



STATEMENT

by

H.E. Mr. Emomali Rahmon,

President of the Republic of Tajikistan

at

the General Debates of the 64th session of the UN General Assembly

23 September 2009, New York

Distinguished Mr. President,

Distinguished Mr. Secretary-General,

Distinguished Colleagues and Heads of Delegations,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to congratulate esteemed Dr. Ali Abdussalam Treki on the election to the office of the President of the 64th UNGA session.

I am confident that your extensive diplomatic experience and talent will contribute to the fruitful and successful work of this UNGA session.

Distinguished colleagues,

Over the last decades the world has made considerable progress in the technological, information, economic and social development, which, due to **globalization**, is being spread across the world.

However, the negative aspects of this phenomenon such as international terrorism, extremism, transnational organized crime, narcotics aggression, outburst of pandemics, and emerging ecological challenges pose a serious threat to the international community.

The United Nations plays the key role in coordination of the Member States' efforts in order to effectively meet the challenges of modern times and to attain the Millennium Development Goals.

Tajikistan regards the UN peacekeeping operations as one of the major areas of the UN activities.

Last year for the first time ever the citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan joined the police forces in peace keeping operations in order to make their contribution to strengthening peace and stability in conflict zones. The National Strategy on Development of Peacekeeping capacity of Tajikistan is currently being elaborated.

Tajikistan gives primary importance to **strengthening the disarmament processes.**

Our hope is that at the *2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference* a constructive exchange of views on urgent issues concerning practical realization of this document will take place. We are convinced that the establishment of nuclear free zones is equally important both at the regional and global levels.

Given the above, Tajikistan is prepared to enhance the work on practical implementation of the provisions of the Treaty on nuclear free zone in Central Asia that came into effect on March 21, 2009.

We support the leading role of the UN in combating illicit trade in **small arms and light weapons**, and hope that important measures for coordination of further steps in this direction will be developed at the next meeting to be convened for consideration of the Program of Action.

Tajikistan supports the striving of the international community to achieve **comprehensive prohibition of anti-personnel mines**, and meets its commitments with regard to the Ottawa Convention by providing to the UN Secretary-General the information concerning the mine risk on annual basis.

The first International conference to address the issues of consequences of mining was held in Dushanbe in June 2009.

Over a long period of time Tajikistan has experienced the consequences of mining. We believe that Central Asia must be free from mining threat, and we call upon the international community to make its contribution to achieve this noble goal.

The international community continues combating terrorism, extremism, transnational organized crime and illicit drug trafficking.

When all these threats are merged together it gives rise to a greater concern, therefore, we consider it essential to expedite the adoption of the **Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism**. Double standards should be excluded from this area of work, given the fact that terrorism does not have any national or religious affiliations.

Prevention of illicit drug trafficking is an integral part of the common struggle against terrorism. Tajikistan has developed bilateral, regional, and multilateral short-term and long-term programs of action, and ratified about 30 intergovernmental agreements.

The Antidrug Agency that was established under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, with the active involvement of the UN, has already been in existence for over a decade. In terms of the amount of confiscated drugs, Tajikistan is rated as Number 1 on the post-soviet territory, and as Number 4 in the world. The total value of heroin confiscated during these years, provided it is appraised in terms of its average price in Europe, is estimated at 1.12 billion US dollars. This initiative helped save more than 36 million human lives from drug addiction. The initiative of Tajikistan to establish "*an anti narcotics safety belt*" around Afghanistan was for the first time voiced from the lofty rostrum of the General Assembly at its 20th Special session in 1998.

We believe that rendering assistance to Afghanistan for target programs could become one of the ways of counteracting the drug threat emanated from this country. Regrettably, the efforts undertaken by the international community and the resources allocated by it to address this issue are not always sufficient for counteracting the ever increasing narcotics aggression. In our view, the borders of the countries neighboring Afghanistan should be regarded as the front line of this struggle, and the reinforcement efforts should be enhanced. All these years Tajikistan has acted as a buffer zone preventing spread of narcotics, terrorism, extremism and other negative phenomena emanating from this area.

We are profoundly interested **in strengthening peace and stability in neighboring Afghanistan** because security for Central Asia in every respect depends on the situation in Afghanistan. Today it is obvious that the Afghan issue can not be resolved only through military means, and requires a comprehensive approach that would account for all factors involved. First and foremost, social and educational projects and programs should be implemented. We support the current efforts at peaceful rehabilitation, and believe that the international strategy of action in Afghanistan should, to a larger extent, rely upon the Afghan people themselves, and priority should be given to ensuring close and efficient cooperation with the country's authorities.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The situation in the world is rapidly changing because of **the financial and economic crisis**. It does not merely undermine our efforts and capacity to achieve the Millennium Development Goals but makes us face new complex tasks. We highly appreciate the UN role and efforts at addressing the current “triple crisis” and mitigation of its consequences.

It is known that the global financial and economic crisis was primarily caused by the most advanced and wealthy countries that unreasonably inflated banking assets at the expense of unsecured loans.

For this reason, we believe that these countries must bear its share of responsibility towards the developing countries, whose rather difficult situation was even more aggravated by the global financial crisis. Partial writing off the debts incurred during the crisis, consistent increase in donor assistance, and rational use of labor migration could be very helpful in such situation.

In my opinion, it is high time that numerous forums were replaced with actual practical support of the efforts undertaken by the developing countries at mitigating the impact of the crisis and overcoming it, otherwise the long-continued crisis may be fraught with even more serious consequences.

Along with other Member States, Tajikistan supported the outcome of the UN Conference on the World Financial and Economy Crisis and Its Impact on Development.

We highly appreciate the efforts undertaken by the High Level Task Force on Global Food Security Crisis, and deem it necessary to enhance assistance to the developing countries in rendering financial and economic support, transfer of technology and seeds.

Meanwhile, our opinion is that the efforts at solving the problems caused by the energy crisis have not been very successful. We believe that alongside with the MDGs, access to energy should be given top priority.

Tajikistan, who ranks eighth in the world in terms of availability of hydropower resources, the total amount of which is estimated at 527 billion kWt/h, currently utilizes less than 5 percent of its potential, and over the last 18 years has faced the energy crisis for 8 months of every year, primarily in autumn and winter seasons. In recent years shortage of energy has been coupled with

abnormally severe and long winters, due to climate change. It is absolutely logical that in the absence of explored hydrocarbonic resources Tajikistan is developing its hydropower engineering, in a consistent and comprehensive manner.

Completion of the construction of a number of small, medium and large hydropower stations will contribute to providing energy not only to the entire Central Asia but to the neighboring countries as well. In this regard, implementation of such regional projects as CASA-1000 will define the prospects of development of our vast region, including Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The ever increasing needs in cost efficient and environmentally sound energy require construction of hydropower stations and water reservoirs, which play the key role in providing guaranteed volumes of water, especially in the years of drought.

As hydropower facilities generate energy by utilizing water rather than by consuming it, hydropower engineering plays an important role for development of the water-energy and socio-economic sectors, and for environmental protection not only in Tajikistan, but in the entire Central Asian region.

Distinguished Colleagues,

Global climate change requires a comprehensive and integrated approach towards the use of natural resources. We are deeply convinced that the Copenhagen session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change will approve a new comprehensive agreement on this issue.

Every year **natural disasters** cause severe damage to agriculture, environment and the entire economy of such countries as Tajikistan, 93 % of the territory of which are covered with mountains.

The damage done to our country's economy in recent years by such natural disasters as mud flows, land slides and floods is estimated at hundreds of millions US dollars. Unfortunately, that was paired with human casualties.

Assessment of climate change impact on the Tajikistan's glaciers proved that during the period of observation that started in 1930 the total area of the glaciers has been reduced approximately by one third. Since glaciers and snowcaps are the main sources for water discharge

into the rivers there is a probability that in the near future the rivers flows will be diminished by 5 to 15 per cent.

At the same time water consumption has increased, due to the demographic growth and expanded area of irrigated lands. In the previous century alone, the total area of irrigated land increased from 2.5 million hectares to 9 million hectares, while the population of Central Asia grew from 20 million in 1956 to 63 million people, as of today.

Under the circumstances the countries of the region should review their programs and strategies with regard to water use, especially in agriculture, and should take consolidated actions in favor of sustainable development.

From this lofty rostrum, we would like to once again, remind everyone of the problems caused by the degradation of the Aral Sea. The use of land, on a large scale, for cultivating such agricultural crops as cotton and rice, which consume a lot of water, has become the major cause of this ecological disaster.

The most reasonable solutions to the current situation, which is characterized by salinization of soil and irretrievable losses of irrigation water in the amount from 30 up to 60 percent, would be adopting specific water saving measures such as rehabilitation of irrigation systems, reclamation of irrigated land, introduction of advanced irrigation technologies, and partial replacement of cotton and rice with less water consuming crops, which would also help to address the issues of food crisis.

Only an integrated and mutually advantageous approach of the countries of the region towards the use of water energy and other natural resources can help resolve the interrelated energy, food and environment problems, and ensure sustainable development of Central Asia.

It is anything but a secret that mankind is already facing the problem of shortage of fresh water, which is not accessible to more than one billion people on the planet; and in some countries the price of freshwater currently exceeds the price of gasoline.

Being one of those countries that have the largest amounts of freshwater resources in the world, Tajikistan is convinced that creation of an economic mechanism for cross flows of water and energy resources between the upper stream countries that are rich in water resources, and the down stream countries where hydro carbonic deposits are primarily located, would promote long-term mutually advantageous cooperation among the states.

Having proposed the idea of utilization of pristine clean freshwater from Lake Sarez to meet the needs of the population in the entire region we suggest specific measures in this area.

Our hope is that the UN, other international organizations, regional commissions and relevant institutions can render constructive assistance to this issue, which is of utmost significance for our region.

As the initiator of the *International Year of Freshwater, 2003* and the *International Decade of Action "Water for Life", 2005-2010* Tajikistan believes that it is of paramount importance to expedite the implementation of the UN water agenda, and to supplement it with achieving the Decade goals.

The World Water Day on March 22, 2010 will mark the fifth year since the commencement of the Water Decade. In this regard, Tajikistan proposes to hold on this day a High level Dialogue of the UN General Assembly to discuss the implementation of the *International Water Decade* and the *Millennium Development Goals* on water and sanitation. This event can become a milestone to a midterm review of the implementation of the half of the Decade, and evaluation of progress in the achievement of MDGs.

My Government has already put forward a proposal to hold in Dushanbe in 2010 a Conference for a midterm review, which would serve as one of the preparatory events for the *UN Summit on MDGs 2010*. I do hope that this initiative will find understanding and receive support from all Member States.

Taking into consideration the water crises that was aggravated by the growth of population and global climate change, the international community should take specific measures to ensure equitable and integrated use of water resources in order to meet the needs of people, environment and economies of all countries.

To this end, the Republic of Tajikistan proposed to declare the year *2012 as the International year of Water Diplomacy*, with the aim to develop, within the UN, further coordinated steps towards rational use of water resources at the national, regional and international levels. Our country has the intention to further advance this issue at the UN General Assembly, and hope for support from Member States.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Next year will mark the beginning of the third 5 year term on the way towards the achievement of the MDGs by the international community. The year 2010 will become a landmark in taking stock of our efforts at meeting global challenges, overcoming difficulties, and at evaluating progress in the attainment of the goals outlined in the Millennium Declaration.

In conclusion, I would like to underline that as an advocate of a broad based cooperation, Tajikistan believes that only collective and coordinated efforts and effective regional and international cooperation can serve as a foundation for success in this area.

Mutual understanding and cooperation that have prevailed in this Organization since the time of its establishment remain the only way to a bright and clear future, to universal peace and prosperity.

Thank you for your attention.