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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Ms. Lassen.	(Denmark)
<i>Members:</i>	Algeria.	Mr. Bendjama
	China.	Mr. Fu Cong
	France	Mr. Dharmadhikari
	Greece	Mr. Sekeris
	Guyana	Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett
	Pakistan.	Mr. Akram
	Panama	Mr. Alfaro de Alba
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Hwang
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sierra Leone	Mr. Kanu
	Slovenia.	Mrs. Blokar Drobič
	Somalia	Mr. Osman
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
	United States of America.	Ms. Shea

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2025/109)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2025/109)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Afghanistan, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Kazakhstan to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Roza Otunbayeva, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan; and Ms. Azadah Raz Mohammad, Co-Founder of the Ham Diley Campaign.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2025/109, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security.

I now give the floor to Ms. Otunbayeva.

Ms. Otunbayeva: The independent assessment of November 2023 (S/2023/856, annex), noted positively by the Security Council in resolution 2721 (2023), calls for a political pathway through which the interests of all sides — the Afghan people, the international community and the de facto authorities — can be fairly discussed so that Afghanistan can be fully reintegrated into the international system while respecting its international legal obligations. The establishment of this political pathway has been our fundamental task over the past months.

Challenges remain. It is the responsibility of the de facto authorities to indicate whether they want Afghanistan to be reintegrated into the international system and, if so, whether they are willing to take the necessary steps. The de facto authorities have thus far treated the Afghan State's international obligations selectively, rejecting some on the basis they allegedly impinge on the country's sovereignty or violate their traditions. But to be very clear, these international obligations affect not only the possibility of progress along the political pathway but, most crucially, the well-being of Afghanistan's entire population, whose voices must be included in the political pathway.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the United Nations family have constant contact across the country with Afghans from all walks of life. More and more Afghans are approaching UNAMA to express their concerns, and they deserve to be elevated to the Council. Afghans increasingly resent the intrusions on their private lives by the de facto authorities. They fear Afghanistan's further isolation from the rest of the world. After three and a half years under Taliban rule, they have indeed welcomed an absence of conflict and greater stability and freedom of movement, at least for the male population. But this is not a peace in which they can live in dignity, with their human rights respected and with confidence in a stable future.

Afghans continue to face a severe humanitarian crisis defined by decades of conflict, entrenched poverty, climate-induced shocks, large population growth and increasing protection risks, especially for women and girls. In 2025, more than 50 per

cent of the population — some 23 million people — require humanitarian assistance, but this assistance is rapidly decreasing.

The defunding of assistance is already having and will continue to have a significant impact on the Afghan people. In the past month, more than 200 health facilities have closed, impacting some 1.8 million people, essential malnutrition services for children have been limited, and implementing partners have significantly reduced their footprint and coordination capacity. Lives and livelihoods will be lost, and development gains further eroded. Given this dire situation, I would like to thank the World Bank for its decision last week to provide an additional \$240 million to support the health sector until November 2026.

Despite the enormous challenges Afghan women face, they have continued to meaningfully and comprehensively participate in the humanitarian response. Humanitarian partners remain committed to upholding the principle of women's participation.

Last year, in anticipation of funding cuts and aware of the need for greater efficiencies, the United Nations system in Afghanistan and its partners adopted a joined-up approach to strengthen the nexus between humanitarian and basic human needs assistance. This fed into and complemented efforts on the political track, including the United Nations-convened meetings of Special Envoys on Afghanistan, held in Doha, and the subsequently established working groups on counter-narcotics and the private sector.

Donors responded by increasing contributions to basic human needs aid, which reached almost \$1.6 billion in 2024, equalling the funding levels of humanitarian aid. Our field visits and interactions with Afghans in all provinces provide ample evidence of the positive impact of this joined-up approach. This includes the ability of Afghans to access basic services, to build their livelihoods and to promote participation and inclusion. If this assistance stops, the fragile progress of the last three years would collapse, and many Afghans would revert to historical coping mechanisms such as out-migration. While there have been some instances of interference in aid delivery, de facto authority representatives in Kabul and in the provinces have generally cooperated with the United Nations and partners to enable the provision of assistance and resolve cases of interference.

The Afghan economy grew by approximately 2.7 per cent in 2024. Investments, especially in infrastructure, supported by countries of the region, are taking place. But in the short and medium term, current levels of growth cannot compensate for the drop in foreign aid and the growing population. In the longer term, the de facto authorities' positive vision of economic self-sufficiency cannot reach its full potential unless ongoing obstacles to its reintegration into the international system are resolved. In that connection, we return to the question of Afghanistan's international obligations.

Regarding human rights, there has been no easing of the significant restrictions on women, despite global appeals and appeals by many Afghans. Those include laudable efforts by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which recently sent a delegation to Kabul to promote the Jeddah Declaration on Women's Rights in Islam and the January summit in Islamabad on girls' education in Muslim communities hosted by the World Muslim League and the Government of Pakistan. Those and other events make clear that the Taliban's restrictions — including its ban on girls' education, soon to enter its fourth tragic year — have no basis in Islam. The anniversary of the education ban is a particularly sad landmark as we recently celebrated International Women's Day. Unfortunately, on 2 December 2024, the de facto Ministry of Public Health ordered medical institutes to be closed for women, shutting down one of the last avenues for women to attain professional education. That new restriction

deepens a long-term gap in the country's capacity to protect the health of women and girls, and indeed all Afghans. That will further worsen maternal and infant mortality in Afghanistan, already among the highest in the world.

UNAMA has been closely observing the Taliban's enforcement of its Law on the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice since it was promulgated in August 2024, including its negative economic effects and impacts on Afghans' human rights and private lives. The law demonstrates the de facto authorities' prioritization of ideology over international obligations. It remains a major impediment to implementing the political pathway needed to reintegrate Afghanistan into the international community.

Turning to the security situation, the de facto authorities continue to exert full control over the country, although security incidents continue to take place as documented in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2025/109). Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-KP) claimed a suicide attack on de facto authorities' security personnel who were queuing to receive salaries in Kunduz on 11 February, killing four civilians and 14 de facto security personnel, with an unknown number of wounded. Two days later, there was another ISIL-KP-claimed suicide attack on one of the de facto Deputy Ministers of Urban Development and Housing in Kabul, who was injured, with three de facto authority personnel killed and 10 wounded. The continued activities of the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan against Pakistan and the presence of other terrorist groups in Afghanistan, as documented in the recent report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team (see S/2025/71/Rev.1), demonstrate that the international community continues to have legitimate questions about the de facto authorities' ability or commitment to uphold their own guarantees that Afghanistan will not become a threat to other countries.

The space for engagement is narrowing. There is growing frustration on the part of some key international stakeholders that political engagement is not working and may actually be encouraging hardliners within the de facto authority. At the same time, funding decreases are putting additional pressure on the Afghan people, as I have described. How do we move forward given those negative trends?

The mechanisms to address the issues that prevent Afghanistan's reintegration with the international community are in place today. The working groups on counter-narcotics and the private sector are meeting and provide a framework for engagement and potential confidence-building. On counter-narcotics, Afghan experts, including women, with the de facto authorities, United Nations and Member State representatives, produced a joint action and investment plan on alternative livelihoods for poppy farmers to support the de facto authorities' opium cultivation ban. Work on a sustainable private sector includes defining a comprehensive support strategy that integrates access to financing, business enablers and market access with regulatory frameworks and a focus on women-led businesses. Those meetings have helped to build confidence among the main stakeholders and provide concrete plans to improve the lives of Afghans. The United Nations-proposed comprehensive approach, shared for now with the Doha format participants and the de facto authorities, for the first time proposes a framework to address the difficult issues blocking Afghanistan's reintegration into the international community. But the United Nations cannot move faster than the Member States that are participating in the Doha peace process and other stakeholders who must lead that process.

The trend of world events, including competing international priorities, budgetary constraints and a growing tendency of Governments to focus on internal issues, all risk leaving Afghanistan poorer, more vulnerable and more isolated. That is an avoidable outcome, but only if all stakeholders recognize the risk and seek actively to avoid it, in particular the de facto authorities. The most helpful development would be a clear signal from the de facto authorities that they are committed to

the reintegration of Afghanistan into the international community, with all that that implies. This is a moment for realism.

I am grateful, for the expressions of support to UNAMA from the Council. We look forward to an expected renewal of our mandate next week. UNAMA, along with all United Nations agencies in the field, funds and programmes, remains fully committed to the goal articulated at the beginning of this briefing: an Afghanistan fully reintegrated into the international system, respecting its international legal obligations for the benefit of the Afghan people. We remain committed to improving the lives of the Afghan people, whose concerns and aspirations must be addressed for there to be real and lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan.

The President: I thank Ms. Otunbayeva for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Raz Mohammad.

Ms. Raz Mohammad: I thank you, Madam President, for the opportunity to brief the Security Council on the human rights crisis in Afghanistan.

My name is Azadah Raz Mohammad. I am a lawyer from Afghanistan and the founder of the Ham Diley Campaign, which has been calling for accountability for the grave international crimes that have been committed in Afghanistan for decades and that continue, with impunity, under the Taliban.

In 2021, the Taliban tried to sell themselves to the international community as a reformed group, promising to respect human rights, including women's rights — a lie that the international community was too quick to believe. Afghan women warned members then that, given the chance, the Taliban would destroy every gain that we had fought for since their brutal rule in the 1990s.

Over the past three and a half years, our fears have become reality. Through at least 126 brutally enforced decrees, the Taliban have deprived Afghan women and girls of their most fundamental rights — to education, employment, movement, assembly and speech, and to live free from violence. Women's access to healthcare and justice has been severely restricted. The Taliban have erased Afghan women so thoroughly that even hearing their voices or seeing their faces in public is now a crime. They are suffocating in their homes, banned from even looking out of the window. We, the women of Afghanistan, along with international experts, call this systematic and institutionalized oppression of women gender apartheid.

The Taliban is ready to crush anyone that resists them, including protesters and women human rights defenders, health workers, educators, journalists, legal professionals and former security and Government officials. Punishments at the hands of the Taliban include extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, torture, sexual violence, corporal punishment, public flogging and execution by stoning.

The Taliban has also systematically persecuted ethnic and religious groups such as the Hazaras, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Baluchs and others, through targeted attacks, forced displacement, confiscation of land and destruction of livelihoods. The lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community, already at great risk before August 2021, now faces systematic violence, including murder and sexual violence, as the Taliban attempt to impose strict, heteronormative gender roles.

Accountability for those grave violations is essential — and yet impossible domestically. The Taliban has made it an early priority to dismantle all Afghan institutions mandated to promote human rights, such as the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the independent judiciary. They aim to rule Afghanistan in a complete legal vacuum.

Although Afghan women have consistently appealed to world leaders to hold the Taliban accountable for their escalating repression of women's rights, we have seen alarming steps by United Nations States Members to normalize the Taliban. We were especially shocked to see the international community comply with the Taliban's demands at the third Doha meeting, in June 2024, during which Afghan women were excluded from formal discussions and human rights and women's rights were not on the agenda.

We observed how that directly emboldened the Taliban to deepen their abuses. In the wake of that meeting, the Taliban barred the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan from entering the country and issued their most draconian declaration yet, further barring women from public life in the name of preventing vice and promoting virtue. We also see Embassies being turned over to the Taliban, jeopardizing important services for the Afghan diaspora. On Taliban social media accounts, there is a regular flow of smiling photos of foreign diplomats and businessmen partnering with this gender apartheid regime. Those developments do profound and permanent damage not only to the cause of Afghan women and girls but to the cause of women globally.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) Prosecutor's announcement in January that he had applied to the Court for arrest warrants for two senior Taliban leaders, including the group's Supreme Leader, is a beacon of hope for the people of Afghanistan, because it is a push-back against that normalization. Those warrant requests recognize that the Taliban's violations of the rights of women and girls amount to gender persecution — a crime against humanity. We are also encouraged by efforts to hold the Taliban accountable for violations of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women at the International Court of Justice.

Finally, I extend my gratitude to the growing list of Member States calling for gender apartheid to be recognized as an international crime, including through the new United Nations treaty on crimes against humanity. No term better describes the crimes that the Taliban are committing against Afghan women and girls, and we will never forget the States that are standing with us in this effort.

These historic developments should remind the international community that the Taliban have been deemed criminal actors who can never be the legitimate Government of Afghanistan while their unprecedented abuses continue.

In conclusion, I leave Council members with the following recommendations.

First, it is imperative that the Security Council demand, at every opportunity, that the Taliban immediately reverse all policies and practices that prevent the full enjoyment of all women's human rights, in line with Afghanistan's international obligations, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and relevant Security Council resolutions.

Secondly, in accordance with the fundamental tenets of the Council's women and peace and security agenda, the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of diverse Afghan women in all international discussions about Afghanistan's future, including in the Doha process and the road map currently being prepared by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), must be non-negotiable. Meetings to decide the fate of Afghanistan without the women of Afghan women are simply not legitimate.

Thirdly, the Security Council should renew UNAMA's mandate and press for its full implementation, particularly those aspects that relate to the protection of women's rights and women human rights defenders, human rights monitoring and meaningful engagement with diverse Afghan women civil society. UNAMA must

continue to report regularly to the Security Council, including on the situation of women and girls.

Lastly, I urge the Security Council to impose sanctions on Taliban leaders who have committed human rights violations against Afghan women and girls and not to lift the sanctions, including travel bans, on those who are guilty of such crimes.

All Member States must provide their full assistance to the ICC in current and future efforts to pursue charges against all senior Taliban members who have committed acts of gender persecution and other crimes against humanity and war crimes in Afghanistan since 2003. They must use universal jurisdiction to bring Taliban leaders who are committing international crimes to justice. They must call for gender apartheid to be codified as a crime against humanity, including through the draft treaty on crimes against humanity. They must rapidly seek remedies for Taliban violations of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, including by bringing an action at the International Court of Justice. States that have not yet joined this effort should do so.

The Human Rights Council should move swiftly to create an accountability mechanism to document and preserve evidence of gender-based crimes in Afghanistan. As a woman from Afghanistan, I have witnessed how the unaddressed legacies of past crimes have trapped my country in a cycle of violence and instability. If the people of Afghanistan had been able to hold the Taliban accountable in 2001 and in earlier years, perhaps we would not have witnessed the Taliban's violent return to power 20 years later.

If impunity is the disease, accountability is the antidote.

The President: I thank Ms. Raz Mohammad for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett (Guyana): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council, namely, Algeria, Sierra Leone and Somalia, and my own country, Guyana (A3+).

The A3+ thanks the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Ms. Roza Otunbayeva, for her briefing. We also listened carefully to the statement by Ms. Azadah Raz Mohammad and acknowledge the participation of the representatives of Afghanistan and countries of the region countries in this meeting.

The recent report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan (S/2025/109) indicates the continued challenges faced by the Afghan people on multiple fronts. The A3+ reiterates its firm commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan and reaffirms its unwavering solidarity with the Afghan people.

The humanitarian situation is particularly concerning, with 22.9 million people requiring assistance in 2025, owing to high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition, recurring natural hazards and climatic shocks, internal displacements, the growing number of returnees, a fragile economy and ongoing restrictions on the Afghan people, particularly women and girls.

We are concerned that, despite slight improvements in food security during the reporting period, more than 92,000 children under the age of 5 are suffering from severe acute malnutrition. We commend the efforts of the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in providing food, nutrition and livelihood assistance, as well as other support, to those in need. We call for unhindered and sustained humanitarian access across the country and encourage

international donors and humanitarian partners to continue providing critical support and to scale up contributions, while acknowledging the impact of significant funding shortfalls.

The situation of women and girls in Afghanistan remains of the utmost concern, as they continue to bear the brunt of the Taliban's numerous decrees and the Law on the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, which restricts their education, employment, freedom of movement and freedom of expression. We note with concern that, in December 2024, the Taliban reissued Decree No. 4293, which reaffirmed the ban on Afghan women working for national and international non-governmental organizations, further exacerbating an already dire humanitarian situation. We also noted in the Secretary-General's report that the implementation of the Law on the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice is negatively affecting both men and women and having a particular impact on women's gainful employment, and that it resulted in a significant reduction in, or a total loss of, income and employment opportunities for many families, exacerbating poverty levels. We reiterate our call for the Taliban to reopen all schools and universities and to swiftly reverse all laws, policies and practices that discriminate against women and girls and infringe upon their human rights and fundamental freedoms. Furthermore, the ban in December on women attending medical education courses in areas such as midwifery, nursing, dental care and nutrition is further affecting women's and girls' access to healthcare, including maternal and neonatal care, and will reduce the already insufficient number of female health workers in Afghanistan. The A3+ emphasizes that the full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership of women in all spheres of life is necessary for Afghanistan's development and prosperity.

The security situation in Afghanistan remains of great concern, especially with the presence of terrorist groups in the country. Seven terrorist attacks claimed by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan resulted in several casualties. We call on the Taliban to scale up efforts to combat terrorism, and we urge countries in the region to intensify joint efforts to stabilize the security situation in Afghanistan and the wider region.

While we welcome the report's finding that opium production remained low for the second consecutive year, we are concerned about the 19 per cent increase in cultivation as compared to 2023. That underscores the need for viable alternative livelihoods. We are also concerned by the November 2024 report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the United Nations Development Programme on the treatment of substance use in Afghanistan, which found that opiates remain the leading cause of admissions for treatment, with rising demand for services related to use of stimulants, in particular methamphetamine.

We appreciate UNAMA's convening of virtual meetings of the working groups on supporting Afghanistan's private sector and counter narcotics efforts in February. Those discussions play a crucial role in improving the country's economic situation and addressing drug-related challenges. We note the ongoing cooperation between Afghanistan and regional countries in various fields, including trade, agriculture, water and energy, and welcome UNAMA's efforts to facilitate regional cooperation. We note with appreciation the recent adoption of General Assembly resolution 79/268, establishing the United Nations Regional Centre for the Sustainable Development Goals for Central Asia and Afghanistan.

The A3+ reiterates our belief that engagement between the international community and Afghanistan is crucial for the country's social and economic development and for sustainable peace and stability. We call upon the Taliban to comply with Afghanistan's international obligations for the well-being of the Afghan people.

In conclusion, we express our full support for UNAMA, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Otunbayeva and the renewal of UNAMA's mandate and emphasize the continued crucial role of the United Nations in delivering humanitarian support and advancing the political process for the benefit of the people of Afghanistan.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Ms. Roza Otunbayeva, for her assessment of the current situation in the country. The Russian Federation has consistently supported UNAMA's activities carried out under her leadership and within the Mission's mandate. We note Kabul's interest in maintaining and fostering contact with Ms. Otunbayeva. We welcome the United Nations unwavering commitment to maintaining a presence in Afghanistan and providing the assistance that its people need. We listened attentively to the statement of the civil society representative, Ms. Azadha Raz Mohammad. We are delighted to see that countries from the regions have also been given the floor in today's discussion.

We have taken note of the Secretary-General's report on the situation in Afghanistan (S/2025/109). We would like to make the following remarks.

Afghans have been living under Taliban rule for almost four years. That was preceded by the signing of a deal between the United States and the Taliban in Doha — whose fifth anniversary was marked 10 days ago — the hasty withdrawal of foreign troops under the Biden Administration and the shameful flight of erstwhile President Ashraf Ghani and his Administration. At the same time, contrary to our Western colleagues' grim predictions, Afghanistan has survived. Amid unprecedented unilateral sanctions and a humanitarian crisis, the country, which had grown accustomed to depending on international support for years, has not lurched into another civil war and collapsed. Nonetheless, it is clear that, given the magnitude of the problems and threats that have accumulated over years of war, its people now need our continued assistance and support more than ever. Nevertheless, it is encouraging to see Afghans seeking to chart their own course towards development and reviving their economic potential on the basis of regional cooperation.

The Russian Federation has consistently supported a realistic and comprehensive approach to Afghanistan, grounded in an objective analysis and a balanced assessment of the situation. We are convinced that there is no other alternative, and neither can there be. That approach is based on constructive engagement by the international community on Afghanistan, entailing full consideration for the Afghans' needs and a patient and frank dialogue with the de facto authorities on a wide range of pressing issues, free from the blackmail and pressure that some Western donors favour.

Ensuring sustainable peace and stability in the country remains an imperative, as it is key to stability in the region and beyond. That approach has found the support of participants in the Moscow format and other regional players. It is starting to dawn on some, but alas not all, Western donors that there is no alternative to pragmatic engagement with the Taliban. Some are still stubbornly refusing to acknowledge their mistakes and remain confident that by reducing humanitarian aid and cutting off development assistance channels they can force the Taliban bend to their will. Council members must ask themselves whom they are ultimately making worse off — the Taliban leadership in Kandahar or the ordinary Afghan people, women, girls and children included? I think that the answer is obvious.

We concur with the Secretary-General's assessment of the difficult domestic political situation in Afghanistan. A cause for particular concern is the security situation, given that Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-K) terrorist group continues to have a presence in the country. Despite the efforts of the de facto

authorities, the challenge of definitively eradicating terrorism remains unresolved. Militants of the Afghan wing of ISIL are recruiting new members, including foreign terrorist fighters, receiving financial backing from abroad and regularly launching fresh terrorist attacks, whose victims include members of religious and ethnic minorities, women and children. Their objectives are clear: they are seeking to stir up the situation and destabilize not only Afghanistan but also the region as a whole. Furthermore, the danger of weapons abandoned by Western military falling into militants' hands is very real, as is the risk of their being circulated within the region and beyond.

We are very much focused on the issue of narcotic drugs, which is linked to terrorism. We are concerned about the information from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) about synthetic drugs — primarily methamphetamine — being produced in the country. We stand convinced that efforts to support farmers and treat drug addicts will not be enough to definitively eradicate the drug problem. It is a major challenge that requires our attention and real measures to combat the cultivation, production and distribution of narcotic drugs. We need practical steps to develop comprehensive international and regional assistance, including through UNODC. It is our common task.

We are closely following the development of the socioeconomic situation in Afghanistan. We welcome the consistent efforts by the United Nations and regional organizations to provide humanitarian assistance to the country. The selfless work of humanitarian agencies and their personnel deserves our support. Under any and all conditions, they stand ready to remain in the field to help the Afghan people. We note that the United Nations is willing and intends to extend assistance that goes beyond essential services, which would make it possible to rebuild schools and hospitals and build much-needed roads, including ones connecting urban and rural areas. Such support is needed not only to address the humanitarian crisis in the country but also to strengthen the capacities of Afghanistan, making it into a self-reliant State.

Furthermore, development-related objectives are also part of UNAMA's mandate. Against that backdrop, we regret that several Western donors have blocked any attempts to help the United Nations to make headway on that issue, including during discussions of the relevant Security Council resolutions on Afghanistan. As a result, the activities of several humanitarian organizations and agencies are being deliberately curtailed and any proposals for UNAMA to participate in the discussion on unfreezing Afghan assets are being rejected. In turn, my country has systematically provided tailored assistance to those in need in Afghanistan, including through multilateral humanitarian organizations. We will continue to work very actively on that front. We are also following very closely the developments regarding respect for the rights and freedoms of all Afghans, including women and girls, including in the light of the new bans introduced recently. Among other imperatives is shaping a truly inclusive Government with the participation of all ethnic and political groups in the country. We hope to see positive momentum on both fronts.

The Russian Federation comprehensively supports the right and desire of the Afghan people to live in a peaceful and prosperous country free from terrorism and narcotic drugs. That is the key to order and stability in the region. However, building that long-term and sustainable peace will be possible only if we have patient dialogue with the de facto authorities, without any attempts to impose anyone else's vision and priorities on the Afghans. That is what a swift resolution of the current deadlock and the subsequent international reintegration of Afghanistan depend on. We believe that UNAMA's effective implementation of its mandate hinges precisely on its compliance with that comprehensive approach. We support the upcoming renewal of the Mission's mandate.

Mr. Sekeris (Greece): I would like to thank Special Representative Otunbayeva and Ms. Raz Mohammad, the civil society representative, for their briefings. I also welcome the presence of the representatives of Afghanistan and other countries of the region at today's meeting.

Greece reaffirms its support for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and stresses the need for the smooth renewal of its mandate. At the same time, and in line with resolution 2721 (2023), we support the United Nations-led Doha peace process and the recently established working groups on counter-narcotics and the private sector, and we call for the inclusive participation of women therein. We advocate for the continuation of principled engagement with the Taliban, with clear timelines and benchmarks. We reiterate that respect for human rights and women's rights, the establishment of an inclusive Government with the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and Afghanistan's adherence to its international obligations are prerequisites for the normalization of the country's relations with the international community.

Allow me to make the following three points.

First, only two days ago, we commemorated International Women's Day, honouring the social, economic and political achievements of women. Yet the day served as a painful reminder of the dire situation being faced by the women and girls in Afghanistan. With more than 80 directives and decrees targeting the autonomy and everyday lives of women, the Taliban continues to pursue policies of gender discrimination and practices of gender-based violence, which may amount to gender persecution. The most recent example is the Law on the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, by which the Taliban attempts to erase women from public life and to silence their voices. My country, Greece, condemns in the strongest terms those egregious practices and urges the Taliban to put an end to the systematic and systemic violations of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Afghan women and girls, while standing ready to welcome any steps towards accountability. Moreover, we are deeply concerned about the human rights violations against ethnic and minority groups and the reprisals against those civil society representatives and human rights defenders who dare to expose the oppression of the *de facto* authorities. We also deplore the restrictions against journalists, which pose a serious threat to the freedom of the media.

Secondly, we remain deeply concerned about the continuing terrorist attacks in Afghanistan, which constitute one of the most serious threats to peace and security in the country and the region. We reiterate our position that Afghanistan should not become a safe haven for terrorism, and we call on the Taliban to strengthen its efforts to combat terrorist activities.

Thirdly, we are alarmed by the environmental degradation in Afghanistan, which is one of the countries most affected by climate change. Droughts, floods and other extreme weather conditions are causing mass displacement and food insecurity. Water scarcity has a severe impact on rural populations in particular.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that Greece will continue to support a stable, prosperous and peaceful Afghanistan, with a view to realizing the hopes and aspirations of the Afghan people, in particular women, girls and vulnerable groups, and stands ready to contribute to any further engagement by the Security Council as necessary.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Special Representative Otunbayeva for her briefing. I also listened attentively to the statement by Ms. Raz Mohammad.

Today Afghanistan remains largely stable, with a steadily improving economy and dynamic external relations. But the country also faces multiple challenges in humanitarian areas, development, terrorist threats and women's rights and interests, among other areas. I wish to stress the following points.

First, the engagement momentum with the Afghan interim Government must be maintained. Last year saw an increasing number of countries conducting dialogue and cooperation with the interim Government, lending strong support to the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan. China supports the international community in cementing mutual trust with the interim Government and addressing each other's concerns through dialogue. China reiterates that the Security Council should reinstate its package of exemptions to the travel ban imposed on the relevant personnel of the Afghan interim Government and adjust the 1988 sanctions regime in a timely manner to facilitate the external engagement of the interim Government.

Secondly, humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan must be bolstered. The report of the Secretary-General (S/2025/109) indicates that nearly 23 million Afghans require humanitarian assistance and close to 15 million people are acutely food insecure, while merely 3.5 per cent of this year's humanitarian funding has been received. Major traditional donors have abruptly paused or reduced their aid to Afghanistan, seriously affecting its healthcare, education and food and agriculture systems and making the already difficult life of Afghans even more precarious. We call on traditional donors, especially those historically responsible for the problems of the country, to resume and increase their aid to Afghanistan and desist from using humanitarian aid as a bargaining chip to exert political pressure.

Thirdly, the commitment to the development of Afghanistan must be strengthened. The Afghan economy managed to grow by 2.7 per cent last year. However, the foundation remains shaky, and the potential for development is yet to be unlocked. It is necessary that all parties continue bilateral, regional and other cooperation in support of Afghanistan's economic recovery, including rebuilding its banking system, and provide more resources for the country's development. The overseas assets of the Afghan Central Bank constitute valuable wealth that belongs to the Afghan people. The United States should unconditionally unfreeze and return all of them to Afghanistan.

Fourthly, the fundamental rights and interests of all Afghan people must be guaranteed. The morality law promulgated by Afghanistan has been widely scrutinized. We hope that the Afghan side will take the legitimate international concerns seriously and effectively respect women's equal rights to education, employment and public life. Nevertheless, it is important to note that women's rights and interests are not the only problems facing the country, still less a root cause of its current challenges. There is a need to support its economic and social development as a way to create favourable conditions for women's rights and interests, while guiding Afghanistan to shift its policies through dialogue.

Fifthly, terrorism must be countered resolutely. China calls on the interim Government to continue to counter all terrorist forces, including Da'esh, Al-Qaida and the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement, to eradicate the breeding ground for terrorism. All countries should abandon their geopolitical calculations and ideological biases and reject double standards and selectivity to safeguard the greater good of international counter-terrorism cooperation.

Under the stewardship of Special Representative Otunbayeva, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has continued to advance the Doha peace process, facilitated the dialogue between various interlocutors and the Afghan interim Government and actively helped the country to cope with its humanitarian and development plight. China commends UNAMA for those efforts. We support

the renewal of UNAMA's mandate, and we hope that UNAMA will effectively play its bridge-building role, keep improving understanding and trust between various parties and the interim Government and make greater contributions to the peace and reconstruction of Afghanistan.

This year marks the seventieth anniversary of China-Afghanistan diplomatic relations. Over the past seven decades, no matter how the international landscape has evolved, China and Afghanistan have always maintained good-neighbourliness and friendship and stood in solidarity with each other. Under the current circumstances, China remains committed to respecting the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan, respecting the independent choice of the Afghan people and the religious beliefs and national customs of the country. China never interferes in Afghanistan's internal affairs, never pursues any selfish gains in Afghanistan and never seeks to build a so-called sphere of influence. China has always been action-oriented in supporting the country's peace, stability, development and prosperity. We stand ready to work with all sides to strengthen Security Council unity and consensus to make greater contributions to addressing the Afghan issue.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I thank Special Representative Otunbayeva and Ms. Raz Mohammad for briefing us today, and I welcome the participation of the representatives of Afghanistan and other countries of the region.

Let me begin by commending the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for its invaluable work supporting the people of Afghanistan. That work remains vital while Afghans — especially women and girls — continue to suffer under a series of oppressive restrictions. At the time, members of the Taliban claimed that the March 2022 ban on secondary education for girls was temporary. Three years on, girls in Afghanistan continue to be denied their right to education. On the opening day of the session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the United Kingdom joins others in unequivocally condemning that ban and all others that restrict Afghan women and girl's rights and fundamental freedoms. We strongly urge their immediate reversal, and we support efforts towards greater accountability, including the referral of Afghanistan to the International Court of Justice for violations of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The Taliban face a choice: if they want to be integrated into the international community, then they must adhere to their international obligations, including on human rights, political inclusion and counter-terrorism. That is clearly laid out in the Special Coordinator's independent assessment (S/2023/856, annex) and resolution 2721 (2023). The United Kingdom, along with other members of the international community, has engaged constructively with the United Nations-led process, including through the Doha meetings and working groups on counter-narcotics and the private sector. But continued engagement is not guaranteed without reciprocity and commitment from the Taliban in return. We welcome the ongoing efforts of UNAMA and the United Nations goods offices to that end, and we encourage further dialogue among all relevant Afghan political actors and stakeholders, in line with the relevant Security Council resolutions and in support of a better future for the people of Afghanistan, especially its women and girls.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I congratulate you, Madam President, and the Danish delegation on your skilful guidance of the Security Council this month. We take note of the report of the Secretary-General's on the situation in Afghanistan (S/2025/109). We welcome the briefing provided by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Ms. Roza Otunbayeva. We commend her wise leadership of UNAMA and her efforts to promote normalization in Afghanistan in extremely difficult

circumstances. Pakistan will support the renewal of UNAMA's mandate. We also thank Ms. Azadah Raz Mohammad for her important contribution.

There is universal and justifiable concern about the dire situation in Afghanistan. It is afflicted by multiple challenges, some inherited from history and others self-inflicted by ideological and political inflexibility. Pakistan has faced the adverse impacts of the series of crises Afghanistan has lived through during the past 40 years — hosting millions of Afghan refugees and infected by its extremist groups and the inflow of arms and drugs. During the 20-year conflict that ended in 2021, Pakistan consistently advocated engagement and sought to broker an inclusive peace. After the precipitous withdrawal of foreign forces in August 2021, Pakistan facilitated the exit of NATO's troops and Western civilians, accepted the temporary location of Afghans affiliated with the previous regime and accepted 700,000 Afghans fearing persecution by the Taliban. History will attest to Pakistan's positive role.

It is not surprising that Afghanistan, which was so heavily dependent on foreign assistance for more than 20 years, faces a humanitarian crisis and economic stagnation following the Western withdrawal. We believe that humanitarian assistance to the more than 20 million destitute Afghans must be unconditional and generous. The Afghanistan humanitarian response plan has received only 3.5 per cent of the required \$2.42 billion. The United Nations Strategic Framework for Afghanistan has received less than 11 per cent of the \$2.53 billion required for 2025. Allowing Afghans' suffering is inconsistent with the call for upholding human rights in Afghanistan. The Afghan economy grew by 2.7 per cent last year. It will continue to struggle without foreign cooperation and investment.

Pakistan supports the call to unfreeze the assets of Afghanistan's Central Bank. That will revive the banking sector and end the cash transfers that are partially responsible for money flowing into the hands of terrorists. Afghanistan's trade could grow significantly if it resolved its problems with Pakistan — its natural transit and trade route — by ending cross-border terrorism, the arbitrary construction of border posts on Pakistan's territory and the smuggling of goods into Pakistan. The implementation of the shovel-ready connectivity projects — such as the Turkmenistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan–India gas pipeline, the CASA-1000 electricity grid and the Uzbekistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan railway — could expand trade relations and commercial linkages and contribute significantly to economic growth and job creation within Afghanistan and the region.

The human rights situation in Afghanistan is another self-inflicted injury. Far from fulfilling its earlier commitments, the Kabul Government has doubled down on its restrictions against women and girls, which are inconsistent with international norms and obligations and contrary to the laws and teachings of Islam. That was made clear by the Muslim world in the Islamabad Declaration on Girls' Education in Muslim Communities, signed at the international conference hosted by Pakistan on 11 and 12 January 2025.

The greatest threat to security and stability in Afghanistan — and the entire region, and indeed the world — arises from the more than 20 terrorist organizations present in Afghanistan. The Taliban Government faces a challenge to its power and ideology from Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-K). They are fighting Da'esh but, obviously, not very effectively, as evident from the numerous attacks claimed by Da'esh in Afghanistan as well as its attacks in Kerman, Iran; Moscow, Russia; and more recently in Peshawar, Pakistan.

As noted in the thirty-fifth report of the Monitoring Team of the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee (see S/2025/71/Rev.1), Pakistani authorities successfully foiled attempts by ISIL-K terrorists to cross over from Afghanistan into Pakistan and prevented its external operations branch from establishing itself

in Pakistan, detaining several high-profile operatives involved in the Kerman and Crocus attacks. Among those detained was an individual named Muhammad Sharifullah, an Afghan who plotted the Abbey Gate bombing during the United States evacuation from Afghanistan in 2021.

Unfortunately, while fighting Da'esh, the Kabul authorities have failed to address the threat posed to the region and beyond by other terrorist groups, such as Al-Qaida, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Baloch terrorists, including the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) and the Majeed Brigade, which are present in Afghanistan. With 6,000 fighters, the TTP is the largest designated terrorist organization operating from Afghanistan. With safe havens close to our border, the TTP has conducted numerous attacks against Pakistan's soldiers, civilians and institutions, resulting in hundreds of casualties. I am grateful to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for mentioning those attacks against Pakistan. We have evidence that the Kabul authorities have not only tolerated, but are complicit in, the conduct of the TTP's terrorist cross-border attacks.

Furthermore, the TTP is collaborating with other terrorist groups present in Afghanistan, such as the BLA and the Majeed Brigade, which seek to destabilize Pakistan and disrupt our economic cooperation with China, especially the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, through a terrorist campaign. The TTP also receives external support and financing from our principal adversary.

The TTP, perceived as enjoying Kabul's patronage, is fast emerging as an umbrella organization for regional terrorist groups whose objectives are to undermine the security and stability of all of Afghanistan's neighbours. Given its long association with Al-Qaida, the TTP could pose not only a regional but a global terrorist threat.

In countering the TTP's cross-border operations, our security and border forces have confiscated some of the modern arms acquired by the Afghan authorities from stocks left behind by foreign forces. The Kabul authorities have the responsibility to retrieve those weapons from the terrorist groups.

Pakistan will continue to take all necessary measures to eliminate the terrorist threats to our national security, in accordance with our right to self-defence under international law and in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. The joint statement of the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of China, Iran, Pakistan and the Russian Federation (see S/2024/720), held on 27 September 2024, was a welcome affirmation of the regional consensus to eliminate the terrorist threat from Afghanistan. We remain committed to cooperating with our regional and international partners to effectively combat the menace of terrorism, which threatens many countries in Asia, Africa and elsewhere today.

Given the centrality of the terrorist threat to Afghanistan's future, it is strange that the Secretary-General's report (S/2025/109), which is entitled "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security," while it covers the humanitarian, economic and human rights issues, does not cover the issue of terrorism. We are offered the bureaucratic explanation that UNAMA's mandate does not cover counter-terrorism, which we are told is the mandate of the Office of Counter-Terrorism. The Office of Counter-Terrorism's work programme includes counter-terrorism efforts relating to Central Asia and Afghanistan but, so far, not Pakistan — which is facing daily terrorist attacks — or Iran, China or Russia. Neither have the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011) or the Counter-Terrorism Committee, established under resolution 1373 (2001), been activated so far to address the terrorist threat in and from Afghanistan. Pakistan will initiate consultations on the creation or activation of an appropriate mechanism to address that issue, including a working group on counter-terrorism within the Doha process.

International consideration is also essential to ensure the earliest possible repatriation of Afghan refugees, especially from Pakistan and Iran. Pakistan cannot be expected to host the refugees indefinitely, or to hold back from expelling undocumented Afghans, some of whom have been involved in unlawful activities, including terrorism, within Pakistan.

We need to intensify our efforts to promote early normalization in Afghanistan. Pakistan was the first to advocate sustained engagement with the Afghan interim Government. Pakistan has welcomed the Doha process. However, the steps undertaken under its framework must go beyond counter-narcotics and the private sector. All the fundamental issues identified in the independent assessment report (S/2023/856, annex) by Special Coordinator Ambassador Feridun Sinirlioğlu in 2023, including counter-terrorism, human rights and inclusive governance, must be addressed in the Doha process. To that end, we endorse the Special Coordinator's proposal for the adoption of a road map of reciprocal actions to be undertaken by the Afghan interim Government on human rights, political inclusion and counter-terrorism and by the international community on economic revival, connectivity projects, travel ban exemptions, sanctions relief and eventual recognition of United Nations representation for the interim authorities. That could be elaborated into a time-bound programme of action under the mosaic approach proposed by UNAMA and could provide a clear pathway towards normalization in Afghanistan.

In conclusion, as close and contiguous neighbours with shared bonds of history, geography, ethnicity, language, faith and culture, the destinies of Afghanistan and Pakistan are intertwined. The people of Pakistan are deeply sensitive to the suffering of their Afghan brothers and sisters. We are steadfast in our commitment to support all possible efforts at the bilateral, regional and global levels to achieve peace, stability and development in Afghanistan. After 40 years of conflict, the people of Afghanistan deserve no less.

Mr. Alfaro de Alba (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Panama is grateful to the presidency of the Council for convening this meeting and to Ms. Roza Otunbayeva, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), and to Ms. Azadah Raz Mohammad for their valuable briefings.

We also acknowledge the representatives of Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, India and the Islamic Republic of Iran, who honour this meeting with their presence.

The Republic of Panama acknowledges the progress accomplished by UNAMA and its evolving mandate aimed at providing further assistance to the people of Afghanistan. Resolutions 2626 (2022), 2679 (2023) and 2727 (2024), together with the progress achieved in the Doha process, underscore the important role that the United Nations plays in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan and serve as a basis for sustained and robust international engagement.

The Secretary-General's recent report (S/2025/109) underlines the worrisome state of affairs in Afghanistan, which is compounded by the deleterious consequences of the measures that the de facto authorities have taken in relation to women's rights, the humanitarian situation and the growing erosion of security. The enactment of the so-called Law on the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, on top of the directives of the de facto authorities restricting the rights and freedoms of women and girls, means that their access to educational and employment opportunities is limited. Panama joins the international community and UNAMA in demanding that the de facto authorities reconsider the implementation of those edicts, in the light of the profound implications for the lives of Afghan women and girls. Those measures are self-sabotaging and will adversely affect the country's development

and fuel mistrust vis-à-vis the international community and should be treated as an international security concern.

Panama trusts that UNAMA will continue striving to promote the women and peace and security agenda and to advocate for women's participation in political processes, the promotion of legislative reform with a gender perspective, the strengthening of institutions and awareness-raising about erroneous interpretations of Afghan and Islamic law. Accordingly, Panama strongly supports the renewal of UNAMA's mandate, as the Mission has served as a pivotal mechanism for allowing the international community to track developments in Afghanistan closely. Panama reaffirms its commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan and its continued support for the people of Afghanistan within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations and other international laws and instruments.

The Council must act on the basis of facts, data and the current situation, not political expediency. It is imperative that Council members have the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to Afghanistan's future by ensuring that diplomatic and humanitarian efforts take an inclusive approach. We therefore believe that there is a need for a comprehensive approach in Afghanistan that broadens and enhances the work of the Mission and brings the various actors together with a genuine and unreserved willingness to resolve differences and work towards more sustainable peace and security. The de facto authorities must find ways of signalling to the international community that they are ready for dialogue. That can be achieved only if the international community and the de facto authorities undertake to assume their respective responsibilities for maintaining peace and security in a way that includes all civilian actors.

The stability of Afghanistan cannot be considered in isolation. In that connection, given the escalation in border conflicts in the country and the threat to international peace and security posed by terrorist groups on Afghan soil, we urge all regional actors to prioritize joint efforts for confronting those threats and to abide by constructive diplomacy so as to avoid further destabilization, avert deaths and displacement among civilians and support the work of the Mission and the safety of its personnel.

With that objective in mind, Panama believes that Afghanistan should not be used as a battleground for external rivalries. We recognize that lasting peace remains the best protection for the people of Afghanistan. This is a nation that has not known peace in decades. It is a generation that has grown up amid conflict, without basic freedoms and unshielded from the scourge of war.

The Afghan people are not mere numbers in reports: they are human beings, whose dignity and future are at stake. History will remember how we decided to respond. We, the peoples of the United Nations, have a moral responsibility to act on the basis of the dignity and the worth of the human person and the equal rights of men and women and to act with courage, concrete action and unwavering commitment to the growth, development and fulfilment of the full potential of the Afghan people.

Mr. Dharmadhikari (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Roza Otunbayeva, and Ms. Azadah Raz Mohammad for their briefings.

The Taliban regime has placed gender-based persecution and violence against women at the heart of its political identity. Afghan women and girls have been denied their right to education, erased from public, economic and political life and deprived of the freedom of movement. France calls for the immediate repeal of all the repressive measures imposed by the Taliban, starting with the so-called Law on the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice of August 2024 and the ban on

access to medical educational institutions for women. That policy of segregation does not only harm women. By erasing half of the population from public life, the Taliban are condemning any prospect of development and justice for Afghanistan. As the session of the Commission on the Status of Women opens today, the Security Council and the entire international community must unambiguously condemn that policy of segregation. The role of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) is essential in calling for compliance with the requirements of the Council, in particular on women's rights. Those requirements, set out in resolution 2593 (2021), are a condition for any normalization of our relations with the Taliban.

The security situation remains very worrisome. The terrorist threat has increased in the past few months, as evidenced by the reports of the Secretary-General (S/2025/109) and the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team (see S/2025/71/Rev.1). Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan, Al-Qaida and the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan pose acute threats to international peace and security. Drug cultivation and trafficking continue at an alarming rate, in particular the trafficking of methamphetamines. Faced with that deteriorating situation, the Council set out clear demands in resolutions 2593 (2021) and 2681 (2023). None of those demands have been implemented. On the contrary, the Taliban responded to the outstretched hand in Doha with even more severe restrictions on women's rights. France is in favour of dialogue, but that dialogue must be inclusive. It must allow for the participation of all parties. Civil society, women, young Afghan men and women and experts must have their place in the discussions on the future of their country. Our commitment must be part of a unified and coherent strategy, for the benefit of the entire Afghan population, in full respect of international law. In that regard, we call on UNAMA to conduct a demanding dialogue in order to bring the Taliban into compliance with their international obligations. That objective must guide any engagement process.

France reaffirms its commitment to the Afghan people. We call for safe and unhindered access for all humanitarian actors, international organizations and non-governmental organizations. France has supported their work to the tune of €160 million since 2021 in the areas of nutrition, education and health and in favour of Afghan women and girls. France will also continue to welcome Afghan women through the Women in Danger scheme. We will continue to protect defenders of freedoms through the Marianne initiative and to support humanitarian actors assisting the Afghan population. I therefore today reiterate France's support for UNAMA, whose mandate must be renewed in the coming days, and for all United Nations agencies and their partners on the ground.

Ms. Shea (United States of America): I thank Special Representative Roza Otunbayeva for her briefing. I would also like to thank Ms. Azadah Raz Mohammad for her remarks, and I welcome the representative of Afghanistan.

We recognize the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) team, in very challenging conditions, to support the people of Afghanistan. UNAMA coordinates the provision of humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people, promotes good governance and reports on the political and social developments in Afghanistan, including on human rights. The security threat emanating from Afghanistan is a continuing driver of regional instability. The United States notes that, in February, the United Nations Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team echoed those concerns (see S/2025/71/Rev.1). We are also concerned about the transnational threat posed by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan. We call on the Taliban to abide by their counter-terrorism commitments. The Taliban must ensure that Afghanistan can never again be used as a safe haven for terrorist groups to threaten the security of the United States, our allies or any country.

Afghanistan cannot achieve self-reliance and stability so long as the Afghan people remain subject to oppressive Taliban restrictions that strangle the economy. The situation for Afghan women and girls is particularly devastating given the more than 80 edicts directly targeting their access to education, commercial activities and overall participation in the economy. Furthermore, the December ban on women attending medical institutes will have dire consequences for all Afghans. The United Nations must be a stronger voice of the international community in pressing the Taliban to change course. More than 22 million Afghans rely on emergency humanitarian assistance, making Afghanistan one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. The Taliban's repressive policies and Afghanistan's struggling economy are drivers of human displacement, which strains the region's limited resources and contributes to further destabilization. The United States is sceptical of the Taliban's willingness to engage in good faith in the Doha peace process. We cannot build confidence with a group that unjustly detains Americans, has a long history of harbouring terrorist groups on its soil and ignores the basic rights and needs of its own people. We look forward to working with members of the Security Council to maintain consensus on our collective demand that the Taliban act responsibly.

Mr. Hwang (Republic of Korea): We also thank Special Representative Otunbayeva for her comprehensive briefing and her valuable and dedicated work on the ground, and we appreciate the insights and recommendations shared by Ms. Raz Mohammad.

As we celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration in New York, another school year is about to commence in Afghanistan, with more than 1.4 million girls absent from the classroom. And despite the outcry in the Chamber in December 2024 (see S/PV.9810), Afghan women and girls were eventually put under a life-threatening ban on their medical education. It is appalling and very sad how the Taliban's numerous edicts and the so-called morality law against Afghan women have infringed all 12 critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action, including education and training, health, the economy, the media, human rights and decision-making. Against that backdrop, I would like to convey three messages today.

First, the situation of women, girls and minorities in Afghanistan is a source of universal concern. The key point here is universality. That is not only from the so-called Western eyes. As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2025/109), Muslim communities have also voiced caution over the misuse of religious principles for legitimizing policies of exclusion. And that concern is not only raised by human rights defenders, but also by development actors and international financial institutions. Neither is it a concern that solely resonates outside Afghanistan. Doubts have been raised even within the Taliban itself. It is indeed difficult to comprehend, at this point, whose interest those oppressive policies continue to serve. Every household includes mothers, daughters or sisters. Self-imposed restraints on the workforce hold back development and put the goal of a self-reliant economy out of reach. The extremeness of the Taliban's measures overshadows their efforts in banning poppy cultivation, countering Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan and accommodating Afghan returnees from neighbouring countries. We implore the Taliban to reconsider and rescind all such policies and practices.

Secondly, the political road map being developed with the facilitation of the Secretariat and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) places us at a critical juncture. Extensive work will be required to identify, pair and sequence the steps to be taken by all stakeholders. Designing a viable road map will be a great challenge, and then ensuring its faithful implementation will be another difficult task. Yet that United Nations-scale engagement process remains the only agreed-upon pathway for Afghanistan's reintegration into the international community. We continue to believe that the Doha peace process would benefit from

a dedicated agent to coordinate and reconcile differing priorities. In that regard, we encourage the Secretary-General to continue his efforts towards appointing an independent entity, such as a Special Envoy, in accordance with resolution 2721 (2023). We expect the cooperation of all parties in that regard. In the meantime, from Afghanistan we need interlocutors who can not only communicate and negotiate, but who can deliver on their commitments. For our part, the Republic of Korea will continue its principled engagement with all relevant Afghan stakeholders as a Doha participant.

Thirdly, we must not lose sight of the urgent everyday needs of the more than 22 million Afghan people. One pressing area of focus is water scarcity and other climate-related risks, as highlighted in the recent informal expert group meeting co-hosted by my delegation. In a landlocked, war-torn country with an agriculture-based economy, those challenges can precipitate increases in displacement, organized crime, narcotics and the recruitment of terrorist groups. As a long-standing donor, Korea has provided approximately \$94 million of humanitarian assistance since August 2021. That includes partnering with UNICEF to build climate-resilient water, sanitation and hygiene solutions, assisting the World Food Programme in supporting alternative livelihoods for poppy farmers and addressing the rapidly increasing needs of refugees and displaced populations with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration. In addition, we hope that our recent pledge to join the Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan will further contribute to supporting the humanitarian and basic human needs of the Afghan people.

Let me conclude by reiterating the importance of the Council's consensual support for UNAMA. With few diplomatic corps on the ground, UNAMA is indeed the face of the international community and plays an irreplaceable role in sustaining the country at this dire moment. In that regard, the Republic of Korea looks forward to working together with the Council members to ensure the smooth renewal of UNAMA's mandate, while reflecting important updates on the multifaceted challenges facing Afghanistan over the past three years.

Mrs. Blokar Drobič (Slovenia): I wish to add my thanks to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Otunbayeva for her briefing and to Ms. Mohammad for her remarks. I also welcome the representative of Afghanistan to the meeting.

The latest report of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) (S/2025/109) is once again a stark reminder of the many and complex challenges Afghanistan continues to face. We welcome all the activities UNAMA has undertaken in fulfilling its mandate during this period. UNAMA's presence in Afghanistan remains crucial. We particularly stress the importance of its work on human rights, humanitarian assistance and continued political dialogue with all relevant stakeholders, including the Taliban. Slovenia supports the renewal of UNAMA's mandate and its full implementation. We will continue to engage constructively with other members to that end.

The two working groups launched in the framework of the Doha process have now proceeded to the next stage. We welcome the work of the Secretariat and UNAMA towards a political road map with six main topics, including human rights, to facilitate a more coherent, coordinated and structured engagement by the international community with the Taliban. We particularly appreciate the inclusion and participation of women experts in discussions within the working groups. In the upcoming efforts on job creation and entrepreneurship, including access to financing, banking infrastructure and other key private sector issues, we expect the process to focus on delivering real, tangible results for all Afghan people, across urban and remote rural areas alike.

Slovenia continues to pay particular attention to the human rights situation, which remains bleak, particularly for women and girls, who continue to face systematic gender-based discrimination. We repeat our calls for an immediate reversal of all policies and practices of unacceptable repression of women and girls. The full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of women and girls in all spheres of public life is essential, and they need to be included in all discussions at all levels.

Humanitarian aid is still needed by nearly 30 million people, with profound repercussions for the overall stability of Afghanistan. All humanitarian operations must have safe and unhindered access to deliver urgent aid. It is essential to ensure that humanitarian aid is distributed safely, fairly and in a gender-responsive manner, to all Afghan people in need.

The worsening adverse effects of climate change, environmental degradation and natural disasters, such as floods and drought, are another acute challenge for Afghanistan. It is widely affecting the humanitarian situation and overall stability of the country, including by contributing to displacement, water scarcity, food insecurity and land degradation. We welcome UNAMA's work in that regard and encourage further analysis and engagements with respect to the peace and security implications of climate change and environmental impacts on Afghanistan and the region.

In conclusion, let me stress that, despite the continuously regressive developments in Afghanistan, which warrant serious concern, Slovenia and most international partners remain ready to assist the Afghan people on their path to a secure, stable, prosperous and inclusive Afghanistan. However, the Taliban must create suitable and sustainable conditions by upholding international law and fulfilling Afghanistan's international obligations, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. After all, a nation's true success is measured by how it treats its women, because when women thrive, society thrives.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Denmark.

I join others in thanking Special Representative Otunbayeva for her briefing. A special thanks also goes out to our civil society briefer, Ms. Raz Mohammad, for her powerful words and unwavering dedication.

Afghanistan remains engulfed in crisis. Severe economic hardship, persistent human rights violations and a catastrophic humanitarian situation have caused widespread suffering, most acutely among ordinary Afghans.

I want to highlight three pressing points today.

First, the Taliban's persecution, erasure and violation of the fundamental freedoms of women and girls in Afghanistan have continued relentlessly. Policies such as the vice and virtue law seek to control nearly every aspect of Afghan daily life. Bans, such as the one imposed on women attending medical institutes, further limit women's already fragile access to healthcare, affecting generations to come. Let us be clear: those policies institutionalize an extreme system of gender-based discrimination and domination. They are contrary to basic universal human rights, and they are devastating for the Afghan people. Denmark condemns, in the strongest possible terms, those massive human rights violations. That injustice undermines Afghanistan's prospects for lasting peace, economic development and stability. We urge the Taliban to immediately reverse all of their discriminatory policies. The Taliban must uphold their obligations under international law, including under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the resolutions of the Council.

Secondly, we stress the importance of accountability. Persistent impunity is a driver of new serious international crimes. The International Criminal Court

Prosecutor's request for arrest warrants against senior Taliban leaders for the crime against humanity of gender persecution is a step towards accountability. There must be justice for the countless Afghans suffering under the Taliban's systemic restrictions. Afghanistan is bound by the Rome Statute, and the de facto authorities must abide by their obligations under that treaty. We also commend the countless brave civil society members who work tirelessly to document serious violations of international human rights law in Afghanistan.

Thirdly, those stark human rights violations are taking place against a bleak and shocking humanitarian crisis, with half of the population in need of aid. Securing adequate funding for the 2025 humanitarian response plan is imperative to address the crisis effectively. Ongoing restrictions and interference in aid activities, including against non-governmental organizations, are significantly disrupting aid operations, negatively affecting efforts to help stabilize Afghanistan. They are impeding and imperilling access to vital humanitarian assistance, especially for women and girls. Put simply, they are costing lives. Denmark has urged the Taliban to ensure the safety of humanitarian workers, to end the interference in, and diversion of, aid, and to allow the safe, meaningful and comprehensive participation of Afghan women in the response.

In conclusion, let me reiterate Denmark's full support for UNAMA and the renewal of its mandate. UNAMA continues to play a crucial role, not only in ensuring the delivery of humanitarian aid to meet basic human needs but also in advancing a political process that brings together all stakeholders in Afghanistan. We support the Doha process and welcome United Nations efforts to develop a road map for a comprehensive approach on the basis of the recommendations of the Special Coordinator. The past three years have cast a growing shadow over Afghanistan, especially for its women and girls, whose basic human rights are violated on a daily basis. The de facto authorities seek to erase them and to hide them away behind closed doors and shuttered windows. Around this table, we have a responsibility to stand by them, to let the light in, just as we did this afternoon in the Security Council.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Afghanistan.

Mr. Faiq (Afghanistan): At the outset, I wish to thank you, Madam President, for convening this important meeting on the situation in Afghanistan and to congratulate you and your team on your assumption of the presidency of the Council.

We are also thankful to the Special Representative, Ms. Roza Otunbayeva, and Ms. Azadah Raz Mohammad for their sobering briefings today. We express our deep appreciation to all those Council members who expressed their support for the people of Afghanistan, in particular for its women and girls.

This being the first Security Council meeting on Afghanistan of 2025, we congratulate the new Council members and hope that, through cohesion and solidarity, the Council will better address current global conflicts, including the grave realities facing my people, through a renewed approach and form of engagement.

This briefing comes at a time of escalating crisis in Afghanistan. We are approaching the fourth year of the Taliban's illegitimate hold on power, and Afghanistan remains trapped in a deep crisis of repression of basic rights and freedoms, economic decline, political instability and humanitarian disaster. The latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2025/109) paints a grim picture of a nation where basic freedoms are systematically violated, livelihoods are rapidly deteriorating and millions of ordinary Afghans, including refugees and internally displaced persons, are left in utter desperation and with zero hope of any degree of improvement in their daily lives.

Afghanistan today is one of the most repressive places on Earth for women and girls. The Taliban's continued systematic erasure of women from public life is not just a violation of fundamental rights, it is a crime against humanity. After years of demands by ordinary citizens and international friends of Afghanistan for an end to the Taliban's repressive policies, women are still banned from education, including medical training, thereby exacerbating an already fragile healthcare system. Afghan women are also still barred from working in non-governmental organizations, which directly affects life-saving humanitarian assistance.

We welcome the summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation organized by Pakistan and the declaration that explicitly condemned the Taliban's ban on girls' education and emphasized that girls' education is both a religious obligation and a fundamental right protected by Islamic teachings, international law and national constitutions.

Public corporal punishment, summary executions, arbitrary arrests and torture remain widespread, targeting women, former Government officials and security force officials, journalists, activists and individuals accused of armed opposition or affiliations with Da'esh — leaked records reveal that approximately 18,000 detainees in Kabul and provincial prisons, including 16,507 men and more than 1,300 women. Last month, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan presented his report on the so-called Law on the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/58/74). The report exposes the Taliban's systematic oppression, in particular against women and girls. The report also confirms that the Taliban's policies amount to crimes against humanity, including gender persecution. He noted that the law violates the human rights of all Afghans and echoes the Taliban's regime from 1996 to 2001 and that the Taliban are continuing to impose new edicts, restricting in particular the rights of women and girls. We welcome and reaffirm that report's recommendations and those made in his periodic report. We urge the Council to take decisive action to hold the Taliban accountable and support the Afghan people in their fight for their dignity and their rights.

We welcome the recent steps taken by the International Criminal Court to hold the Taliban leaders accountable for gender persecution as a crime against humanity, as well as the joint initiative launched in September by United Nations States Members to hold Afghanistan and the Taliban accountable for violations of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Those actions mark a significant milestone in the fight against impunity. They also send a powerful message to the women and girls of Afghanistan that the international community is attentive to their plight and is hearing their call for freedom and justice. We urge all Member States to support those efforts and to affirm that impunity for such crimes is unacceptable.

In the past three years and seven months, the international community engaged the Taliban for the purposes of a change in position and improvement in the situation. However, the Taliban has rejected the legitimate and joint demands of the Afghan people and their global partners. Instead they have consolidated power under a rigid, unelected theocratic and misogynistic regime that seeks to isolate and silence Afghanistan's diverse voices, deepen the country's isolation from the global community, intensify repression against women and girls and push Afghanistan into poverty and dependency on international aid. The international community needs to act to help end the operation that is being carried out against women and girls, and against other citizens of the country for that matter. We all know that the Taliban's actions violate international law, including multiple Security Council resolutions. We therefore ask the Council to send a clear and united message that women's rights are non-negotiable, that Taliban leaders must be held accountable and that the

Security Council will explore targeted measures against those responsible for those grave violations.

The Taliban's claim of stability and security is a facade. The reality is that Afghanistan is increasingly vulnerable to terrorism and regional conflict. The thirty-fifth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team (see S/2025/71/Rev.1) confirms that Afghanistan remains a terrorism hotspot, with the presence of more than two dozen terrorist and extremist groups. Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-K) continues to pose a global and regional threat. Al-Qaida and Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan are among the broad range of such groups that benefit from Taliban control. The Taliban have no serious intention of combating or containing threats posed by any groups, including ISIL-K. There is an urgent need for stronger regional cooperation and countermeasures.

Moreover, as of late, cross-border clashes between the Taliban and neighbouring countries have escalated, with mounting civilian casualties. Internally armed opposition against the Taliban resulting from the group's repressive policies is becoming more mobilized, with targeted attacks on specific Taliban targets. That evolving dynamic will only gain momentum without any change in the Taliban's position on the demands and expectations of the people. The international community must contemplate what the long-term consequences will be of an Afghanistan ruled by extremism and lawlessness. A State with no legitimate governance, no respect for human rights and an unchecked security vacuum is not just a threat to the people of Afghanistan, it is a threat to global security.

On the economic front, Afghanistan's fragile economy continues to rely on humanitarian aid, with more than 85 per cent of Afghans now living below the poverty line and 23 million Afghans — more than half the population — requiring humanitarian assistance. Malnutrition rates are soaring, with children at severe risk of starvation. The Taliban's economic policies, including the exclusion of women from the workforce, have made self-reliance impossible. Yet, at a time of unprecedented need, international aid to Afghanistan has declined too sharply. The United Nations humanitarian response plan for 2025 remains critically underfunded. We express our deep appreciation to those neighbouring countries that continue to host Afghan refugees — in particular Pakistan and Iran — providing them with safety and shelter during this critical time. We also recognize the urgent plight of those refugees whose lives remain at grave risk and are waiting for relocation and resettlement to safer countries. We call on the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the international community to strengthen their efforts in facilitating and expediting the resettlement processes. We must ask ourselves the following: will we allow an entire population to suffer because of the actions of their rulers?

The world cannot look away. The Security Council must act with urgency and resolve. I call on this organ to first, strengthen accountability mechanisms, including supporting the International Criminal Court's investigation into Taliban crimes; secondly, ensure that humanitarian aid reaches those in need, while preventing the Taliban's manipulation of resources; thirdly, demand the immediate reversal of restrictions on women and impose targeted consequences for Taliban leaders refusing to comply; fourthly, strengthen regional and international coordination to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a hub for extremism; fifthly, maintain pressure on the Taliban through diplomatic, economic and security measures — engagement must be principled and conditional on respect for human rights, international obligations and inclusivity; and lastly, without addressing the political stalemate in Afghanistan, there will be no lasting peace, stability or prosperity. There is therefore a need for a comprehensive and inclusive political process, backed by the United Nations, to develop a road map based on the recommendations of the Secretary-General's independent assessment report (S/2023/856, annex) and an inclusive process with all

Afghans. Any process or dialogue with the Taliban without the engagement of all Afghan stakeholders is a repetition of failed past experiences and will not ensure a legitimate outcome.

As the Council adopts the extension of UNAMA's mandate, we express our full support for a stronger, impartial and transparent UNAMA to ensure its full and effective implementation for the benefit of all Afghans. The Afghan people — especially women, journalists, human rights defenders and former security forces now living in fear — deserve more than words. They deserve action. The credibility of the United Nations, the Council and UNAMA depends on it. Let history not say that we watched, debated and did nothing. Let it say that we stood up for justice, dignity and human rights, as called for in the Charter of this Organization.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): I extend my congratulations to Denmark on assuming the presidency of the Security Council and express my gratitude to Ms. Roza Otunbayeva for her insightful briefing on the activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). I also appreciate the contributions of the briefer, whose valuable perspectives play a key role in shaping future policies.

The stability, peace and progress of Afghanistan remain pivotal priorities for Kazakhstan and the broader Central Asian region. We reaffirm that we stand with the Security Council's position on the international recognition of the Taliban and emphasize our unwavering commitment to international humanitarian law and the fundamental rights of all Afghans. Kazakhstan strongly advocates for the meaningful participation of women in all aspects of society and life and the protection of minority rights.

As a close neighbour and long-standing partner, Kazakhstan continues to provide crucial humanitarian aid and essential supplies to Afghanistan, ensuring support reaches those in greatest need. Beyond humanitarian assistance, Kazakhstan remains a vital economic partner to Afghanistan. Our bilateral trade is steadily expanding, with Afghanistan ranking among the main importers of Kazakh wheat and flour — critical resources for its food security. To further enhance local agricultural productivity, Kazakhstan has introduced a wheat farming initiative in central Afghanistan, offering expertise and resources to local farmers so that they can grow wheat.

In addition to agricultural collaboration, we are strengthening trade and economic ties, enhancing regional connectivity and supporting infrastructure development that benefits both Afghanistan and the Central Asia region. At the sixth Consultative Meeting of Central Asian Heads of State in Astana, our countries adopted the Central Asia-2040 concept and the road map for regional cooperation until 2027, reinforcing economic collaboration and collective support for Afghan people. Recognizing the importance of creating job opportunities, Kazakhstan hosted the business forum in October 2024, where both nations committed to achieving a mutual trade turnover of \$3 billion.

Kazakhstan firmly believes that sustainable development is the cornerstone of Afghanistan's long-term stability. In that regard, President Tokayev has championed the establishment of the United Nations Regional Centre for the Sustainable Development Goals for Central Asia and Afghanistan in Almaty. That initiative, sponsored by 152 Member States at the General Assembly on 4 March, aims to foster regional collaboration through the coordinated efforts of 18 United Nations agencies based in Almaty. The Centre will enable cost-effective strategies for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, ensuring efficient and well-coordinated international assistance, aligned with our shared priority of promoting lasting stability. It also reflects the Secretary-General's whole-of-United Nations initiative,

uniting United Nations agencies and stakeholders to advance the sustainable development agenda more effectively. Kazakhstan calls on the international community to support Central Asia's initiatives to assist Afghanistan. The Doha meetings of Special Envoys have reaffirmed the importance of sustained dialogue, particularly in trade, economic development and humanitarian efforts.

In conclusion, we remain steadfast in our belief that only through collective efforts can we realize the vision of a peaceful, democratic and prosperous Afghanistan.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of India.

Mr. Harish (India): At the outset, I congratulate Denmark on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council, and I assure you, Madam President, of our full support for your presidency. I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Ms. Roza Otunbayeva, for her remarks. We take note of the remarks of the civil society briefer, Ms. Raz Mohammad, and other Member States.

India and Afghanistan share a relationship that has spanned centuries. As contiguous neighbours, India and Afghanistan share a special people-to-people relationship, which has been the foundation of our present-day engagement with the country. India is closely monitoring the situation in Afghanistan and has been actively engaged in regional and international efforts to maintain stability and peace in Afghanistan. Our broad approach remains to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan and create an international consensus under the United Nations framework to resolve various issues between the de-facto authorities in Afghanistan and the international community. Our participation in the United Nations meetings in Doha, the Moscow format and other forums are a reflection of our efforts to secure peace, stability and development in Afghanistan. India has also been an active participant of the two UNAMA working groups on counter-narcotics and enabling the private sector in Afghanistan.

At the beginning of this year, the Foreign Secretary of India met the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, Mr. Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, in Dubai. The two sides discussed various issues pertaining to bilateral relations, as well as regional developments. The Afghan side appreciated and thanked the Indian leadership for continuing to engage with and support the people of Afghanistan. It was decided that India would consider engaging in development projects in the near future, in addition to the ongoing humanitarian assistance programmes.

India has been working with various United Nations agencies to provide assistance to the Afghan people in the areas of health, food security, education, sport and capacity-building. Since 2001, India has been committed to the rebuilding and reconstruction of Afghanistan. Our development partnership includes more than 500 projects spread across all provinces of Afghanistan. Since August 2021, India has delivered 27 tons of relief material, 50,000 tons of wheat, 40,000 litres of pesticides and more than 300 tons of medicines and medical equipment to the country.

India has also partnered with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Afghanistan to provide assistance for the welfare of the Afghan drug-user population, especially women. Under that partnership, India has supplied 11,000 units of hygiene kits, baby food, clothing, medical aid and more than 30 tons of social support items to UNODC in Kabul since 2022.

In conclusion, let me underline India's historic relationship with the people of Afghanistan and our readiness to respond to the needs of the Afghan people. At the same time, we remain committed to continuing our close interaction with all relevant stakeholders on Afghanistan and supporting the international community's efforts towards a stable, peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Irvani (Islamic Republic of Iran): We congratulate Denmark on assuming the Security Council presidency and commend China for its successful and effective leadership in February. We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Otunbayeva, for her valuable briefing. We carefully listened to the statement by Ms. Raz Mohammad.

Today's briefing once again highlights the persistent challenges faced by the Afghan people, despite the ongoing efforts by the United Nations to improve their situation. The latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2025/109) underscores the worsening humanitarian crisis, the continued erosion of human rights, especially for women and girls, and the persistent security threats that demand attention.

In that context, I wish to emphasize the following points.

First, Afghanistan faces one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. More than 22.9 million people need urgent assistance. The humanitarian needs and response plan for 2025 requires \$2.42 billion, yet funding remains critically low. Humanitarian aid must remain impartial and unconditional to ensure that aid reaches those in need without obstruction, and funding must not collapse. We call on donors to strengthen their commitments and urge the de facto authorities to stop interfering in life-saving operations and allow unhindered access. In addition, those responsible for Afghanistan's current crisis, who withdrew recklessly and worsened the situation, must fulfil their obligations. Policies and announcements, such as the return of military equipment or cuts to humanitarian aid, are unrealistic and serve only to escalate tension and worsen the suffering of the people.

Second, Afghanistan's frozen assets remain a major issue. Economic recovery requires responsible financial mechanisms to support the Afghan people. Sanctions must not block efforts to stabilize the economy, and frozen assets should be released without conditions.

Third, security in Afghanistan remains precarious. The threat posed by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan and other terrorist groups operating in the country is alarming, not only for Afghanistan but for regional and global security. With more than two dozen terrorist organizations reportedly present in Afghanistan, the de facto authorities must honour their international obligations, ensure counter-terrorism efforts remain a priority and take decisive action to effectively eliminate those networks. The international community cannot allow Afghanistan to become a safe haven for terrorism.

Fourth, the situation for Afghan women and girls remains dire. Policies and decrees, such as the ban on women and girls attending medical institutes, have further stripped women and girls of their basic rights and exacerbated Afghanistan's healthcare crisis. Those restrictions have no basis in Islam and contradict Afghanistan's cultural traditions. We urge the de facto authorities to reconsider those measures and take immediate steps to restore women's rights.

Fifth, Iran's policy on Afghan refugees and migrants remains unchanged and rooted in humanitarian principles. For more than four decades, Iran has sheltered millions of Afghans, carrying a heavy burden, one that became even greater after the reckless withdrawal of the United States in 2021. Legal Afghan migrants in Iran face no restrictions, and Iranian Consulates issue 5,000 visas daily. However, those who have been repatriated entered the country illegally. Owing to security concerns, including terrorist threats, Iran will repatriate those who enter illegally. Let us be clear — neighbouring countries should not be left to bear this responsibility without support from the international community. Iran and Pakistan need sustained and

meaningful assistance. The international community must go beyond rhetoric and take concrete action.

Sixth, Iran remains actively engaged with Afghanistan's de facto authorities, through both bilateral and regional efforts. As part of that continued engagement, Iran's Foreign Minister visited Kabul on 26 January 2025, the first such visit since the Taliban took power. The discussions encompassed trade, railway development, investment, border security and other key bilateral issues. Iran remains firmly committed to Afghanistan's peace, stability and reconstruction. We continue to emphasize that a stable Afghanistan hinges on the establishment of an inclusive and representative Government. Such a Government is essential to addressing major challenges, preventing conflict and curbing refugee flows. It is also crucial for ensuring security, fostering economic recovery and upholding human rights, particularly for women and girls.

Seven, despite Afghanistan's challenges, a stable future is achievable through sustained international support and shared responsibility. A step-by-step approach, within a clear road map, can help to rebuild trust and security. Iran has actively engaged in the Doha process and supports its outcomes, including the establishment of working groups on narcotics and private sector initiatives. Iran remains committed to the implementation of those mechanisms but emphasizes that the priority must be delivering concrete results that directly benefit the Afghan people.

Finally, as the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) approaches, we reaffirm our support for both the Mission as well as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in carrying out their responsibilities. UNAMA remains a crucial presence in Afghanistan, playing a key role in addressing the country's challenges. We call on the Security Council to ensure that UNAMA has the necessary resources and to support the Special Representative in fulfilling her mandate effectively.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.