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**STATEMENT**

**by**

**His Excellency  
Ambassador František Ružička**

**Permanent Representative of Slovakia  
to the United Nations**

67<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly

**Item 38: The situation in Afghanistan**

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New York

Mr. President,

Slovakia is pleased to be one of the cosponsors of the draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan. We thank Germany for steering the negotiations and facilitating a consensus on the draft resolution to be adopted today. In our view it represents a renewed message of encouragement for Afghani authorities and people as well as our commitment. The text covers all aspects of country's achievements and at the same time acknowledges that many challenges still remain.

Slovakia aligns with the statement of the European Union. At the same time I would like to point out some aspects of the particular importance to my country.

Mr. President,

Afghanistan remains a top operational priority for the Slovak Republic. Our troops will remain deployed to Afghanistan as long as the situation will require. In order to support building the Afghan Security Forces, the National Council of the Slovak Republic has adopted a new mandate prolonging our contribution to ISAF until 2014.

We also transform the form of our forces to better react and reflect the evolving situation. We are reducing engineering and guarding capabilities and deploying a greater number of instructors, mentors and special forces. The main driver for the changes is building and deploying a Special Operations Task Group (SOTG) in May 2014 which will advise SOF units of the Afghan army and police.

We further need to continue building a functional and credible Afghan National Security Forces. Currently, when the ANSF have almost reached the anticipated numbers, it will be crucial to focus mainly on increasing the quality. As the main challenge we see the "insider attacks" that have multiple negative impact on overall situation.

The Slovak Republic is ready to consider the possibility of sending civilian experts to the region if it is so required. Related national legislation - the Act on sending of the civilian experts into the international crisis management activities outside the territory of the Slovak Republic – came into force this year.

Mr. President,

Apart from our engagement in the area of peace and security, we expand all components of our comprehensive assistance to Afghanistan. It is among top three priority program countries of the Slovak Official Development Assistance (SlovakAid). To get more objective picture the absolute volume of the aid should be compared to the size of the country.

We are aware that Afghanistan will need help from the international community even after 2014. There has, rightly, been a focus on ensuring the longer-term plans. Commitments are in place to build Afghanistan's political, security and development self-sufficiency.

Allow me, please, to mention some examples of Slovak engagement:

- a) Since 2004 up to date, 22 projects for Afghanistan have been approved (*worth of more than 3,7 million EUR*).  
These projects have been aimed at building schools in rural areas, providing education for girls and women, support of small enterprises led by women, local TV broadcasting, capacity building, democratization and civil society support.
- b) In the past as part of our dedicated commitment to the country's future the Government of the Slovak Republic approved full debt relief for Afghanistan (*worth 29,3 million USD*) in 2005.
- c) Slovakia is ready to fulfill its pledge of 1million euros in development aid to Afghanistan as indicated at the Tokyo Conference earlier this year and reiterated on several occasions since through bilateral channels.
- d) We are ready to maintain the levels and modalities of our assistance for the years to come. We will concentrate on following sectors: healthcare, rural and socio-economic development, building a civil society and security institutions.

We believe that through targeted projects that are well coordinated and aligned with the priorities of the Afghan Government we can improve the daily life of Afghan people. Step by step we can help to fulfill our common goal of secure, stable and prosperous country.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, let me also take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Mr. Jan Kubiš, for the dedicated and outstanding work carried out by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. We encourage Afghan people and its government to strengthen relations with the United Nations and use a full potential of cooperation with the UN. We believe that central role of United Nations remains one of the key factors of promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Thank you for your attention.