

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Majid Takht Ravanchi
Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations
On “the Situation in Afghanistan”
Before the United Nations Security Council
New York, 3 September 2020

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

Mr. President,

The people of Afghanistan are currently passing through a crucial stage in their decades-long struggle to overcome insecurity and instability and achieve their long-awaited aspiration: genuine and durable peace in their country. To that end, the swift commencement of the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process involving all Afghan factions, including the Taliban and other political, ethnic and religious groups and minorities, enjoys strong national, regional and international support.

The process, in addition to preserving Afghanistan’s past achievements, particularly its Constitution and political system, as well as ensuring the rights of women and all ethnic and religious minorities, must also aim at establishing solid foundations for comprehensive and lasting peace and sustainable socioeconomic development in the country.

Genuine and durable peace cannot be dictated or imposed. The right to decide about Afghanistan’s future belongs exclusively to Afghans themselves. This must be recognized and respected by all. Accordingly, the international community, including the key regional and international players, while avoiding interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, must encourage, facilitate and support its people’s efforts to determine their own future. At the same time, addressing the legitimate interests of Afghanistan’s neighbours will ensure regional support for the establishment of an enduring peace in that country.

The Government’s efforts, such as the formation of the High Council for National Reconciliation and the peace negotiating delegation, as well as the recent decisions of the Consultative Peace Jirga, indicate its seriousness about peace.

To ensure the success of the peace process, certain additional measures need to be taken, the most important of which is agreeing on a ceasefire, which can promote trust and confidence among conflicting parties. This, however, must not include combating the

activities of terrorist groups, particularly Da'esh, whose terrorist acts are on the increase, endangering peace and security in Afghanistan and the entire region, including through the expansion of its operations into Central Asia. Taking effective measures to contain the coronavirus disease pandemic is another important step towards the establishment of peace in Afghanistan.

As a prerequisite for sustained socioeconomic development and stability in Afghanistan, we reiterate our strong call for a time-bound and responsible withdrawal of all foreign forces from that country, regardless of their mandate and structure. We also underline the high importance of supporting and strengthening Afghanistan's National Defence and Security Forces.

Following our intensive efforts aimed at bringing the two sides within the Government together, which facilitated the conclusion of a political agreement on the formation of the Cabinet of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran has also conducted extensive consultations with Afghan leaders and regional and international players to facilitate the peace talks, and stands ready to host the talks if the parties so desire.

In addition, as peace cannot be achieved and sustained in the absence of socioeconomic development, Iran, in parallel with its diplomatic efforts in support of peace, has continued its cooperation with the Government of Afghanistan in areas such as trade, transportation and health, which include projects concerning the development of Chabahar port, to be utilized by the Government of Afghanistan for import and export, and the construction of roads and railroads to facilitate Afghanistan's access to the high seas and Central Asian countries.

While we spare no effort to promote our economic relations with Afghanistan, the inhumane sanctions of the United States against Iran have negatively affected the benefits that such efforts can bring for both Iran and Afghanistan.

Finally, Iran stands ready to support the activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. Iran reaffirms once again its resolve to support the fraternal people and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

I thank you, Mr. President.