

**Statement by Mr. Vijay.K. Nambiar, Permanent Representative, on
Agenda item 21(d) and 37: Emergency international assistance for
peace, normalcy, and reconstruction of the war-stricken Afghanistan:
the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace
and security on December 6, 2002.**

Mr. President,

It was exactly one year ago that the signing of the momentous Bonn Agreement cleared the way for the political transition of Afghanistan from a shattered and war-ravaged nation to a proud, democratic, multi ethnic and constructive member of the comity of nations. One year down the line this debate provides us an opportunity to take stock of the progress achieved in Afghanistan so far and to see what more requires to be done.

In political terms, the establishment of the Interim Administration last December, the successful conclusion of the Emergency Loya Jirga in June this year and the subsequent appointment of a Transitional Authority of Afghanistan represent important milestones. Several key elements of President Hamid Karzai's reform agenda have been set into motion. These include the establishment of the Defence Commission, a National Security Council and the assumption of civilian control over the armed forces. Other achievements include the process of reconstruction which has begun in earnest in infrastructural areas such as the construction of a national roadway system, the return of as many as 1.7 million refugees and the reinstitution of an educational system that has permitted as many of 3 million children, including a million girls, to return to school. Also noteworthy are the measures initiated to set up an independent human rights commission at the national level in that country.

The Secretary General, in his report on the "Situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security" contained in document A/57/487, has pointed out that the key impediment to implementation of the Bonn Agreement remains the deteriorating security climate. This is a matter of serious concern to my country. Reports of disturbances along Afghanistan's southern and south-eastern borders can only be attributed to the renewed efforts of Al Qaeda and Taliban cadres to destabilize the country. Unfortunately, these elements continue to receive moral and material support from their erstwhile mentors across the border, who have yet to reconcile themselves to the loss of the influence and power they once wielded in Afghanistan. We reiterate the importance of ensuring that the resurgent forces of religious fundamentalism and extremism, manifested in the Al Qaeda and the Taliban, are fully neutralized and that the intensity of the anti-terror campaign is maintained.

Meanwhile, it is encouraging to note the abatement of tensions in northern Afghanistan following increased cooperation among leaders in the area. The Secretary General, in paragraph 35 of his report has drawn attention to this development. The contribution of the Joint Security

Commission, in which UNAMA is represented, towards the modest success achieved is commendable and deserves to be recognised.

In the context of assuring security for Afghanistan and of the need to prevent a resurgence of the pressures of external forces in that country, we note a reference in the Final Communiqué of the Petersberg Conference to the intention of the Afghan government to sign later this month a declaration of good neighbourly relations with six of its neighbours that would, inter alia, affirm the principle of non-interference by these countries in Afghanistan's internal affairs. India welcomes this development.

Mr President,

India believes that a major element of the institutional reform agenda in Afghanistan should involve the rebuilding of its security structures. To this end, we welcome the recent decision taken to create a new Afghan National Army. We applaud the fact that the new army would be a professional force drawn from the different regions and ethnic groupings. We believe that in the interest of the sustainability of Afghan security apparatus, it is important that the security structures in Afghanistan are established as Afghan institutions, flowing out of intra-Afghan processes relevant to and targeted at meeting Afghan needs of dealing with internal and external threats. The task of disarmament, demobilization and rehabilitation of former Afghan fighters, as also the disbanding of local militias, is a crucial one and needs to be treated with great attention and sensitivity.

Other important tasks and challenges before the government include broadening the Central Government's authority, preparation of the Constitution, building the rule of law and preparing the country for the 2004 elections. For this purpose, the Government of Afghanistan requires more resources than what is currently available. In paragraph 55 of his report, the Secretary General has estimated that "the total needs of a country recovering from over two decades of conflict, destruction and drought outstripped even the \$ 1.8 billion generously pledged at the Donor Conference held in Tokyo". The situation has become worse as a result of the prolonged drought in several parts of the country.

We are deeply concerned by the reports of increase in poppy cultivation in the country. The Secretary General observes in his report that the earlier momentum for putting in place an anti-narcotics strategy has faltered. Eradicating illicit poppy cultivation and breaking the drug trafficking-terror group nexus are also areas that have major implications for regional and global security.

It is important for the international community to continue supporting Afghanistan at this critical juncture of its development. Any weakening of support or diversion of international assistance from Afghanistan can only benefit the regressive and obscurantist elements that have proved disastrous for the country in the recent past.

Mr. President,

We have noted the priority the Secretary General's report attaches to the development of Afghanistan's economy. We agree that initiatives to enhance the government's capacity, encourage private sector growth and to reform fiscal policy are important determinants towards the attainment of healthy economic growth in Afghanistan.

India has committed itself to assisting Afghanistan in its nation-building efforts. Though not a traditional donor, we have made our own contribution towards Afghanistan's reconstruction efforts. The Government of India will have disbursed about one-third of its financial assistance of

\$ 100 million pledged to Afghanistan by the end of this year. This has included a budget subsidy of \$ 10 million disbursed last July and supply of three Airbus aircraft as a gift to Ariana Afghan Airlines. Indian assistance has been focused in the critical areas of health, education, transport, civil aviation, water, power, agriculture, judiciary and banking. Fifty buses have been provided to the Afghan Government. Over 18 tonnes of material was sent to set up a camp for artificial limbs for amputees in Kabul. A computer training centre has been established and is being run in Afghanistan by Indian experts. India has also made a commitment to provide one million tonnes of wheat as food aid through the World Food Programme's school feeding scheme in Afghanistan.

In extending our assistance, we have scrupulously adhered to the concept of Afghan ownership and prioritization in designing and implementing programmes for Afghanistan. We are in the process of discussing a bilateral Preferential Trading Agreement with Afghanistan. India also organized an extremely successful industrial exhibition in Kabul in September 2002. It is our endeavor that such initiatives would enable Afghanistan to resume its economic integration with its immediate neighborhood thus restoring vitality to its nascent economy.

Before concluding, I would like to place on record our sincere appreciation for the contribution of Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General and the UNAMA team as well as the other UN agencies involved in Afghanistan towards the development and progress achieved in Afghanistan during the past year. Their efforts in the coming months would continue to be vitally important.

Thank you.

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