

**Statement on the Situation in Afghanistan by Hon. Minister
Gayan - 30 January 2002**

I thank Mr. Karzai for his kind words expressed to this institution. I shall now make a statement on behalf of the members of the Council.

On behalf of the members of the Council, let me extend once again a warm welcome to the Chairman of the Afghan Interim Authority, Mr. Hamid Karzai, and his delegation to the Security Council. We thank you for your statement on the situation in your country.

At the very outset, allow me to assure you of the Council's unqualified and unreserved support for your quest for peace, justice and stability in Afghanistan. The Council remains committed to helping advance this process, which is on the right track. We stand ready to extend the necessary assistance to the people of Afghanistan, who have suffered virtually every privation known to mankind and who deserve a better future.

The Security Council reaffirms its wholehearted commitment to supporting the Interim Authority and the transitional process. In that light, we welcome the International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan held in Tokyo and the efforts of the Afghan Support Group, as well as bilateral donors, as they are vital and integral to assisting the Interim Authority. Council members emphasize that rapid disbursement of assistance and good coordination in its delivery, in full cooperation with the Interim Authority, are essential.

The Security Council expresses its concern about the episodes of lawlessness in Afghanistan. It commends the efforts of those States contributing to the International Security Assistance Force and welcomes the progress the International Security Assistance Force is making in assisting in the restoration of security in Kabul and its surrounding areas. We emphasize that the United Nations and

nongovernmental relief operations must be allowed to operate in security and with full freedom of movement, particularly in those areas most in need of humanitarian assistance.

In all its decisions, the Security Council has stressed the point that it is for the people of Afghanistan themselves to freely determine their own future. The Security Council will continue to support all efforts based on the Bonn Agreement, leading to the formation of a Government in Afghanistan that should be broad-based, multi-ethnic and fully representative of all the Afghan people and committed to peace with its neighbours. It is essential for the Afghan Interim Authority and for a new Government of Afghanistan to fully respect the basic human rights of all Afghan people, regardless of gender, ethnicity or religion.

There is still a lot to do to assist the Afghan people in what appears to be one of the most challenging and imposing tasks of our time. For real success to be achieved in the Afghan political stabilization, we believe that the following two issues, among others, need urgent attention.

First, the reconciliation, reconstruction and rehabilitation process should not be derailed by any outside pressure or intervention. Here we appeal to the international community to continue extending its valuable support to the Afghan Interim Authority in order to take the country away from the legacy of war, misery and instability.

Secondly, it is high time that leaders and representatives of different ethnic groups within Afghanistan forwent their differences and invested in the construction of a nation with sound democratic credentials.

The members of the Security Council take good note of the decree banning the cultivation, production, processing, abuse and illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs, which was issued on 17 January under your signature, Sir. Likewise, we welcome the decree on the rights of women. Such bold steps prove that the Interim Authority is resolute in its objective of reinstating peace and stability in

Afghanistan as well as creating the conditions for Afghans to lead a normal life.

We also welcome the appointment of women to key positions in the new administration, including in the Cabinet. Council members recognize that the success of the Bonn Agreement will depend on the people of Afghanistan themselves.

The Security Council welcomes the central role played by the United Nations in assisting Afghanistan and expresses its full support for the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, in the accomplishment of his mandate.

It would be remiss on our part not to mention the significant contribution made by the humanitarian agencies and their staff, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and all the non-governmental organizations in Afghanistan. The Security Council underscores the importance of ensuring their security.

Finally, Sir, on behalf of the members, I appeal to all Afghans and to the United Nations Member States to build on the momentum created through your efforts and those of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, so that the institutions and mechanisms put in place by the Interim Authority could operate smoothly towards a better future for the Afghan people.