



Malaysia

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR SADIK KETHERGANY, REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA,
ON AGENDA ITEM 38: THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN AT THE PLENARY OF THE 66th
SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, NEW YORK, 21 NOVEMBER 2011**

Mr. President,

Allow me at the outset to extend my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on the situation in Afghanistan, as contained in document A/66/369. The report provides a comprehensive description of the current situation in Afghanistan, and we take note of the valuable observations on possible courses of actions.

2. My delegation also extends our appreciation to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan Steffan de Mistura, as well as the members of the UN Assistant Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for their dedication in carrying out their duties under the prevailing challenging conditions in the country.

Mr. President,

3. My delegation wishes to take this opportunity to express our deep condolences to the Government and people of Afghanistan on the passing of the High Peace Council Chairman and former President Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani who was assassinated on 20 September 2011 in Kabul. My delegation would also like to share our thoughts and minds to the families of those who perished in the attack on the UNAMA office in Mazar-e-Sharif on 1 April 2011.

4. Ten years ago, Afghanistan was at an important turning point when the Security Council authorized the creation of the International Stabilisation Assistance Force (ISAF) to assist the then Afghan Interim Authority. Today Afghanistan is yet again at another turning point, with the transfer of security responsibilities from ISAF to the Afghan National Security Forces against the backdrop of the precarious security situation in Afghanistan.

5. We are concern on the increasing rate and number of civilian casualties that have occurred in the recent months. While we strongly condemn the deliberate targeting of civilians by anti-Government elements, we are equally disturbed by incidents of Afghan civilians who were killed in air strikes and night raids conducted by NATO-led ISAF forces. Malaysia abhors such incidents as it will only fuel anger in the Afghan people towards ISAF making it more difficult to win the hearts and minds of the people of Afghanistan.

Mr. President,

6. The battle to win the hearts and minds is one that Malaysia is familiar with, given our own experience in dealing with the armed insurgencies during the formative years of nationhood. It is in this genuine spirit of sharing our experiences that we have accepted the invitation by the Afghan Government to participate in ISAF.

7. In July 2010, Malaysia contributed a 40-member strong medical contingent to the Bamyan province, with a purpose of providing medical and healthcare services to the local population. The contribution of the Malaysian contingent has been recognised not only by their ISAF partners but also by the local populace, as providers of innovative healthcare solutions which took into consideration local socio-religious sensitivities.

8. The Malaysian doctors had successfully designed and constructed an inexpensive water filtration system in schools and villages meeting the local concerns that chlorination filtration methods was not '*hala'* or religiously permissible. The Malaysian medical team has also enlisted the assistance of the provincial heads or Grand Mullah to encourage the locals to come forward in the blood donations drive to save lives.

Mr. President,

9. The value that Malaysia places on winning the hearts and minds of the Afghan people cannot be underestimated. It is within this context of utmost respect for the country's democracy and constitution, non-violence as well as the rights of all Afghan people, that my delegation supports the reconciliation and reintegration process undertaken by the Afghan Government.

Mr. President,

10. My delegation strongly believes that human capacity building constitutes an important building block in the nation building process. Human capacity building is also the most practical way forward for Afghanistan to achieve greater and more sustainable growth and development.

11. In this regard, Malaysia is committed to continue to provide technical assistance to Afghanistan under our various technical cooperation programmes, including the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP), the Malaysian Defence Cooperation Programme (MDCP). Under the Third Country Training Programme (TCTP), the Malaysia-Australia Education Project for Afghanistan facilitates training of trainers for Afghan lecturers at a language institute in Kuala Lumpur.

12. It is through these measures, and with utmost regard for winning the hearts and minds of the Afghan people, that my delegation expresses its sincere commitment in supporting the Afghan Government in its efforts to achieving peace, security and stability in the country.

I thank you, Mr. President.