Statement by the Permanent Mission of Lithuania to the United Nations

UN General Assembly debate on agenda item 37

The situation in Afghanistan

November 20, 2014

Mr. President,

Allow me to thank Germany and other states for having prepared the draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan. Lithuania looks forward to its unanimous adoption.

This year has presented a number of challenges to the Afghan nation which it has successfully met. The presidential elections marked the first democratic transition in the modern history of Afghanistan. Moreover, the elections took place at a time when the Afghan national security forces assumed their responsibilities for safeguarding the country. Although the situation remains fragile, the successful completion of these processes proves the willingness and capability of Afghanistan to continue on its path towards creating a stable, peaceful and prosperous country where every man, woman and child can feel safe and secure.

Afghanistan now urgently needs a fully functioning national unity government which would be able to implement the necessary and pressing reforms. A particular focus needs to be placed on improving the rule of law, dealing with security situation, protecting human rights, fighting corruption and combating drug production and trafficking. The illicit opium production threatens security and development of the country and the whole region, as this year's Afghanistan Opium Survey shows a worrying trend of increasing opium poppy cultivation. We call on Afghanistan and the international community to intensify their joint efforts in supporting alternative livelihoods and fighting organized crime.
Mr. President,

Lithuania has been a firm partner of Afghanistan, a supporter and contributor in achieving its main goals. Our political and development cooperation, including support for institutional capacity building, civil society, economic growth, social development and promotion of regional initiatives will continue as stated in the Chicago Summit, Tokyo Conference and other meetings.

Lithuania, which has undergone radical transformation over the past couple of decades, is ready to share experience in a number of areas of state building, including strengthening regional cooperation.

In our view, regional cooperation is of crucial importance for strengthening stability and facilitating development of Afghanistan and the whole region. We support regional initiatives involving Afghanistan such as the Istanbul Process, Regional Economic Cooperation Conference and others. The future of Afghanistan depends also on the positive engagement of its neighbours.

Mr. President,

As the ISAF mission winds down, sustained capacity building of Afghan national security forces (ANSF) is essential for the maintenance of security and stability in the country. Lithuania will continue supporting ANSF with financial contribution as well as through participation in the Resolute Support Mission. This non-combat mission, aimed at training, assisting and mentoring ANSF builds on the results achieved by ISAF.

The invitation extended by Afghan Government to continue to train, advise and assist ANSF and the signing of US-Afghanistan Bilateral Security Agreement and NATO-Afghanistan Status of Forces Agreement offer a solid legal basis for the new mission. We urge Afghanistan to ratify both agreements so that future security assistance can
continue unhindered. Lithuania would also welcome a UN Security Council Resolution which should be prepared in consultation with Afghan Government.

Another area in which Lithuania contributes to the efforts of Afghanistan’s government is through the participation in the European Union Police Mission EUPOL. The extension of EUPOL mandate in Afghanistan until the end of 2016 is a welcomed decision. The Mission has provided much needed training for Afghan civilian police service and support for Afghan authorities at the strategic level. Lithuania is planning to continue its participation in this important mission.

The presence of UNAMA has been of crucial importance to the advancement of human rights, democratic processes and overall development of Afghanistan. And as Afghanistan starts its Transformation Decade, the role of UNAMA will become more prominent and necessary.

Mr. President,

Let me now turn to the situation of Afghan women. Violence against women in Afghanistan remains underreported, especially in rural areas. We call on Afghan Government to step up efforts to fully implement the 2013 CEDAW recommendations, the Law on Elimination of Violence Against Women, and the recently adopted National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security. Women’s genuine and meaningful involvement in peace, reconciliation and development processes, ensuring the safety and dignity of women public servants, women’s recruitment, training, and retention in Afghan National Security Forces are a must for future Afghanistan. The prominent role that the First Lady of Afghanistan is willing to take up will hopefully produce positive results, including in engaging women and strengthening their rights. We hope that this progressive momentum can be sustained. Afghanistan needs to find solutions suitable for the Afghan way of life and yet able to improve the situation of the female population.
In conclusion, as Afghanistan enters the Transformation Decade, the support by the international community and countries in the region will be essential. The national unity government, the Afghan people and the international community must work in unison for the better future of Afghanistan.

Thank you.