



**Permanent Mission of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
to the United Nations**

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Statement

by

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Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
to the United Nations

Open VTC on UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)

United Nations Security Council

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Thank you, Madam President,

I also thank our briefers for their passionate, comprehensive and insightful presentations. [Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan and Head of UNAMA Deborah Lyons, Director of UNODC Ghada Fathi Waly, and Shaharзад Akbar, Chairperson for the Independent Human Rights Commission]

Madam President,

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines remains firmly committed to supporting Afghanistan on the path to stability and peace. We welcome the efforts of President Ghani and Mr. Abdullah, which culminated in the signing of a power-sharing Agreement on 17 May, aimed at ending the months-long political impasse in Afghanistan. This Agreement helps deepen the public support for the future intra-Afghan negotiations and broaden the understanding and support of the outcome. In our view, unity and cooperation through inclusive national dialogue and leadership are necessary to address the needs and challenges faced by the country. We believe, too, that intra-Afghan talks should include women and youth, which are essential for an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process and fundamental to an inclusive negotiated political settlement.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines remains deeply concerned by the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. According to the report, the spread of COVID-19 had serious implications for the humanitarian situation in view of continued conflict-related displacement, population returns, poverty and food insecurity. My delegation calls on the international humanitarian community and national partners to renew

their commitment to the humanitarian needs of people in Afghanistan. Additionally, the armed conflict remains the deadliest for children. There have been reports of sexual violence against children and incidents of attacks against schools and protected personnel. *We agree, wholeheartedly, with SRSO Lyons that if ever there was a prayer for peace it will, most certainly, echo the voices of these children.* In this connection, we reiterate our call for greater protection of civilians, particularly women, children and displaced persons, and respect for international human rights law.

Turning to the 2020 Pledging Conference on Afghanistan scheduled for later this year, we encourage the international community as well as the Afghan government to renew their commitments to the mutual objectives to coordinate the development cooperation in Afghanistan. We urge greater support to the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF) to promote inclusivity, resilience and sustainability in accordance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Madam President,

I feel compelled to highlight a significant fact that is not mentioned in the Report of the Secretary General. The situation in Afghanistan, which has been affected by years of war, is further compounded by the fact that this is one of the most climate vulnerable countries in the world and the environmental impacts of war, and resultant damage to critical infrastructure, has made it one of the least equipped to handle these challenges. The consequences of flooding, drought and lack of irrigation for crops contribute to continued instability in Afghanistan. We call on major emitters and all member states to significantly reduce their emissions in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement. We further call on member states to fulfil

their responsibilities regarding climate finance for adaptation and loss and damage caused by climate change. We can only call on Afghans to address what is within their power and control. The impact of human induced climate change on this country is palpable and caused by external forces far beyond its borders. Climate change is one in a deadly mix of factors at play, but it is too-often overlooked. This truth, as inconvenient as it may be, must be acknowledged so that we may comprehensively address the climate-induced security risks that undermine stability in Afghanistan. Without action on this front, lasting peace may remain elusive.

In conclusion, Madam President, we reiterate our support for UNAMA and our commitment to a successful and sustainable Afghan peace process.

I thank you!