



**Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations at the
Arria Formula Meeting on
Peace Process in Afghanistan**

Friday, 20 November 2020

Allow me to begin by thanking their Excellencies the Foreign Ministers Afghanistan, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Indonesia, Norway and Qatar for their participation in this Arria Formula meeting. I would also like to thank His Excellency Mohammad Ashraf Ghani and the panellists for their interventions.

South Africa is fully supportive of the Afghan Government and people continuing efforts towards achieving long-term peace, security and prosperity in Afghanistan. The convening of the Afghanistan Peace Negotiations is a necessary and positive step in achieving this goal.

In order to further this important goal of a stable and peaceful Afghanistan, all parties must make every effort to stop the violence that has plagued the country. During this crucial period of time, in the midst of the Afghanistan Peace Negotiations, South Africa urges all parties to commit to a ceasefire that will create a calm environment conducive to fruitful negotiations. In order for any progress in the Afghan peace process to be made and maintained, hostilities must come to an end. In this regard, we urge all parties to the Afghanistan Peace Negotiations to actively participate in the discussions in good faith, with the aim of ensuring a better life for all Afghans.

Another step towards a permanent peace is ensuring that those who are responsible for committing or conducting grave violations should be brought to justice and held accountable for their actions. South Africa, therefore, calls on the parties to the conflict to comply with their obligations under international human rights law, as well as international humanitarian law.

Additionally, ensuring that these peace negotiations are inclusive and represent all aspects of Afghan society is equally important. Women have, for many years, played an active and crucial role in the Afghan peace process; this must continue and be further encouraged. It is the voices of those who were previously silenced that should now speak the loudest to ensure their needs, rights and choices are respected and heard.

A critical part of the intra-Afghan dialogue must be to ensure that the vast gains made in women's and girls' rights are protected. Sustainable peace will only be achieved if women know that they will never again be subjected to the deprivation of their

fundamental and essential rights; the participation of women in all levels of the peace process will ensure this.

It is our duty, as members of the international community, to continue to strongly advocate for the equal participation and full involvement of women in all processes in the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

In conclusion, South Africa would like to extend its appreciation to the United Nations and Special Representative Lyons and her office for the important they continue to do in challenging circumstances. Their steadfast support, continued engagement with national, regional and international stakeholders in seeking an end to the violence; its work in support of a ceasefire; in promoting the intra-Afghan negotiations and encouraging confidence-building measures are a necessary and significant component in bringing long-term peace, security and prosperity to Afghanistan.

I thank you.