

**73rd Session of the
United Nations General Assembly**

**Agenda Item: 40
“The Situation in Afghanistan”**

INDIA STATEMENT

By

**Ms. Eenam Gambhir
Counsellor**

Madam President,

Thank you for organizing this debate. We would also like to thank the delegation of Germany for facilitating this very important resolution.

My delegation attaches great importance to the consensual adoption of this annual resolution in the General Assembly on Afghanistan, as it is an important opportunity for the international community as a whole to express its solidarity for peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Madam President,

Many member states attended the recently concluded Geneva conference on Afghanistan last month, thus reaffirming the commitment of the international community and the UN to Afghanistan.

As stated by President Ghani in the Geneva conference, this year is reflective of how Afghanistan is gaining control of its own destiny and how the Afghans are taking ownership of their own problems and demonstrating leadership for the solutions.

Despite mounting challenges of security, peace and development, there has also been considerable progress in the last 17 years - especially in promoting education and health care, protecting the rights of women, children and the marginalized; securing lives; improving governance and reforms; generating livelihood and in moving Afghanistan towards self reliance.

Democracy in Afghanistan is taking deeper roots. The enthusiastic participation of the people of Afghanistan in the Parliamentary elections held last month despite terrorist violence, reflect their desire and faith in democratic governance and rejection of forces that foment and spread terror and violence. Presidential elections scheduled next year would strengthen democratic institutions further. These gains in the face of utmost adversity and violence only demonstrates the indomitable courage and determination of our Afghan friends.

Madam President,

While the people of Afghanistan strive for better lives and a peaceful future, the challenges they face have only increased in the recent past. As per latest reports on Global Terrorism Index released this week, Afghanistan is now the world's deadliest country for terrorism. One-quarter of all worldwide terrorism-related deaths during 2017 occurred, sadly, in Afghanistan. It is indeed sad that we as international community did see it coming.

The reports of the Secretary General, year after year, months after months, did demonstrate that the violence and terror in Afghanistan was showing no signs of abating. We witnessed an increased frequency of attacks, in places never imagined before; even the sick and wounded in hospitals, young boys and girls in schools, praying devotees in mosques, and even mourners at funerals, were not spared by the forces of terror and violence.

It is clear that the terrorists and those who plan such attacks are not interested in peace. The goalposts for them have changed. The terrorists and their supporters have now set up industries amongst them of narcotics and illegal mining in the territories they control stealing the resources of the Afghan people and to fund more violence and terrorism.

Despite these challenges, the UN has not demonstrated the resolve to deal with the source of the problem. The Security Council sanctions committee, which refuses to designate new leaders of the Taliban or to freeze the assets of the slain leader of Taliban, is falling short of what is expected of it by the Afghans and international community. From the lessons from the past, we who are located in New York, are aware that peace in Afghanistan is tied to the peace and security in the entire world.

Madam President,

While all of us advocate that there is no military solution to the issue, yet, the Taliban, aided by their supporters, continue to pursue military operations perpetrating violence and destruction, like the recent attack in Kabul, over several parts of Afghanistan. These offensives are planned and launched by those who are harbored in safe havens in the neighborhood of Afghanistan. These sanctuaries have, for years, provided safety for the dark agendas of ideologically and operationally-fused terror networks like the Taliban,

Haqqani network, Daesh, Al- Qaeda and its proscribed affiliates such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed.

Madam President,

We support an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled inclusive peace and reconciliation process which promotes and protects unity, sovereignty, democracy, inclusiveness and prosperity of Afghanistan. Any meaningful progress towards sustainable peace requires cessation of terrorist violence, renunciation of links with international terrorism, respect for rights of common Afghan people, especially the women, the children and minorities.

India has always stood shoulder to shoulder with our Afghan partners and will continue to do so in this transformation decade in providing assistance that Afghanistan needs and seeks. Building reliable connectivity for land locked Afghanistan is key component of our regional partnership.

In these endeavors we are mindful that all such projects respect state sovereignty and territorial integrity and are based on universally recognized international norms, transparency and principles of financial responsibility, ecological and environmental protection and preservation standards. It is with this spirit that we are engaged in various connectivity projects in the region including the Chabahar Port project and direct India-Afghanistan Air-Freight Corridor, which have been successfully operationalized. We will continue to build on the gains made. We will continue to work with all those who share this spirit of helping Afghanistan without conditions.

Madam President,

Indians, since their young age are familiar with the tales of Afghan courage, resilience and determination which has long been a source admiration in our region. We only hope that the courage of Afghans can be matched by that of international community in doing what needs to be done on its part to bring peace to this war torn country.

I thank you Madam, President