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Delegation of Afghanistan

**STATEMENT BY MR. WAHID MONAWAR,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF AFGHANISTAN  
TO THE OSCE, AT THE 717th MEETING OF THE  
PERMANENT COUNCIL**

19 June 2008

Mr. Chairman,

I should like first of all to thank the distinguished ambassadors here in the Permanent Council for the participation of their countries in the International Conference in Support of Afghanistan held last week in Paris. Our special thanks go to France for its efforts in organizing and co-chairing this conference and for its kind hospitality.

Mr. Chairman,

As I promised a few weeks ago to inform this Council about the security situation in Afghanistan, and bearing in mind that September is drawing near, with the OSCE-Afghanistan Conference, it seemed to me essential to stress the issues at stake that were discussed at the Paris Conference in Support of Afghanistan.

The Paris Conference offered an important opportunity for Afghanistan and its partners to review what they have accomplished together and to reflect on the constraints on our actions. Most important, the conference allowed us to express and exchange views on how to overcome the remaining obstacles on our long and perilous path towards achieving, with the help of the international community, a progressive, democratic and prosperous Afghanistan.

The Government of Afghanistan, along with its international partners, emphasized the urgent problem of the poverty of a steadily growing population, and in some cases an unacceptable absence of co-ordination in development projects and in the distribution of aid to the most needy. Mediocre co-ordination, a duplication of efforts and a lack of transparency were often evident among donor countries, international organizations, the various agencies of the Afghan Government and the members of the international community, and above all between the Afghan Government and its international partners. Our united endeavours to reconstruct Afghanistan will never be fully visible if our efforts are fragmented and our energies wasted.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to enumerate briefly the key elements essential for the security and prosperity of the Afghan people which were stressed at the Paris Conference.

1. To strengthen democracy in Afghanistan.

We underlined the importance of the holding of elections in 2009 and 2010 as a crucial step to consolidate democracy for all Afghans. The international community pledged its strong support to help make the elections free, fair and secure.

2. To support the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) in order to give the Afghan people a better future.

3. To stimulate investment in infrastructure, especially in the agriculture and energy sectors.

The international community welcomed the determination of the Afghan Government to give priority to the agriculture, irrigation and energy sectors, while continuing support for roads, education and health.

4. To create opportunities for Afghans through private sector growth.

5. To strengthen Afghan institutions and improve delivery of services to all Afghans.

6. To improve aid effectiveness and ensure that the benefits of development are tangible for every Afghan.

7. To combat corruption.

The Afghan Government reaffirmed its commitment to intensify action to combat corruption and to take concrete steps to that effect. The international community will support such actions.

8. To intensify counter-narcotics efforts.

We expressed our concern that drug production and trafficking networks continue to threaten Afghan development, particularly in a few provinces. At the same time we welcomed the increased number of poppy-free provinces. We must ensure that these provinces receive the support required to sustain this achievement.

9. To ensure greater civil society participation in the nation-building process.

10. To promote respect for human rights for all Afghans.

We noted the vital importance for the protection of human rights of establishing the rule of law. We committed ourselves to supporting the implementation of the National Action Plan for Women. In particular, we emphasized the need to ensure respect for international humanitarian law. As reaffirmed recently in Bucharest, we will continue to ensure that every measure is taken to avoid civilian casualties.

11. To strengthen regional co-operation.

We highlighted the importance of regional co-operation on political, economic and security matters. Afghanistan's neighbouring countries have an essential role to play in supporting Afghan Government efforts to build a stable Afghanistan with secure borders.

Mr. Chairman,

Permit me once again to express the profound gratitude of our delegation to you and to our distinguished colleagues present here in this assembly for the contribution and the sacrifice made by their countries in the cause of promoting a democratic, peaceful and pluralistic Afghanistan.

Thank you for your attention.