

**Statement by Ireland at the United Nations Security Council Arria Formula  
Meeting on the Peace Process in Afghanistan  
20<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

**Delivered by H.E Simon Coveney T.D, Minister for Foreign Affairs**

I would like to thank President Ghani, the previous speakers, and Ministers Reinsalu and Atmar for the opportunity to address this important meeting on Afghanistan from an Irish perspective.

Mr Chairman,

The Afghan people have endured decades of violence but the start of peace negotiations have provided hope for a better future.

**Making peace takes courage.**

We know from our own experience of overcoming conflict, that the path to peace can be long and complex.

I urge all of the participants engaged in the peace process to stay the course and to substantively engage in negotiations.

The UN and the international community supports Afghanistan in all efforts to build sustainable peace, as evidenced in the adoption of Resolution 2513 by the Security Council earlier this year.

Together with our EU partners, Ireland has made clear its approach to the future of Afghanistan.

We support an inclusive Afghan-owned peace process that meaningfully includes women and young people, and that builds on gains made by the Afghan people over the last two decades, including respect for human rights, gender equality and the rights of minorities, the rule of law, and improving inclusive and accountable governance.

Colleagues,

Ireland is gravely concerned at the increase in violence over recent months in Afghanistan at a time when efforts should be focussed on providing humanitarian relief for people across Afghanistan, especially during the pandemic.

Attacks against civilians violate international humanitarian law, and those responsible must be held to account by the international community.

I call on all who are genuinely committed to peace to reflect the overwhelming desire of the Afghan people for an end to the violence and to declare an immediate ceasefire.

Chairman,

The international community, and this Council in particular, has a responsibility to support those working for peace in Afghanistan, and we look forward to participating in the Pledging Conference in a very real way next week.

Ireland was proud to co-found last year, with Afghanistan, the UN Group of Friends of Peace Processes.

As a member of the Council, we will continue to stand in solidarity with and support the people of Afghanistan to build a sustainable peace that lasts.

END.