

**Statement by Mr. Gokhool on the situation in Afghanistan –**  
**19 July 2002**

Let me first of all convey my thanks and deep appreciation to you, Mr. President, for holding this public meeting on Afghanistan. I would also like to extend a very warm welcome to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Brahimi, and thank him for his useful and comprehensive briefing on the current situation in that country. My delegation commends the efforts of the Special Representative and his team in contributing to the success of the Loya Jirga process. The fair and transparent manner in which the process was carried out clearly indicates the willingness of the Afghan people to embrace the principles of democracy and the rule of law.

My delegation welcomes the positive and constructive steps taken to implement the Bonn Agreement, and we are particularly pleased to note the establishment of the Human Rights and Judicial Commissions. We also commend the work carried out so far by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in the rehabilitation process and in helping the Afghan women and children enjoy their inherent rights and freedom.

We congratulate the people of Afghanistan, who have shown their resilience, courage and determination to rebuild their country and to make it a safe place to live.

Now that the Transitional Authority is in place, the primary task that needs to be undertaken by the current leadership is to establish a political and institutional infrastructure that will facilitate the economic and social reconstruction of Afghanistan. Security throughout the country will have to be given priority on the agenda. The recent incidents of violence and the assassination of Haji Qadir show that the security situation in Afghanistan is still under threat. We welcome the commission established by the Transitional Authority to carry out an enquiry on the assassination of the Vice-President.

The insecurity prevailing in Afghanistan is a matter of concern to my delegation. Although the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) is

doing its best to maintain peace in Kabul, serious incidents of threats and armed attacks continue to disrupt the life of the ordinary Afghan citizen. It is important to accelerate the process of the formation of the Afghan police force, which will have to shoulder the responsibility of maintaining peace and security throughout Afghanistan on its own.

We welcome the holding of the recent Afghan Support Group meeting in Geneva this month. We are happy to note that donor countries and international organizations have committed themselves to \$1.8 billion in aid to the country for the year 2002, and a total of \$4.5 billion over the years. We appeal to the donors to fulfil their pledges.

It is also important that the people of Afghanistan collaborate with the international community in order to realize the projects that will be put in place. We agree with the observations of Minister Ashraf Ghani that the problems of Afghanistan require a joint approach to stabilize the country and to bring it security, economic growth and development.

The humanitarian situation in Afghanistan merits the international community's urgent attention. The return of more than half a million Afghan refugees leads to enormous strains in Kabul. Internally displaced persons need to be reintegrated into the society, since they constitute an important element in building the human and social capital in Afghanistan. Without international support, it would be difficult for the Transitional Authority to cope with the rapid influx of refugees and internally displaced persons, who are already suffering from malnutrition, food insecurity and socio-economic vulnerability.

On the question of drug trafficking and drug control programmes, the efforts undertaken by the Interim Administration and its commitment to poppy eradication need to be commended. The decree against the cultivation of poppies should not be undermined for any reason.

The establishment of the Ministry of Women's Affairs under the Interim Authority is yet another major achievement. As the country moves ahead in its democratization process, it is my delegation's view that the Interim Authority should continue to maintain the momentum in supporting the advancement of women and their integration in all recovery programmes. We support all efforts undertaken in strengthening the Ministry of Women's Affairs to allow for better planning and coordination of the

gender issue and women's rights. We sincerely hope that this institution will increase women's participation in the civil service and allow them to take higher responsibilities in other sectors, such as justice and administration, and at decision-making levels.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation for the comprehensive report prepared by the United Kingdom on ISAF during its first six months of operation. ISAF's contribution to improving the security situation in Kabul has been very positive in regard to the establishment of law and order and in maintaining security. We are confident that under its Turkish command ISAF will continue along the same path. We support the recommendations made by the Secretary-General for the limited expansion of ISAF outside Kabul. Such expansion should, in the first place, focus on the security and protection of aid workers, particularly in sensitive and remote areas.