



Norwegian Ministry
of Foreign Affairs

Statement by Norway's Minister of Foreign Affairs

Ms. Ine Eriksen Søreide

at the Arria-formula meeting on

Peace Process in Afghanistan

20 November 2020

I have the pleasure of speaking not only as co-sponsor, but also on behalf of all the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and Norway. We are pleased to take part in this timely discussion in the lead up to the donor conference next week.

Supporting peace, stability and development in Afghanistan is a top priority for the Nordics. For years, we have worked closely with the Afghan government, the Afghan people and the international community to this end. In a few days we will reconfirm our commitment to support the people of Afghanistan at the Geneva conference.

The intra-Afghan negotiations represent a historic opportunity for peace. Nordic expectations and principles are clear. In order to be sustainable, a peace agreement needs to have human rights, gender equality, rule of law and a constitutional framework at its core. It will be important to uphold and expand on the important progress made to date. Experience also shows that the likelihood of lasting peace is significantly enhanced with the meaningful participation of women in all aspects of negotiations and peacebuilding.

We are deeply concerned about the high level of violence which presents an obstacle to peace. We again call for a ceasefire. The Afghan people deserve it.

We condemn the appalling terrorist attacks targeting civilians, ethnic groups, university students, journalists, new mothers and their babies. This must end and perpetrators must be brought to justice.

The Security Council should support the peace process by maintaining a strong focus on stability and security in Afghanistan, especially in light of the expected

international military drawdown. The Security Council should also strongly support the meaningful inclusion of women, as well as of minorities and victims, in the peace process.

We commend UNAMA for its important role in helping to promote an inclusive peace process and coordinating the donor community.

When Norway enters the Security Council as an elected member in January, we will bring our long-standing commitment to peace, stability and development in Afghanistan with us into the work of the Council. I would like to express my deep appreciation for the work Germany and Indonesia have done as penholders on Afghanistan in the Council, and express Norway's intention to continue this work in close cooperation with our Baltic partner Estonia.

Let me conclude by underlining that we know that a peace process is complex. Difficult compromises have to be made. But Afghanistan needs to seize this historic opportunity for peace. The Nordics stand ready to do our part in support.

Thank you.