

Security Council Open Debate on Afghanistan and UNAMA
20 March 2012, Security Council Chamber

Statement by H.E. Mr Rosenthal, Representative of Guatemala

We thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2012/133), which is the basis for today's meeting. We also thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Jan Kubiš and the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Ambassador Zahir Tanin, for their respective briefings. Guatemala supports Afghanistan in its efforts to achieve democracy, prosperity and peace.

As we all know, Afghanistan has been on the agendas of the Security Council and the international community for many years. Many conferences have been convened to mobilize resources and take steps towards peaceful reconstruction of the country and a better life for its people. The endeavour is a complex one whose execution falls to the Afghan people themselves. Progress must be made simultaneously on political stabilization, security, development and the rule of law.

We are concerned that the security situation remains problematic. We especially regret the frequent bloody incidents with civilian victims. The international community must redouble its efforts to support the Afghan Government in achieving sufficient stability to move towards the gradual transfer of security maintenance to the Government.

We support the long-term commitments taken on by the international community at the Bonn Conference last December, aimed at spurring political development in the country, which depends, inter alia, on reconciliation among various groups of the population. We welcome the process, building on commitments undertaken in London and Kabul, as well as a structured follow-up and a clear timetable for its implementation. The upcoming regional conferences in Tokyo and Kabul will provide further opportunities for progress.

We encourage all to carry on with the road map and not to be sidetracked from the successes achieved through cooperation between the international community and Afghanistan. We must not lose sight of the big picture, even as we recognize that much remains to be done. Guatemala supports the transition under the leadership and ownership of Afghanistan, even as we acknowledge the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security. That includes confronting the transnational problem of drug trafficking that plagues the country and the region. We applaud the long-term commitment of the United Nations to cooperating with the Government and people of Afghanistan. We lend our full support to the excellent work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

We would like to make a few points about the UNAMA mandate. First of all, we endorse the recommendations of the mandate review team, which include the United Nations taking the role of facilitator rather than implementer. Secondly, we support extending UNAMA's mandate for an additional 12 months. Thirdly, we commend the Organization for strengthening the coherence of international efforts in Afghanistan and successfully promoting Afghan ownership. Fourthly, despite some progress on human rights, we call for further efforts to respect and protect the rights of women and children. Fifthly, we believe that UNAMA should play a more active role in elections, which are critical to promoting democracy, the rule of law and Afghan ownership. Sixthly, we eagerly await the Special Representative's of the future presence of UNAMA at the sub-national level, as called for in paragraph 76 the Secretary-General's report.

Lastly, we would like to mention the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Programme. We note the number of armed groups identified in the report as participating in the reintegration process, which is a highly positive development. We fully endorse the principles and outcome of the Bonn Conference, especially those reflected in paragraph 18 of the Conference Conclusions. We also support the work of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011), which is a positive addition to efforts for national reconciliation in Afghanistan. We further believe that UNAMA should continue to support the Government's efforts to build its capacities and to promote the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme.