

**Statement of Slovakia at the UN General Assembly meeting on the situation in Afghanistan
(item 39)**

30 November 2015

Mr. President,

I would like to thank the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan for his statement.

We all appreciate those delegations that have contributed to the text of the annual resolution, and especially our German colleagues who facilitated negotiations, once again, in an admirable and professional manner.

Slovakia would like to align with the statement of the European Union.

Mr. President,

Beyond any doubt, Afghanistan stays on a track of a continuous, though fragile, progress in all areas vital for the state. In 2015, Slovakia repeatedly highlighted at Security Council quarterly debates the key role of the Afghan government,

- its dedication - on sustainable future of the country,
- its responsibility - on maintaining political unity framework
- its awareness - when it comes to pertaining challenges, especially in the security environment.

We often refer to “momentum”. We hope *to catch a trend of positive changes*. We believe to keep it for as long as possible. We try to transform a momentum to long term sustainability of positive developments.

But there is also a negative momentum. Today it is perhaps most visible in the global impact of regional crises. Migration, in unprecedented levels and numbers, became one of the most serious political agenda today. Its negative momentum has an impact on all countries – those of origin, transit and destination.

While the war and/or armed conflicts tend to be the primary reason for people to flee their homeland, dire humanitarian and economic situation and lack of prospect for decent life are also motifs, especially for young or productive generation.

Afghanistan is not in a state of war. But Taliban, illegal armed groups and criminals including those involved in narcotics trade, and illicit exploitation of natural resources, continue to pose threat to the security and stability of the country.

Also through the General Assembly resolution, Slovakia urges the Government of Afghanistan with the support of the international community to continue to address these challenges.

Mr. President,

An improved security environment is a precondition for Afghan citizens *not to be forced to become a refugees*.

Furthermore, implementation of reforms, creation of opportunities and vision of prosperity are preconditions for Afghan citizens *not to choose a life of a migrant*.

Regional cooperation is paramount in this regard, supported by wider international community. Slovakia thus welcomes and supports all relevant initiatives. We sincerely hope that forthcoming Ministerial meeting of the Heart of Asia process in Islamabad on 9 December can deliver prospects of further engagement in our joint effort to support Afghanistan's sustainable development.

Mr President,

In light of the above mentioned and similarly to the EU statement, we recognize the role of institutions in Afghanistan and the new 'Self Reliance Mutual Accountability Framework' (SMAF).

Within the key areas of the development assistance, Slovakia continues to implement its strategy, with cooperation of the Afghan government, in the following areas:

- Education for
 - *entry into the labor market and self-employment targeted at women and young people,*
 - *specialist education for healthcare personnel*
 - *education in agriculture,*
 - *in efficient public administration and good governance;*
- Agriculture – food security, modernization of the agricultural sector (production and processing);
- Security Sector Reform – particularly in the form of financial contributions to multi-donor funds.

Education is the only way forward for utilizing the talent and potential of Afghan young and youngest generations of both - boys and girls.

Agriculture is a natural and important sector. In the past, Afghan agriculture produced enough food for internal consumption and part of the production was even exported.

And finally, Security Sector Reform seeks to provide framework and safety environment for development of economy and knowledge.

In conclusion, Mr. President,

Slovakia remains committed to support Afghanistan through bilateral assistance as well as via cooperation with other stakeholders of the international community.

Here in New York, I am personally looking forward to work together with the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan Ambassador Mahmoud Saikal,

- contributing to the work of Group of Friends lead by Canada and
- participate at all fora looking for peaceful and sustainable solution which will significantly contribute to stability of the whole region.

Thank you for your attention.