



**Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent
Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, at the
Security Council's UNAMA Briefing on Afghanistan
(21 June 2023)**

Madam President,

I would like to congratulate you and the delegation of the United Arab Emirates on a very successful Presidency of the Council this month and for convening this important debate on the situation in Afghanistan.

2. I would also like to thank SRSG Otunbayeva for her excellent briefing to us this morning. And I also thank Ms. Shabana for her moving intervention.

Madam President,

3. While we await the “independent” assessment of the situation in Afghanistan from Ambassador Feridun Sinirlioğlu, we find that, at present, there are reasons for both optimism and pessimism regarding Afghanistan.

4. On the positive side, we see:

- Security has vastly improved in Afghanistan, allowing commerce and trade, among other benefits;
- The interim government is stable and secure. There is no credible internal threat, and no one should encourage anyone to pose such a threat;
- The Afghan Interim Government has managed the Afghan economy, especially trade and commerce, revenue collection, reasonably well;
- The opium economy has been reduced; and
- The Afghan Interim Government is engaged with all immediate neighbors that is China, Iran, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan and with regional countries and is open to engaging with the rest of the international community.

5. On the negative side:

- The humanitarian situation remains dire, compounded by the impacts of climate change and the impacts of sanctions;
- The unacceptable restrictions relating to women and girls have been enlarged instead of being reversed. Pakistan will continue to make every effort to find a durable and mutually agreed solution on this important issue; and
- There has been limited progress towards enhancing political inclusion; and the threat from terrorist organizations, within and from Afghanistan, persists. While Al-Qaida is a shadow of its early self, Daesh remains to be contained and the threat from the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan is real and sizeable. Not only because of the external support it has received but also because of other regional factors.

6. Continued engagement with the Afghan Interim Government is the best approach to reinforce the positive trends and address the continued challenges in Afghanistan.

7. At our invitation, the Acting Foreign Minister of the Afghanistan, Mr. Muttaqi, visited Islamabad on 5 May for bilateral and trilateral discussions with our Foreign Minister and the Foreign Minister of China. As Afghanistan's closest neighbor and friend, Pakistan is committed to doing everything possible to promote peace, harmony and socio-economic development in Afghanistan. In turn, we have been reassured by the Afghan interim government of its goodwill and support, including in addressing the threat posed by the TTP and other terrorist groups.

8. The 5th Pakistan-Afghanistan-China Foreign Minister's Dialogue was held in Islamabad on 6 May and addressed the critical issues relating to Afghanistan and the region. The meeting underlined the importance of cooperation across the spectrum of issues. The three Foreign Ministers called on the international community to engage constructively with the Afghan Interim Government.

Madam President,

9. Afghanistan's immediate neighbors are playing a major role in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan. The continuation of the deliberations of the region's Foreign Ministers in Samarkand was an important event.

10. Pakistan also believes that other regional countries, in particular the members of the OIC, can and must play a larger role in promoting economic and political stability and development in Afghanistan.

11. Pakistan welcomed and participated in the Doha meeting of Special Envoys on Afghanistan. It was a useful and constructive exchange of assessments and recommendations to address the situation in Afghanistan. We hope the UN and the Secretary-General will continue his endeavor for normalization in Afghanistan. We believe that to render this effort more effective, we should identify clear objectives to be promoted; promote direct engagement with Afghan Interim Government by having them at the table; and move away from utilizing only "sticks" and instead try some "carrots" to advance the objectives of the international community.

Madam President,

12. As we develop the mutual trust and confidence with the Afghan Interim Government to address the issues related to Afghanistan, we hope that the international community will:

One, continue humanitarian assistance to the 28 million Afghans who need such assistance, which in accordance with humanitarian norms, must continue to be unconditional. The Secretary-General's appeal for \$4.2 billion in humanitarian help, which has so far received less than 10 percent should be fully funded;

Two, we should take concrete steps to revive the Afghan economy, including release of externally held Afghan reserve assets; revival of the Afghan banking system, including through technical assistance to the Central Bank; revival of the international support to reconstruction and infrastructure projects and the implementation of the regional connectivity projects; and

Third, open and sustain a process of engagement with the Afghan Interim Government through various available platforms – bilateral, regional and international.

Madam President,

13. Pakistan believes that the engagement and cooperation can lead to a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan, where the humanitarian crises will be over; where the rights of women and girls will be respected in accordance with Sharia; where the economy is thriving; where Afghan refugees have returned home; where terrorism has been effectively addressed and where Afghanistan provides the trade and transit link between Central, West and South Asia.

I thank you Madam President.