

*Please check against delivery*



**STATEMENT**

by

**H. E. Mr. František RUŽIČKA  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative  
of Slovakia  
to the United Nations**

**Debate of the United Nations Security Council  
UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)**

**19 March 2013  
New York**

Mr. President,

Let me begin with saluting peoples and nations including many from Afghanistan with a New Year. Nowruz is always an awakening, a new start and a moment to bring us in harmony with nature. It is to forget the harshness of winter and appreciate the warmth of sun. I hope the spirit of sun and warmth will spare some positive energy on our today's deliberations.

I would like to align myself with the statement delivered by the EU Special Representative Usackas on behalf of the European Union. While fully supporting common EU priorities in Afghanistan let me reiterate some points we see as important.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report. The statement and the report presented a comprehensive picture of Afghanistan today.

We are pleased by the steady progress of transfer of security responsibility, growing numbers of Afghan National Police and Afghan National Army. We welcome decision made by President H. Karzai that **Afghan forces will take main responsibility for security before the summer 2013** in the whole country.

Based on our assessments in many areas where Afghan forces took lead **security transition goes in the right direction**. We welcome the efforts by the Ministry of Interior aimed at transformation of the police from a security force to a service focused on law enforcement and protection. The role of local police is vital especially in remote areas of the country.

But process of building a functional and credible Afghan National Security Forces must go on. As the **main challenge we see the "insider attacks"** that have multiple negative impact on overall situation. The Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) has almost reached the anticipated numbers, so now the focus should move to **quality, loyalty and professionalism**.

Mr. President,

While security transition is on track, it is equally important to concentrate efforts on **political and economic elements** of the transition and synchronize them with the current plan to hand over security responsibility to Kabul in 2014.

Further progress in the **reconciliation** is crucial for any further success. Willingness of **some elements of the Taliban to leave the insurgency** and enter the dialogue and political process can set a positive example and deserve our

support. The process of peace and reconciliation must have strong Afghan ownership.

We see **political transition** as a possible “**game changer**” in internal dynamics of Afghanistan. We believe that, Afghans will take all necessary steps towards inclusive, free, fair and transparent **elections**. Only **legitimate government will be strong enough** to make progress in security, good governance and development. UNAMA can play an important role in advising how to proceed efficiently with electoral reforms and broader political outreach to the Afghan society.

Some fear that after departure of international forces **Afghanistan might slip back again to insurgency, return to a civil war or once again become a hub for terrorism**. We should join our efforts to ensure that it stays firmly on its path to stable and prosperous country.

Bonn and Tokyo conferences, NATO Chicago and Lisbon summits and other international fora provide for strong **commitment of the international community** that Afghans will not stay alone.

After 2014, further support of the international community, especially in **capacity building** of the Afghan state in both security and civilian sector will grow exponentially. Comprehensive approach, division of labor, capacity building in management of international funds, adopting anti-corruption measures aligned with Afghan priorities must continue to be the cornerstones of our efforts in the transformation period.

We must keep in mind the seriousness of a threat posed by **opium production** in Afghanistan to the stability of the region and overall security situation. We welcome the commitment of Afghan government to combat this problem. However it cannot succeed alone, without regional cooperation and international engagement. Therefore we support initiatives **lead by United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)** aimed not only on eradication of poppy production but also to related aspects such as development and law enforcement.

**Cooperation with and active role of neighboring countries is crucial**. Inter alia in border control it plays an important factor in eliminating **illegal trans-boundary activities**, including drug and weapons trafficking, as well as terrorism.

Mr. President,

Afghanistan today remains a proud Muslim society with **more women now serving in the Afghan parliament** than in many other countries.

**Access to education is becoming more universal.** Under the Taliban less than 1 million children, almost entirely boys, were in school. **Now more than 8 million kids go to schools. More than a third of them are girls.**

**Afghanistan GDP in 2001 was around 2 billion USD. In a decade the volume has reached 20 billion.** So far a great extend thanks to foreign aid. But Afghanistan has potential to build on this investment. Among the most visible results is the dramatic increase of use of new technologies, the **grow of small business.**

**Only tenth of the population had access to basic health care** under the Taliban. Now the better health care is generally available, life expectancy has increased from 45 years to 62 years for men and 64 for women.

Improved education, health care, small and medium companies are the cornerstones for sustainability and irreversibility of development after military presence will decrease.

Mr. President

**UNAMA is a crucial and irreplaceable actor in Afghanistan** and its role should be extended. In this regard **we appreciate the words of support for Mr. Ján Kubiš** for his professional leadership of this challenging mission.

We know that **UN and UNAMA are going to be important players in Afghanistan particularly after 2014.** As time is running very fast and there are many challenges, we should start to think and discuss how to adjust UNAMA's future post-2014 mandate, which will have to be properly resourced.

**Slovakia will support Afghans until 2014 and beyond.** While military support after 2014 will depend on requirements of the new NATO-led post-ISAF mission, we took decision on financial support for ANSF sustainment at the level of 1.5 mil. USD in 2015 - 2017. Afghanistan remains our top priority of the Official Development Aid.

One of most famous of Nowruz traditions among Afghans is to forget and forgive mistakes of one another and start the New Year with new hopes and new goals. Only those who do nothing, do not make mistakes. Victory gives us pleasure, defeat gives us experience and strength. Wise are those who do and learn how to reach new hopes all people in Afghanistan deserve.

Thank you.