



Malaysia

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR SADIK KETHERGANY,
REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA
AT THE OPEN DEBATE ON THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN
UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL
MONDAY, 19 DECEMBER 2011**

Mr. President,

Let me first of all extend my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for his latest report on the situation in Afghanistan, as contained in document S/2011/772. My delegation also extends our appreciation to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan Steffan de Mistura for the briefing he has just conducted, as well as the members of the UN Assistant Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for their dedication and resilience in carrying out their duties under the challenging conditions in the country. Let me also join others in congratulating Mr. Ján Kubiš, who will be replacing Special Representative de Mistura next year.

Mr. President,

2. Ten years ago, the Security Council determined that the situation in Afghanistan constituted a threat to international peace and security. Acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, this Council then authorized the creation of the International Stabilisation Assistance Force (ISAF) to assist the Afghan Interim Authority, headed by the recently appointed Chairman Hamid Karzai. This turning point in Afghanistan's history was marked by the Council's resolution 1386, adopted on 20 December 2001.

3. Ten years later, we are pleased to see that President Karzai is leading the country out of the morass of that unfortunate conflict. We are now witnessing another turning point in Afghanistan's history, with the transfer of security responsibilities from ISAF to the Afghan National Security Forces. However, a lot more has to be done to improve the security situation in Afghanistan.

4. Malaysia joins the Security Council and the international community in condemning the horrific attacks in Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif, which took place on 6 December 2011. My delegation remains concerned on the continued targeted assassinations of high-ranking government officials, members of the security forces and influential local political and religious leaders. We also express our condolences to those who perished during an attack by insurgents on the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) facility in Kandahar on 31 October 2011. Our thoughts go to the victims and families of those affected by all these tragic incidents.

5. Of no less importance however is the increasing number of civilians killed in Afghanistan, and this is an issue which my delegation is particularly concerned. Last month, this Council heard the concern expressed by Ms. Navi Pillay, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, that the increase in civilian casualties was occurring, “in a climate characterized by a lack of accountability for serious violations on international law”.

6. While the deliberate targeting of civilians by anti-Government elements should rightfully be condemned, it is even more disturbing to note that pro-Government and NATO-led ISAF forces may be responsible for a significant percentage of the civilian casualties. Malaysia therefore calls upon all parties to respect both the letter and spirit of international humanitarian law, in order to win their hearts and minds of the Afghan people.

Mr. President,

7. Winning the battle for hearts and minds is something that Malaysia has persistently advocated, given our experience in dealing with the armed insurgencies during the formative years of Malaysia’s nationhood. Indeed, it was in this same spirit that we accepted the invitation by the Afghan Government to join the ISAF, and in July 2010 forty members of the Malaysian Armed Forces Medical Contingent (MALCON) were deployed to the Bamyan province.

8. Their mandate is to provide medical, dental and healthcare services to the Afghan civilian population, and they have since been recognised by their ISAF partners as well as the local populace, as providers of innovative solutions, sensitive to the local social and religious situation.

Mr. President,

9. I cannot stress further the value which Malaysia places on winning the hearts and minds of the Afghan people. It is within this context, as well as out of respect for the country’s democracy and constitution, non-violence and the rights of all Afghan people, that my delegation supports the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned reconciliation and reintegration process.

10. This is a political process which deserves the focus, attention, and support of the international community. We should now concentrate on non-military options, in order to complement and subsequently seal the gains which Afghanistan has achieved. My delegation believes that the way forward is to open a clear line of communication to engage with those leaders who disagree with the Government, yet renounce violence and accept the Afghan Constitution.

Mr. President,

11. Malaysia strongly believes that human capacity building represents an important building block in nation building, and in the case of Afghanistan, in rebuilding the country. Human capacity building is also the most practical way forward for Afghanistan to achieve greater and more sustainable growth and development. Towards this end, Malaysia will continue to provide technical assistance to Afghanistan under our various technical training and capacity building programmes.

12. As of October 2011, a total of 399 Afghans have benefited from the many Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP) courses in areas such as diplomacy, public administration, judiciary, banking, engineering and customs administration. The Malaysian Defence Cooperation Programme (MDCP) has provided training for several Afghan military officers in tactics and Arabic language. Malaysia also facilitates joint capacity building initiatives under our Third Country Training Programme (TCTP), such as the Malaysia-Australia Education Project for Afghanistan, which provides training of trainers for Afghan lecturers and teachers in Kuala Lumpur.

Mr. President,

13. Malaysia's commitment to the international community's efforts in supporting and assisting Afghanistan was further underlined by the presence of our Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Anifah Aman, at the recent International Conference on Afghanistan in Bonn, Germany on 5 December 2011. In this regard, my delegation reiterates its commitment to Afghanistan in the areas of governance, security, the peace process, economic and social development and regional cooperation, as agreed upon during the Conference.

Mr. President,

14. The International Conference on Afghanistan was given the theme "From Transition to the Transformation Decade". Malaysia looks forward to continue playing a meaningful role in Afghanistan's development, not just for the ten years of the transformation decade, but for many more decades to come.

I thank you, Mr. President.