



**Statement**

**by**

**TURKEY**

**at the**

**Security Council Arria-Formula Meeting**

**on the Peace Process in Afghanistan**

**New York, 20 November 2020**

**Mr. Chair,**

**We thank the organizers for this timely meeting, which provided the opportunity to discuss the situation in Afghanistan with a particular focus on the peace process.**

**Turkey fully supports the demand of the Afghan people for a permanent peace and an end to the long-lasting war. The country has been through decades of conflict which had severe repercussions on its socio-economic landscape.**

**It is of utmost importance that the appeal by the Secretary-General for a global ceasefire yields concrete results in Afghanistan, especially at this critical juncture when the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is devastating.**

**Despite ongoing peace negotiations, security situation across the country is deteriorating at a worrying rate. Recent increase in the attacks on educational institutions and religious sites targeting civilians is particularly alarming.**

**Turkey strongly supports Afghanistan's fight against terrorism and is in full solidarity with the Afghan people.**

**The high level of violence undermines hopes for a meaningful progress towards peace and erodes trust in the peace talks.**

**We do believe that a comprehensive ceasefire is crucial for the success of the peace efforts.**

**Mr. Chair,**

**Turkey welcomes the holding of intra-Afghan negotiations which demonstrate the willingness to end decades-long conflict through a political solution.**

**Although desired progress has not been achieved yet, negotiation process still continues to be the only viable way to achieve a lasting peace in Afghanistan.**

**We hope that the current stalemate in the negotiations will be overcome and a considerable progress will be achieved soon.**

**We believe in a fair and lasting peace agreement, which would uphold the achievements made to date, especially in the fields of democracy, human rights and women's rights. Meaningful participation of women in the peace process is key to that end.**

**Unfortunately, women and children have been the most severely affected groups of the war in the country. To help their resilience, we have been prioritizing them in our support to the Afghan people through the most comprehensive development aid programme of our history.**

**Mr. Chair,**

**The increasing engagement of the international community in achieving peace in Afghanistan is promising. It is critical to seize the momentum and build on the achievements of the last two decades.**

**At the same time, it is also important to maintain close coordination regarding regional and international initiatives and utilize existing platforms in an effective manner, by avoiding repetitions and duplications.**

**Heart of Asia – Istanbul Process that brings regional and international partners with a view to bridge differences and unify positions can play an important role. We can make use of this mechanism to forge a common understanding in support of the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process.**

**The United Nations should continue to assist the Afghan people and the Government of Afghanistan in laying the foundations for sustainable peace and development. We recognize the central role of UNAMA in promoting peace and stability in the country and express our appreciation for its efforts.**

**We call on the international community to further strengthen international and regional cooperation towards sustained efforts for a secure, stable and prosperous Afghanistan. In the run up to the Geneva Conference, it is particularly essential to increase and honor commitments in the face of the increasing needs on the ground.**

**Mr. Chair,**

**Turkey reaffirms its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan. We stress once again the importance of a comprehensive and inclusive Afghan-led and Afghan-owned political process towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict and a comprehensive political settlement.**

**Thank you.**