Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

By

H.E. Mr. Ioannis Vrailas, Deputy Head of Delegation
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at the UN General Assembly meeting on
the situation in Afghanistan (item 37)

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- Check against delivery -
I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro†, Iceland*, Serbia* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

I would like to thank all delegations that have participated in the consultations on the draft resolution, and particularly the German team for so ably facilitating the negotiations. I would also like to thank Ambassador Tanin for his statement.

Mr President,

Let me start by reiterating the EU’s full support for the continued important role played by UNAMA and all the UN agencies in supporting the Afghan people, and in coordinating the international community’s assistance. As the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission comes to an end and international combat troops are withdrawn, the role of the UN will be even more important in assisting the Afghan authorities to ensure that the gains made are safeguarded and used as the foundation for further progress.

The international community will soon meet in London at the conference to be co-chaired by the Governments of Afghanistan and the United Kingdom. The conference will be an occasion for the new Afghan Government to set out a serious and ambitious reform programme, and to begin a process for agreeing the refreshed mutual accountability framework which will be finalised at next year’s Senior Officials Meeting.

Mr President,

The London conference will be an opportunity for the international community to restate its long-term commitment to support Afghanistan and to reaffirm existing financial commitments through to 2017, underpinned by the principle of mutual accountability. It will also be an opportunity to consider the progress made in the commitments set out in the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework, agreed at the Tokyo conference in July 2012. Afghanistan has been the beneficiary of unprecedented levels of international assistance. But it is vital that assistance is sustained over the coming years, as it is critical that Government revenues increase in the future. The European Union is pleased to welcome the formation of the Government of National Unity and has recently signed an agreement to provide up to €1.4 billion over the next seven years in

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* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
† Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.
development assistance. That money will be used, in line with the common EU strategy, to
strengthen Afghanistan's institutions, so as to enable Afghans to be responsible for securing the
gains made over the last thirteen years, as well as to make it possible to continue developing
national institutions in line with the needs of the women and men of Afghanistan.
Gains can only be secured if the new government commits to enact and implement the critical
reforms needed to improve economic and political governance in the country, including by
tackling the widespread problem of corruption. Urgent action is needed to put in place the
necessary measures to improve the economic growth outlook and attract investment. Only in this
way can Afghanistan both create the jobs and increase the revenue that the country needs to truly
stand on its own two feet. But investors are unlikely to risk their capital if Afghanistan does not
address the ease of doing business in the country and, in particular, the enforceability of
contracts through greater rule of law. Serious reforms are also needed with regards to tackling
illicit narcotics, which contributes to sustain the illicit economy.

Mr President,

The failure to remedy injustice, both real and perceived, has been one of the greatest failings of
the previous Afghan administration and provided an easy target for those opposed to the
government. The new government has taken the welcome step of reopening the investigation into
the corrupt practices that led to the collapse of Da Kabul Bank. The EU welcomes the
appointment of a new Chief Justice and a new Attorney-General. It is vital that this reform
momentum is maintained and that all parts of the justice system are encouraged to work together
in a constructive way to address the systemic failures in the system.

Afghanistan has made good progress since 2001 in addressing the legacy of discrimination from
the Taliban regime. While the EU is fully supportive of a national reconciliation process in
Afghanistan, we must guard against the Taliban returning to previous unacceptable practices. We
need to see a democratic process which fully promotes and respects human rights and the rule of
law, including with the right of women and girls to education and to full participation in the
Afghan society. On its part, the EU will prolong its EUPOL mandate and continue to support
capacity building of the Afghan police and rule of law. Much of the legal framework to
recognise the equality of men and women is now in place. But far greater and more systematic
action is required in order to ensure full and adequate implementation, and women' equal
participation in decision-making processes across the country.
Mr President,

In conclusion, all these challenges will require a strong commitment from both the new government and the international community. The European Union and its Member States will remain a steadfast partner, as set out in the new comprehensive strategy for Afghanistan, which was endorsed in June this year. We applaud the role played by UNAMA and reiterate the importance of the mission maintaining the countrywide presence so necessary for the ongoing delivery of international assistance.

Thank you.