

**REMARKS GIVEN BY H.E. MR. PAUL HEINBECKER, AMBASSADOR AND
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CANADA TO THE UNITED NATIONS TO
THE SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN MEETING ON THE SITUATION IN
AFGHANISTAN**

New York, Tuesday, 26 March 2002

Madame President,

I thank you for the opportunity to speak before the Council on the situation in Afghanistan.

The response we have seen today to this open debate speaks clearly of the international community's concern about the well-being of the Afghan people and the need to find a lasting solution to the protracted crises affecting their country.

Canadians are profoundly concerned with the unstable humanitarian situation in Afghanistan and with the need to protect Afghan civilians, including the displaced within its borders and the refugees beyond.

The UN, especially in its representatives on the ground, led by Mr. Brahimi and also by Mr. Fisher, have provided sound leadership, in trying to address the governance challenge, the security imperative and the urgent humanitarian need.

We can only commend this leadership and urge its continuation and perseverance.

Canada welcomes the report of the Secretary General on the situation in Afghanistan.

It is clear, timely and detailed. The Interim Administration is laying important foundations for peace - through building representative governance structures, seeking to ensure the rule of law, promoting respect for human rights and the implementation of sound economic policies.

Much has been done in the first three months of the administration, and while the task ahead is an onerous one, we congratulate the Afghan Interim Administration on the progress they have made to date under very difficult conditions.

It is most gratifying to see schools reopen and to see girls attend.

The preparations for the Emergency Loya Jirga in June will be key to installing a broadly representative administration to oversee the reconstruction of Afghanistan in coming years.

The continuing work of the Special Commission is critical to its success, and we urge the Commission to ensure that the process remains equitable and transparent.

We are pleased that Afghan women are included in the administration.

We encourage the Administration and the United Nations to ensure that women be full partners in their respective decision-making processes, and to ensure that resources are devoted to this important facet of their work.

Not for political correctness reasons.

Old boys with old approaches will prolong old problems, not generate new solutions.

Let Afghanistan draw on the proven models of Turkey and Bangladesh in involving women in public life and the professions.

We urge that every effort be made to establish the independent Human Rights Commission and the Judicial Commission called for in Bonn.

It is also important to continue to ensure that the civil service is transparent and representative of all tribal and ethnic groups.

The most recent poppy crop, due to be harvested in March, will be another challenge.

It is essential that the Interim Administration do what it can to reduce the incentives for poppy production and provide alternatives for farmer, including reformed rural credit systems.

It goes almost without saying that the international community and the UN must support these efforts.

Canada is contributing to stability and peace in Afghanistan through many channels, including our military contributions to the coalition, our direct support for the Interim Administration, and the provision of additional humanitarian assistance and funds for longer term reconstruction.

Militarily, as part of international efforts to ensure security, Canada has deployed a 900 ground troops to Afghanistan to work with the US forces in Khandahar through Operation Enduring Freedom.

This brings the total contribution of the Canadian Forces to some 3,000 troops (*2,443 in theatre as of today*).

As chair of the G-8 group of nations this year, Canada is also promoting discussions on the challenge of reintegration, disarmament and demobilisation in the Afghanistan context.

The G-8 summit in Kananaskis will seek to address these issues and how to catalyse support.

Financially, Canada's support of the Interim Administration is also part of our ongoing commitment to the people of Afghanistan and the long-term stability of the country.

In January, Canada deposited our \$1.5 million contribution to support the Afghan Interim Administration with the UNDP, and last week we announced an additional \$1.5 million contribution to the Interim Fund.

This brings our total contribution to this fund to \$3 million.

This amount is in addition to the \$24 million in assistance Canada has provided to Afghanistan during our current fiscal year -- \$16 million since September 11 alone.

In the recent federal budget, Canada allocated an additional \$100 million to address the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan and the region, as well as reconstruction needs.

Last week the first \$30.2 million phase of this commitment was allocated to UN agencies and other partners in support of activities such as de-mining, health, refugee reintegration, humanitarian assistance, education, security, peacebuilding and women's initiatives.

The UN clearly has the central coordinating role to play in the international support that is being offered to Afghanistan.

Canada fully supports the leadership of Lakhdar Brahimi in his capacity as Special Representative of the Secretary General.

We welcome the recent appointments of Nigel Fisher and Jean Arnault as the Deputy Special Representatives who will assist Mr. Brahimi in his work.

It is our hope that the proposed structure for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), as outlined in the report of the Secretary General, will ensure a coordinated approach to the complex task that lies ahead.

The UN role in channelling financial support and providing advice to the Interim Administration is key.

It is essential that the UN agencies work together in an efficient and effective and coordinated way.

Effective coordination between agencies and pillars will avoid duplication and ensure that every dollar of international assistance is put to good use in meeting the pressing needs of the Afghan people.

Donor coordination is equally important.

The Interim Administration can and should play a critical role in program development and funding allocation.

Thank you.