

Meeting: Security Council on Afghanistan

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Speaker : Representative of Sweden

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Mr. President,

Let me begin by expressing our appreciation for the opportunity to participate in today's debate. As other speakers before me, I would like to thank especially Mr. Kai Eide, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his comprehensive briefing, and Mr. Eide for your excellent, excellent work in the past and ongoing work in leading the UNAMA mission. We also want to wish you all the best for your future endeavors.

Mr. President,

The European Union welcomes the conclusion of the presidential electoral process and congratulates President Hâmid Karzai on assuming office for a second consecutive term. The EU wishes to underline its readiness to support President Karzai and the future Afghan Government in the implementation of the commitments made to the Afghan people in his inauguration speech, namely, in the five key areas of peace and reconciliation, security, good governance, economic development and regional cooperation. This will require close and strategic coordination of the international efforts under the lead of UNAMA. The European Union takes note of the announcement of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) that the parliamentary elections will take place in May 2010. It also underlines the need for an urgent reform of the electoral system, including a review of the appointment mechanism of IEC commissioners to ensure its impartiality, as recommended in the final reports and findings of the EU Election Observation Mission and other observation groups on the presidential and provincial council elections. The security situation in Afghanistan remains extremely challenging. As highlighted in the Secretary General's report, the security situation has worsened over the reporting period, with a 65 per cent increase in the number of incidents from 2008, including the tragic attack of 28 October 2009, that has highlighted the increased level of risk exposure for UN personnel. In this context, the European Union wishes to reiterate its condolences to the families of the victims. The European Union concurs with the Secretary General that to reverse this downward trend, the new Government will have to show resolve in implementing a political reform that addresses the root causes of the insurgency, including through efforts aimed at improving governance and an Afghan-led political process to re-establish peace. Also, everything possible must be done to avoid civilian casualties. The European Union actively supports the improvement of good governance, the rule of law, the fight against corruption and impunity, as well as respect for

human rights in Afghanistan. Building Afghan capacity and ownership in the police and civil sectors remains at the core of the European Union's engagement in Afghanistan, as reaffirmed in our recent plan of action. The European Union Police Mission (EUPOL) in Afghanistan is clear proof of such an active and continued engagement. Equally, the European Union urges the new Afghan Government to give the utmost priority to the achievement of significant progress in those areas, especially at the sub-national level. Stability, security and development in Afghanistan are closely linked to the overall situation in the region. The European Union strongly supports the development of a coordinated approach at the regional level and enhanced cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbors, especially Pakistan. The EU has initiated decisive steps to strengthen and achieve a more coherent and concerted approach to EU action in Afghanistan and Pakistan through its plan of action for the region.

Mr. President,

The European Union strongly supports UNAMA in its important role as the coordinator of international efforts, while recognizing Member States' responsibility to provide UNAMA with the necessary resources to perform this task. The European Union concurs with the Secretary-General that a more focused and better coordinated international civilian effort, under a UN umbrella and within the framework of a strategy of transition, is urgently required. In this regard, the European Union is ready to further explore initiatives such as the establishment of a reinforced and dedicated civilian coordination structure ensuring strong Afghan ownership and the involvement of all major stakeholders, and the appointment of a senior civilian official within ISAF. These and other initiatives, including the improvement of existing coordination mechanisms, need careful analysis. The European Union also looks forward to the upcoming London Conference, on 28 January, and the subsequent Kabul conference, that will offer an opportunity for the new Afghan Government to lay out its priorities, plans and commitments. The United Nations will have a prominent role in both conferences. For the international community it will be an occasion to review and reaffirm its engagement in Afghanistan. We should agree on new goals, benchmarks and timelines in order to renew a common framework for our work towards the shared goal of a peaceful and secure Afghanistan. These conferences also represent an important step towards the formulation and subsequent implementation of a transition strategy, with the emphasis on building up the Afghan National Security Forces and the gradual handover of responsibility for security to Afghanistan's own authorities.

Mr. President,

The European Union reiterates its full recognition that the primary responsibility for the development of the country lies with the Afghan Government and people themselves. But I would like to assure you that the European Union will continue to play an active role in assisting Afghanistan on its road to security, stability and prosperity, in close cooperation and coordination with UNAMA and other international actors.

Thank you, Mr. President.