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UNAMA

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

Strategic Communication and Spokespersons Unit, Kabul, Afghanistan

<http://unama.unmissions.org>

**STATEMENT OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
SECRETARY-GENERAL TO AFGHANISTAN STAFFAN DE MISTURA
TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL**

As delivered – 22 December 2010

I thank you, Madam President, for giving us the opportunity as the year draws to a close to review, together with the Security Council, the situation in Afghanistan from the United Nations point of view during a period of many developments.

But before doing so, I would like on behalf of all of my Afghan, United Nations, and national and international colleagues, and frankly of the whole international diplomatic community in Kabul, to pay tribute and to pay our respects to the memory of Ambassador Richard Holbrooke. I was told by someone that his last words to an Afghan doctor who started treating him when he went to the hospital were “Please work for peace in Afghanistan”. We are grateful to him and we thank him for his passionate commitment to assisting the Afghan people in seeking their own political stability. I would like to conclude this reflection with a few seconds of personal prayer and silence.

Thank you, Madam President.

My presentation, which will be short as the report has already been issued, will focus on the following topics: the security situation and its linkage to the NATO summit in Lisbon, transition, aid coherence/realignment, human rights, reconciliation, regional engagement, the serious issue of the drugs affecting Afghanistan and neighbouring countries, the elections, and some brief remarks on the budget.

With regard to the security situation, the combined increased activities by Afghan and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) forces are intensifying and are showing results. At the same time, we are detecting from anti-Government elements attempts to show on their side some spectacular attacks in order to dilute the feeling of a change of momentum. What does that mean? It means that we should be expecting and should be ready for, I am afraid, a tense security environment over the next few months. Our assessment is that the situation may get worse before it gets better. And the proof of that was the attack on the United Nations centre at Herat, where 21 of our colleagues were stationed. They all survived, thanks to luck, good preparation, strong support from the Afghan security forces around them and our own private security company linked to the Gurkha support. But it is a signal; it is a message.

The Lisbon NATO summit, in our view, was very successful. The linking of the two dates — 2011 and 2014 — as a long beginning of a long end contributed to establishing a much clearer perspective for all international, regional and national players about mutual commitment to Afghanistan.

With regard to transition, the message is clear, and I am sure that we are all hearing it: allow a more rapid delegation of responsibility and ownership to the Afghan authorities. In other words — to use a slogan that we heard in Lisbon and which I think is a very good one — to help, support and assist the Afghan authorities to stand on their own, but not to stand alone.

The United Nations system and I myself, on behalf of the Secretary-General, are planning — as we are expected to do by this Council and, above all, by the Afghan authorities — to increase, security permitting, our own capacity in the areas where transition is expected to take place and also in areas where security is improving, in order to do what we should be doing — doing much more to assist in capacity-building and support for Afghan ownership of Afghan territory.

We believe that, with the leadership of the Afghan authorities and Mr. Ashraf Ghani, together with the teams that have been established, we are moving in the right direction on transition, and the United Nations, as I said, will, with the blessing of the Council, be doing its part.

On aid coherence, since the Kabul Conference we have been talking about aid realignment, which then leads to aid coherence. Aid realignment means, basically, what we heard at the Kabul Conference, which calls for a stronger and more effective realignment of all bilateral and multilateral aid along the lines of the priorities set by the Afghan authorities, according to clear benchmarks set by both sides.

The United Nations, that is, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), working closely in partnership and as co-Chair of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board, which is the institution that was created jointly by the Afghan authorities and the international community to actually assist, monitor and support the realignment, will be increasing its activities in that field. I have new teams coming in. One senior colleague, in particular, will join me, who has been assigned particularly to support the enhancement.

Human rights are crucial. Everybody recognizes that, and we are working on that issue. The priority for us is to be able to continue to issue reports that are seen as significant because they are considered to be objective and frank — sometimes too frank — but they nonetheless help everyone to realize that the civilian rights in human rights in Afghanistan are important for the Afghans.

The issue of civilian casualties has been an issue included in our report, and we will continue to include that issue, hoping to improve that situation further with fine-tuning. We have heard from President Karzai several times, as well as from many other partners, how important it is to actually address the issue of civilian casualties in the best possible way; hopefully we will not see repetitions of the figures we have seen so far. There has, however, been an increase, as the Council knows.

On the issue of women, reports are coming out — and more will come out — about the violence affecting women in particular. I must say, the results of the election so far have been very encouraging regarding the engagement and the involvement of women in the future parliament. But we will continue to play our role in that area. That has been requested by everyone, and it is, frankly, required by our own moral compass.

On reconciliation and reintegration, everyone recognizes that there is no military solution. Frankly, even the Taliban do so, even if they will not say so publicly. There is no military solution to the conflict in Afghanistan — hence the importance of initiatives such as the Peace Jirga and the establishment, by President Karzai, of the High Peace Council.

The United Nations, through its own newly established Salaam Support Group, in which everyone will be invited to participate, depending on their level of competence and the requirements by the Afghan Peace Council. That participation will be based on competence, the preparation of reports, visions and substantive and substantial support for what could suddenly become an important and accelerated level of dialogue. Additionally, that support will come in the form of logistics. What the Council is helping us with, by asking for a strong logistical capacity, is being put at the disposal of the Afghans, who are going to talk to each other, both inside or outside Afghanistan. That has already been requested three times, and we have provided it on the Council's behalf. Then, of course, confidence-building measures represent an area where the United Nations, the Security Council and the Mission can help in eventually facilitating or explaining how to better implement such measures, if and when they are required.

On regional engagements, everybody again recognizes that if there is — and when there is, insha'allah — actual involvement in a dialogue, it will be possible to sustain national dialogue only through a long-term constructive engagement by all regional players, and that means not only the immediate neighbours, but also the distant and concerned neighbours. In that sense, many initiatives are taking place. As we speak, if I am not mistaken, President

Karzai is in Ankara for discussions facilitated by the Turkish Government on a trilateral basis. I think many more meetings are likely to take place in that context in the coming year. I understand that even in Washington, D.C., there is the possibility of a trilateral opportunity sometime early next year. All those bilateral, trilateral and regional initiatives are welcome and should be supported in the right direction.

The United Nations in Kabul is doing its part in the Kabul Silk Road initiative and is supporting other initiatives by regional players. We understand that, by the end of next year, in November, another Bonn conference will possibly take place, as announced at the NATO summit, and it will probably be — and I do not want to prejudge here the decision by the Turkish authorities — preceded by another regional opportunity and discussion of the type we have had in the past. Whatever the case, we will play a role, because we recognize that all members of the regional context are also Members of the United Nations.

On the issue of drugs, which is linked to the question of regional issues, there has been a substantial increase in drug production in spite of a disease affecting drug production that we hope was sent by God. It has also, unfortunately, contributed to an increase in price and therefore also to an increase in interest in producing, selling, transporting and storing drugs. That is affecting 900,000 Afghans and major neighbours, both close and distant. We welcome the visit to Kabul of the new Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, who has been very engaged and has been giving renewed energy to the initiatives at the regional and national levels in that context.

On elections, allow me to make a few points — actually eight, but each of them short — on behalf of the diplomatic community in Kabul and myself.

First, although it is late, we can never stress enough how proud all of us are and should be and must congratulate the Afghan people, the Afghan National Security Forces and President Karzai for having held elections in a country that, we know, is in a conflict and is facing very challenging circumstances.

Second, at the end of the day, 4.2 million Afghans, out of 10.5 million eligible voters, voted despite the security situation and in spite of two serious warnings from the Taliban to not go to vote.

Third, we recognize the diligent, committed and intense work carried out by the two Afghan independent electoral commissions nominated by the President.

Fourth, the United Nations, the Russian Federation, the United States, the European Union, Japan, Canada and Turkey have all welcomed the announcement — I repeat, the announcement — by the electoral commissions on 24 November, and finally on 30 November, of the certification of the results of the 18 September Wolesi Jirga elections.

Fifth, the elections of 18 September, like all other previous elections, included substantial numbers of cases of fraud and irregularities. That is regrettable, but we are dealing with a young democracy in a very difficult environment. Both the Independent Electoral Commission and the Electoral Complaints Commission, the two electoral commissions, working together, tried and did a lot of work, we have to recognize, in trying to remove those cases of fraud that they were able to detect. By doing so, they sent a signal against impunity, which might have been an important message for all Afghans to hear.

Sixth, we have to recognize the independence of all Afghan institutions, both electoral and judiciary, and that they act within their clearly defined areas of competence and in accordance with the relevant Afghan laws and the Afghan Constitution.

Seventh, with the certification of all results by the bodies mandated by the law, the two Electoral Commissions, the electoral process is now procedurally concluded. Notwithstanding whatever the judiciary system will have to do, following its own procedures, the expected next steps are the inauguration of the new Parliament, pursuant to the electoral law.

Finally, we welcome the announcement by President Karzai's spokesperson that the President intends to inaugurate the new Parliament by the end of January. Now that we have gone through the electoral process, we must look into

electoral reform. We have been discussing the issue with all Afghan authorities and members of Parliament. The feeling is that there is a need for the sort of electoral reform that will help to prevent some of the problems that have been encountered in the latest election and in previous elections. That is the task that we will have to take on together. We are confident that the Afghan capacity for bringing an inclusive political approach to solving some of the pending issues will bring about inclusive participation — despite the previous exclusion of some ethnic groups in the elections — hopefully before January.

In conclusion, I wish to thank the Afghan authorities, members of the Security Council, our friend and colleague who is the European Union representative in Kabul, and our friends and colleagues representing the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Kabul for the support that we have consistently received in implementing the UNAMA mandate, which can only be fulfilled — and incrementally so — if the necessary resources are allocated to it in the next budget.

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