



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

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Statement

by

**Ms. Diani Jamesha Prince
Counsellor**

At the

Open VTC on The Situation in Afghanistan

United Nations Security Council
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Mr. President,

At the outset, we thank you for convening today's meeting and we also convey our appreciation to Ms. Deborah Lyons and Mr. Saad Mohseni for their informative briefings. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines commends the ongoing efforts of UNAMA to promote a durable political settlement and lasting peace in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is currently at a critical juncture, as the volatile security and political situations have been further compounded by the spread of COVID-19, natural disasters, food insecurity, and other humanitarian concerns. More is expected of the United Nations; in particular, to lead the international efforts towards a peaceful solution to the nearly two-decades-long conflict in the country, and to coordinate the provision of humanitarian assistance. We appeal to the international donor community to renew their support to Afghanistan and to cooperate closely with the United Nations to ensure that the urgent humanitarian needs are addressed.

We also emphasize the importance of regional consensus, which is imperative for the success of intra-Afghan peace and reconciliation. As we look towards the upcoming intra-Afghan negotiations, regional partners of Afghanistan should engage constructively in support of an Afghan-led and owned peace process. We also call on regional partners to strengthen relations and facilitate direct peace talks with the Taliban.

Mr. President,

In the area of security, the situation in Afghanistan remains unpredictable and highly volatile. We strongly condemn all acts of violence and intimidation directed against civilians, the Afghan National Security Forces, the United Nations and other humanitarian personnel, and other collateral targets. We reaffirm our serious concerns over the number of civilian casualties reported by UNAMA in its midyear update on the protection of civilians, and reiterate our full support to a zero-tolerance approach for addressing serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Afghanistan, especially against women and children. The rights of all Afghans must be respected, in line with the Afghan Constitution and international law.

We echo, once more, the Secretary-General's calls for a global ceasefire, which is an imperative for successful intra-Afghan negotiations.

In conclusion, we reaffirm our strong commitment to UNAMA and the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan. We remain convinced that a durable political solution to the conflict can only be achieved through an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process, which ensures the full, equal and effective participation of women in decision making processes at all levels.

Thank you, Mr. President.