Plenary: Agenda Item 37: Situation of Afghanistan

Statement by:
H.E Ahmed Sareer, Permanent Representative of the Maldives to the United Nations
New York, 20 November 2014

Thank you, Mr. President.

The Maldives delegation welcomes the Secretary General’s comprehensive report on the situation of Afghanistan submitted to this session. My delegation follows the situation in Afghanistan with much interest and often with deep concern. For a number of years, the country remained in a constant state of civil war, with low productive capacity and failed governance arrangements.

In April this year, hope dawned in Afghanistan. Hope for a fresh start, and progress for the better. After remaining in deadlock for nearly four months, leaders of Afghanistan finally showed maturity and reconciled the differences which emerged after the Presidential election. The Maldives welcomes the efforts by both parties who contested the election for reaching a resolution and putting their differences aside. We further congratulate the leadership for their willingness to put the interests of the Afghan people ahead of their personal or political agendas, in joining together in a unity government. The solidarity shown by both leaders is commendable as it demonstrates the commitment shown to take the country into a new phase of prosperity and development.

Our own experience with democratisation is that the hard work doesn’t stop with elections. That is just one step. The real task is cultivating norms and values that bolster democratisation. It is changing perceptions, the way people think. Institutions and systems need to develop slowly and we ardently believe, organically. And we call on the international community to give Afghanistan the time and patience, to allow for it to find its own path towards democracy consolidation.

Mr. President,

As highlighted in the Secretary General’s report, insurgent groups and international terrorist networks are taking advantage of the dire security situation of the country resulting from the protracted political and electoral crisis. The Maldives welcomes the continuous efforts by Afghanistan to combat the insurgencies
and terrorist activities. In particular, we note the enactment of two landmark statutes in Afghanistan in June 2014, to combat anti-money laundering and terrorist financing. We are also encouraged by the expansion of the security initiative of the Afghan local police overseen by the Ministry of Interior. These developments give hope for stability and security for the Afghan people.

As Afghanistan endures through security challenges, political crises and economic hardships, those who suffer the most are the vulnerable populations. The Secretary General’s report highlighted some of the key issues faced by vulnerable populations, including women and children, and noted the actions being taken by the Government in addressing these issues. The Maldives welcomes the progress made in the implementation of the 2011 action plan for preventing underage recruitment, including age verification and screening of new recruits and training of Afghan security forces in respect of children in armed conflict. My delegation further welcomes the continuous efforts by the international community, specially the UN for providing the Government of Afghanistan with technical support and advice on the elimination of violence against women.

The Maldives acknowledges the challenges faced by the Government in addressing some of these human rights issues in Afghanistan, and calls on all stakeholders – including the Government, private institutions and international community to continue and increase efforts towards the protection and promotion of human rights in the country.

The Maldives believes that increased regional integration is of the utmost importance, and contributes to confidence-building, which in turn greatly benefits the stability and prosperity of Afghanistan. In this regard, it is heartening to note that Afghanistan has continued to engage its neighbours in the promotion of regional cooperation. As a fellow member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the Maldives stands here to reinforce our brotherly affection and call upon all our regional members to maintain its support and commitment to embrace Afghanistan in its quest for peace and prosperity.

Mr. President,

The situation of Afghanistan cannot be solved in isolation. Continued assistance and coordination from the international community and regional collaboration is required to lift the country out of civil war and strife, and aid the transition into a new phase of development. Despite all the hardships the people of Afghanistan have faced, the fact remains that the people have persevered through these difficult times with courage for over three decades. Like many speakers before me, my delegation today reiterates the call to the international community to help the country through its transition—for the sake of the people of Afghanistan, and the region.

Thank you.