTP. The TTP receives financing and sponsorship from external sources. The efforts of the interim government to neutralize the TTP – efforts in which we have participated – have not succeeded. Pakistan reserves the right to take decisive action to eliminate the terrorist threat posed by the TTP.

**Mr. President,**

15. Pakistan values the role played by UNAMA as a vehicle to promote peace and stability in Afghanistan and to address the humanitarian, economic and security challenges facing the people of Afghanistan. UNAMA’s mandate can be achieved effectively only through continued engagement with the interim Afghan government, notwithstanding the difficulties and challenges involved. UNAMA should in particular support the interim government’s efforts to collect weapons and arms from various militias.

16. Afghanistan’s immediate neighbours have an even more critical role in promoting stability and economic revival through trade, regional cooperation and political dialogue – while addressing the complex security environment, including the threat of terrorism, the problem of drug trafficking and smuggling and border incidents provoked by ill-disciplined local commanders. Pakistan is working on modalities to prevent border incidents with the interim authorities. It is essential for Afghanistan’s immediate neighbours to maintain a unified approach, including through the six neighbours platform, and through initiatives such as that from Uzbekistan about which we have just heard and we should not allow “spoilers” to erode such regional cooperation.

**Mr. President,**

17. The international community must also continue to intensify its engagement with Afghanistan. Isolating the interim authorities, or remaining aloof from the situation, is not a winning strategy. Stabilizing Afghanistan requires concerted international cooperation. Peace and stability in Afghanistan requires cooperation between all major powers, despite the current tensions between them. It needs the effective multilateralism which was propagated so eloquently in this Council last week.

**I thank you Mr. President.**