Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations

STATEMENT

BY

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Security Council Briefing on Afghanistan

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(Please check against delivery)

Mr. President,

Thank you for convening this important meeting and we commend you for your able leadership of the Council this month. I would like to thank Ms. Roza Otunbayeva, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of (UNAMA), Ms. Lisa Doughten, Director, Financing and Partnerships Division, OCHA, and Ms. Manizha Wafeq, Co-founder and Executive Director of Global/Afghanistan Women Trade Caravan and Convener of PEACE *THROUGH BUSINESS,* for their their important presentations.

We express our deep gratitude to members of the Council for their unwavering commitment to peace, stability, and prosperity in Afghanistan. We are particularly thankful to those who have reaffirmed their support for the Afghan people and , highlighted the importance of inclusivity, respect, and the protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms of all Afghan citizens, especially women, girls, and minority groups.

Additionally, we thank all donors, the UN system, and both national and international NGOs for their ongoing engagement and provision of vital humanitarian and life-saving support to the people of Afghanistan in this time of deep crsis.

Mr. President,

The United Nations will host the third Doha meeting from June 30 to July 1, 2024, bringing together special representatives for Afghanistan from various countries. We commend the UN Secretary-General's efforts to foster international dialogue and enhance coordinated efforts to address Afghanistan's multifaceted crisis. However, it is disheartening to see a diversion from the primary objective of the previous two Doha meetings.

The past two Doha meetings, along with Security Council Resolution 2721(2023), and the Independent Assessment Report, underscored increasing international engagement in a more coherent, coordinated, and structured manner to achieve an end state of an Afghanistan at peace with itself and its neighbors, fully reintegrated into the international community and meeting its international obligations.

This objective can not be realized without addressing the issue of legitimacy, political process, humanitarian crisis and human rights situation, particularly the rights of women and girls to education and employment under an integrated and holistic approach. The imperative of addressing political component of the Afghanistan's crisis, which remains lack of of an inclusive and representative political system that enjoys support and legitimacy from the people of Afghanistan and the international community, through a political process that includes engagement with all Afghan stakeholders, including civil society and other social and political forces who share a common vision of an inclusive and pluralistic Afghanistan has long been

emphasized by the people of Afghanistan. Commencement of a political process was also reflected in the assessment report of the Special Coordinator.

It is disappointing that the agenda of the Third Doha Conference does not include political process and human rights as two crucial issues in their thematic discussions, and that representatives of civil society and women will not be present at the table. This will be perceived as a shift away from issues deemed essential to the people of Afghanistan, and more broadly from the objectives to which international commitment were made, including Security Council resolutions and it will be viewed as another setback, signaling a normalization without any tangible changes on the ground. We echo the Special Rapporteur' call in his latest report from June to ensure Afghan women are included in all political discussions, including the Doha process.

We believe that a more effective and integrated international approach, as called for in the assessment report, requires consistent and parallel focus on issues of political process, the humanitarian crisis and the human rights situation, especially with regard to the rights of women and girls to education and employment. More broadly, we have consistently emphasized that international engagement should be principled and aligned with the principles and objectives of the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We reiterate that any discussions on the future of the Afghan people will not yield in tangible outcomes without addressing core issues and concerns. These include national legitimacy, the Islamic and fundamental human rights of all citizens (including women, girls, and minority groups), and security threats such as extremism, terrorism, and narcotics, which have contributed the current stalemate.

Moreover, experience has taught us that without ensuring the inclusivity and balanced representation of all relevant and credible Afghan groups, including representatives from women, civil society, the youth, diplomats, and other democratic forces and movements, we cannot achieve enduring peace and stability in the country.

The Taliban are only one internal stakeholder and do not and cannot represent the people of Afghanistan as a sole entity. We should not disregard the the legitimate demands of the Afghan people especially women and girls and normalize a gender apartheid regime in Afghanistan.

We hope that the Doha process will consider the recommendations of the Independent Assessment Report and focus on forging consensus among all international and Afghan

stakeholders. We urge the UN Secretary-General to seriously consider these points and ensure the inclusion of representatives of women and civil society in all discussions on Afghanistan, including the next Doha meeting.

The Doha conference presents a vital opportunity for the Taliban and the international community to discuss and agree on a roadmap by adopting an "action plan" or an "implementation mechanism" with defined objectives and specific timelines. This will support Afghanistan's progress towards becoming an inclusive, united, peaceful, and democratic nation.

Mr. President,

I would like to reiterate that the people of Afghanistan are tired of conflict and war. They have been longing for durable peace, security, and prosperity. This can only be achieved only through a legitimate, accountable, and inclusive system of governance based on the rule of law, justice, and the will of the people, with firm commitments to respecting and protecting the fundamental rights and freedoms of all citizens, as well as Afghanistan's international obligations.

This requires joint efforts by the United Nations, international partners, and all relevant stakeholders to work collaboratively and in good faith toward a stable, inclusive, and prosperous Afghanistan. Only through such comprehensive, coordinated and unified action can we secure a better future for the Afghan people. In this regard, we reiterate our call for the appointment of a Special Envoy to ensure dedicated and coordinated international engagement with Afghanistan.

Mr. President,

Afghanistan faces a dire situation across human rights, humanitarian, social, economic, and political fronts, worsened by the Taliban's oppressive policies and disregard for international norms.

The country is grappling with a complex humanitarian crisis due to decades of war, displacement, underdevelopment, poverty, food insecurity, natural disasters, and climate change. About 29 million Afghans, need humanitarian aid. Millions of Afghan refugees and migrants are in need of suppport in our neighboring countries. The 2024 Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan is severely underfunded. Aid efforts are further hindered by funding gaps, recent flash flooding, and the Taliban's restrictions on Afghan women aid workers, as noted by OCHA.

The human rights situation is equally dire, particularly for women and girls. Reports from the UNAMA and the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights, describe institutionalized system of discrimination, segregation and exclusion of women and girls from public life. This includes, harsh enforcement of dress codes, arbitrary detention of activists and journalists, public executions, and corporal punishment.

Afghanistan is the only country in the world where girls are barred from attending secondary and higher education. These policies and practices are against true Islamic tenets. These acts not only violate fundamental human rights but also undermine the potential for Afghanistan to achieve social and economic progress.

These violations impact the broader population with extrajudicial killings, torture, and disappearances. Ethnic and religious minorities face severe discrimination, worsening social tensions. Civic space has shrunk due to increased restrictions, surveillance, and harassment of civil society and media, stifling dissent and critical journalism. This is detailed in the report by Special Rapporteur Richard Bennett on human rights in Afghanistan.

Despite the Taliban's claims of increased revenues, their refusal to comply with international norms and human rights standards has prevented political and economic stability. This has led to withheld aid, worsening the humanitarian crisis, poverty, and food insecurity. The lack of inclusive governance has stalled development and perpetuated suffering, with schools closed to girls beyond sixth grade for over 1,000 days.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, Afghanistan's well-being, prosperity, and security are not just domestic concerns but are deeply connected to regional and global stability. At this critical juncture, we urge solidarity and consensus among Security Council members. Unified support and action are essential to address Afghanistan's multifaceted crisis.

Together, we can strive for a stable, prosperous, inclusive, and democratic Afghanistan, ensuring the rights and well-being of its people are safeguarded. The continued engagement and support of the international community, through the UN, are essential to achieving this goal.