



PERMANENT MISSION OF TURKMENISTAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

by H.E. Dr. Aksoltan Ataeva
Chairperson of the delegation of Turkmenistan

at the General Debate
of the 60th session of the General Assembly

United Nations, New York
21 September 2005

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to congratulate you on the election to this high post and to express our confidence in your successful and professional implementation of the mandate entrusted to you.

Allow me to also express our gratitude to Mr. Jean Ping for his untiring activity in the management of the 59th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman,
Heads of delegations,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Last week the High-Level Plenary Meeting has concluded its work resulting in the adoption of the outcome document which reflects its commitment to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

The United Nations is an irreplaceable structure of multilateral interstate interaction. Therefore, the question on how it will answer the hopes and aspirations of every member, will depend its viability.

We agree with the Secretary-General that United Nations "remains fully engaged in conflict resolution, peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, defense of human rights, and development around the world".

We support proposals contained in the Outcome document on strengthening the United Nations in areas of development, ensuring collective security, fight against terrorism, ensuring dignity of person and reforms of the Organization.

We are for strengthening the role of the United Nations, for more transparency in its work, improvement of structure and content in the activity of its bodies on the basis of a wide consensus of Organization's Member-States.

We welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General directed at prevention of conflicts, strengthening preventive activity in this area.

With regard to struggle against terrorism, we support activity of Counterterrorism Committee of Security Council. Its role is invaluable in terms of coordination, exchange of information and analysis of tendencies.

Mr. Chairman,

The present session is devoted to appraisal of progress made by the States in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Therefore allow me to share with you information on how Turkmenistan is implementing these goals.

Reforms that are being implemented in Turkmenistan in the economic and social sphere, in accordance with the National program of social and economic development for the period till 2020, have assisted in creation of a powerful industrial potential, formation of market model of administration and public sector of economy, and in ensuring dignified conditions of life for the population.

Turkmenistan possesses huge energy resources. The gas and oil industries are the main sources of development of the national economy. The energy potential of Turkmenistan is currently estimated at more, than 45 billion tons of an oil equivalent that makes it the fifth part of all world reserves of natural gas and oil.

Thanks to the national programs developed in the early years of independence and implemented reforms, a new type of industry has been created in the country. Turkmenistan by its own national means has invested 30 billion US dollars in the national economy, and has built over 1,050 buildings of industrial nature, factories and plants equipped with the advanced, hi-tech equipment.

Oil-and-gas, energy, textile, food processing industries, which are basically new in the domestic economy branches, are successfully developing.

Textile industry has become another area of development. Thanks to the construction of the new specialized enterprises and large integrated textile complexes, large-scale production of various cotton-fiber products was organized and 60 % of it is exported. Textile industry makes up 28% of overall volume of production in the processing sector of the country.

The agrarian sector of the national economy has undergone complete reconstruction. Since the middle of 1995 all collective and state farms have been abolished. Reform has been directed at transferring land to private property and long-term lease, expanding the areas of personal lots. The Government has undertaken measures to generate private agricultural production. Half of the cost for the technical services is boum by the State. The population of the country is exempted from payment of taxes on land, houses, constructions and maintenance of cattle and poultry. All of these and other measures have promoted the rise of agriculture and growth of its production.

In 2005 Turkmenistan has had a record 3.1 million tons harvest of wheat in its entire history. At current stage of development the consumer market of the country is mainly formed by domestic production, practically ensuring food independence of the country.

Turkmenistan attaches great importance to the creation and expansion of the railway infrastructure that corresponds to the highest modern requirements. Today, extent of railway system of Turkmenistan makes 2,516 km. In recent years two new railways were constructed and the third one is under way which increased their overall length by 500 km.

In 1997, Tedzhen-Serakhs-Meshkhed railway was constructed and was put into operation. Its length is 308 km, 132 of which is on the territory of Turkmenistan

Today Turkmenistan has become an vital part of common international transport system — the Trans-Asiatic highway recreating a steel variant of the Ancient Silk Road which connects Turkmenistan to the countries of Europe and the Asian continent and promotes its common social and economic development.

Turkmenistan attaches great importance to social protection of the population. Ensuring dignified standard of living, security, rights and freedoms of citizens, and strengthening the legal basis of society which comprises the meaning of internal policy of the country. During the whole period of transition the President and Government provided social support to the population. Since 1993 Turkmenistan has been giving to its the citizens gas, electricity, water and a food salt health services and an opportunity to receive education free-of-charge. There is minimal price for housing, use of communications and public transportation, practically every year wages, stipends and pensions are doubled. In 2005 they were doubled again. By the decree of the People's Council of August 15, 2003 the free-of-charge use of natural gas, electric power, potable water and salt has been extended till 2020.

Workers of the country have annual paid vacations for 24 calendar days. Maternity leave is given to women and is paid in place of their work. Citizens are given paid 10 days leave with in cases of weddings or funerals. Orphans are given full state provision.

Large-scale housing development programme is carried out in the country. Highly comfortable, with improved lay-out of houses are transferred to the possession of citizens on favorable terms: on credit for the period of 15 years, and part of cost is covered by the employer of the owner-to-be. The state provides social support to those having many children, needy families, invalids, lone old people. Public sector participation in granting social services, public health services, education and culture is expanded. Volume and a spectrum of paid services given to the population have increased.

Free and wide-spread availability of education provide a high educational level and literacy of the population of Turkmenistan.

Turkmenistan has achieved significant progress in such important sphere as maintenance of the rights and protection of interests of children, which, in turn, is evident acknowledgement of steady fulfillment by the country of obligations according to the Convention on the rights of the child. From early days of independence the Turkmen state has shown the world community a responsible approach to questions of maintenance of optimum conditions of life for the young citizens, the promotion of well-being is a priority direction of a State policy. Together with UNICEF, we successfully implement programs for the protection of motherhood and children, development of children and promotion of well-being of the youth. The country achieved wide immunization coverage that has led to significant reduction in level of diseases caused by infectious illnesses, a lot of work is carried out in the field of health protection of motherhood and childhood, considerable achievements are evident in areas of education and social protection. In fact, Turkmenistan is the fourth country in the world recognized by the United Nations as the State which has provides universal iodized salt according to accepted international standards. In this connection it was noted, that today our country consistently carries out obligations which not only struggles with iodine deficiency, but also with regard to the resolution of the problem of deficiency of micronutrients, necessary for development of a growing children's organism.

Turkmenistan successfully held seminars and trainings aimed at improvement of health of younger generation, introduced innovative methods of upbringing and education, propagated healthy way of life, increase of a standard of well-being of youth, and also prevention HIV/AIDS.

In carrying out reform of public healthcare services the structure of a primary unit of public health has been improved. For years of independence in Turkmenistan the large medical centers equipped with the highly advanced technological equipment, providing wide spectrum of medical, advisory - diagnostic and rehabilitation services have been built. Medical insurance of citizens is successfully being implemented in the country. The system of medical insurance provides citizens with a number of privileges for medical services, including purchases of medical products at a 90 % discount in the State pharmacies. Alongside with free-of-charge medical aid more active development is received by system of paid health services both in public and private healthcare services.

Currently, there are 1,704 high schools in Turkmenistan where more than 1 million children are educated. 15 medium special and 16 higher educational institutions operate. Boys and girls study 16 specialties in the medium special schools and 182 specialties in higher educational institutions.

During many centuries Turkmenistan was a crossroad from East to West and from South to North and played a role of a key link of the Great Silk Road which served as a road of peace and dialogue of cultures for almost one and a half thousand years. This led to the creation on the Turkmen land of special atmosphere, and it is not accidental therefore that the national mentality of the Turkmens in the essence was generated as international, oriented towards an individual as supreme value, in its foundation there is openness, tolerance, respect for culture of other peoples, natural peaceful disposition.

In political system of the State the important role belongs to institutions of a civil society. Public associations, professional and creative unions take active participation in the determination of economic, social and cultural policies of the State.

The choice of a democratic way of development, carded out by Turkmenistan, has been predetermined by all course of a historical life of the Turkmen people. Over thousands of years Turkmens have been following their traditions and principles of life and despite all obstacles maintained their openness, goodwill, peaceful disposition

and tolerance. The history does not know the period or event when Turkmens would show intolerance, discrimination, preference, and especially the superiority over other people on a racial, ethnic or national basis.

There is historically developed attitude of respect for a choice of religious freedom of citizens. Also conventional international norms and principles in sphere of freedom of worship are strictly carried out. As a result of such approach more than 100 religious organizations are registered in Turkmenistan.

The State guarantees freedom of religion and belief, its equality before the law, the right of everyone independently to determine relation towards religion, individually or together with others to profess any religion or to not profess any, to express and spread beliefs connected to religion, to participate in religious cults, rituals and ceremonies..

Turkmenistan recognizes priority of the universally recognized norms of international law and has joined or ratified fundamental international documents in the area of human rights.

Only this year Turkmenistan has acceded to such documents as: Optional protocol to the Convention on the rights of the child, concerning participation of children in conflicts; Optional protocol to the Convention on the rights of the child, concerning trade in children, child prostitution and pornography; Convention of the United Nations against the transnational organized crime; the Report on the prevention and suppression of trade in people, especially women and children, and punishment for it, supplementing the Convention of the United Nations against the transnational organized crime; Protocol against illegal import of land migrants overland, sea and air, supplementing the Convention of the United Nations against the transnational organized crime; Protocol against illegal production a distribution of fire-arms, their parts and components, and also ammunition for it, supplementing the Convention of the United Nations against the transnational organized crime and the Convention of the United Nations against corruption.

An important measure determining equality of citizens is served by the status of permanent neutrality recognized and approved by General Assembly of the United Nations and proclaimed by Turkmenistan which are steadily observed during these 10 years.

On December 27, 1995 Turkmenistan has adopted the constitutional law "On permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan". Article 9 of this law proclaims it as constitutional principle that "Turkmenistan recognizes and respects the fundamental democratic rights and freedoms of individual and citizen, accepted by the world community and reflected in norms of international law, creates political, economic, legal and other guarantees of their effective realization".

The highest representative body of people's power, <People's Council has adopted on December 27, 1995 "The Declaration on the international obligations of neutral Turkmenistan in the field of human rights" in which it is underlined, that "Turkmenistan ensures each person's rights and freedoms contained in the Constitution, laws and the conventional norms of international law without any discrimination with regard to race, sex, language, religion, place of residence, political and other beliefs, national or a social origin, property, official or other position. All people has the right to equal protection against any discrimination limiting their rights".

Since 1999 there is no death penalty in Turkmenistan as a measure of criminal punishment.

Turkmenistan implements wide educational program in the field of human rights and freedoms, stating principles of interethnic equality and mutual respect. In high schools, subjects such as "Basics of State and Law" is introduced into the curriculum, which includes section on human rights, national and international norms. In higher educational institutions of the country the legislation of Turkmenistan and the international documents on human rights are studied.

Turkmenistan has adopted specific political, economic and social measures on protection of the rights of the refugees who have arrived in 1991-1997 to Turkmenistan. During this period, about 20 thousand refugees from Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Armenia and other countries have arrived to Turkmenistan. By the decree of the President of Turkmenistan more than 16 thousand of them have received citizenship or residence permits to live in Turkmenistan.

Every year, continuing humane traditions of ancestors, guided by the ideals of humanity and mercy, on the eve of sacred day "Gadyr" gijesi " acts of amnesty and pardon are carried out. This year more than 8 thousand people will be given amnesty.

Among priority directions of the Government of Turkmenistan ecological safety takes a special place. In our State it is legislatively adopted that natural resources of the country are national property, and their protection and rational use is fundamental principle of State policy. The right to a favorable environment, maintenance of comfortable conditions of the life of people are guaranteed by the Constitution of Turkmenistan. In years of independence more than 10 new laws on nature protection were adopted.

We welcome efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Mr. Kofi Annan in strengthening the United Nations. We are grateful to the United Nations, its Secretariat, its specialized agencies such as UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO and others for the joint coordinated work and the invaluable assistance in the development of our State.

Mr. Chairman.

Turkmenistan along with many other States has high hopes with the United Nations and stands for its strengthening and broadening of its role in the world

Thank you for your attention.