

On behalf of the Brazilian Government, it gives me great pleasure to thank the Government of Turkmenistan for hosting this important event. It is a key opportunity for the region and for international partners to confirm their support to Afghanistan and to find new ways of intensifying regional economic cooperation. This is the seventh RECCA Conference and it is Brazil's sincere hope that Afghanistan will be able to fulfill the great potential bestowed by its rich natural resources, by its privileged location, by its ancient civilization and by the strength and generosity of the Afghan people.

Brazil fully appreciates the collective effort of many nations which are concerned with peace and prosperity for Afghanistan, and in particular the work of UNAMA and other agencies and staff, performed under very trying circumstances in the country. Building a safer, more democratic and more prosperous Afghanistan requires both learning from past experience and exploring new paths. It is necessary to find effective solutions to current challenges and to foster a genuine process of national reconciliation that will lead to a lasting and sustainable peace in Afghanistan. A stable Afghanistan will have positive effects in the neighboring countries and also farther afield, by containing the flow of Afghan refugees.

Brazil warmly welcomes some very positive developments in Afghanistan, as the announcement of elections in July of next year; the renewed impetus for the fight against corruption; the plan for women empowerment; the election of Afghanistan to the United Nations Human Rights Council; and the accession of Afghanistan to the Protocol against the Smuggling

of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

One of the best contributions to assist Afghanistan and its society is building capacity. Despite not being able at this stage to pledge financial support to the country, Brazil has offered technical cooperation to Afghanistan. The Brazilian Agency for Cooperation and the University of Lavras - a leading institution in agricultural sciences - have offered to implement a project on agricultural practices through farmer education, aiming to foster the dynamics of the agricultural supply networks in Afghanistan. Even though some internal difficulties have been preventing so far the Government of Afghanistan from benefitting from this offer, we trust this cooperation may be confirmed and that it will produce multiplying effects.

The Brazilian Government has also installed this year a Honorary Consulate of Brazil in Kabul, under the able guidance of Mr Hijrat Zakhilwal, CEO of the Silkaram Group. We are confident that the new Honorary Consul will help promoting locally the trade and the cooperation between the two countries.

Peace, security and development are mutually reinforcing. It is paramount for the international community to continue to support the reconstruction and the development efforts in Afghanistan. Brazil is also committed to this noble effort. Thank you very much for your kind attention.