

UZBEKISTAN

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS



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ADDRESS

by

H.E. Mr. Vladimir Norov
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan
at the general debates of the 63rd Session
of the UN General Assembly

New York, September 27, 2008

**Dear Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished heads of delegations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Allow me, first of all, to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann on the election to the post of Chairman of the 63rd session of the UN General Assembly and wish him successes in his activity at this high post.

Mr. Chairman,

In the context of the agenda of the UN General Assembly's session I would like to dwell on the following, in our opinion, extremely important issues that are directly significant to security and sustainable development of the region of Central Asia.

These are, firstly, the issues related to continuing aggravation and escalation of confrontation in Afghanistan, increasing radicalization of situation and activization of terrorist sallies of militants.

Despite enormous efforts and measures being undertaken on the part of international community and coalition forces on supporting peace in Afghanistan, the situation, unfortunately, tends to worsen. The civilians are losing their lives.

Yet more worsens the situation in Afghanistan the growing volume of drug trafficking. Today the production of opium accounts for more than 8 thousand tons, or over 90 percent of its world production.

It cannot but be taken into consideration that drug trafficking becomes one of the important sources of financing militants, destabilizing the situation in Afghanistan itself and states neighboring on it.

Availing myself of the opportunity to speak from this high rostrum, I would like to state once again that we deeply believe the dynamics of development of situation in Afghanistan with ever bigger obviousness witnesses that the Afghan problem cannot be resolved only by way of using the armed forces, military means and growth of militarization.

The war which has already been ongoing for 30 years destroyed both economic and social infrastructure, led to impoverishment of population, and this should be admitted, deprives people of any belief to their perspective and nurtures a feeding ground for recruiting the new and new militants.

The unfolding situation dictates the need to radically reconsider the approaches towards resolution of the Afghan problem.

To our firm belief, the main priority must become rendering of purposeful economic aid to Afghanistan, construction and establishment of economic and social infrastructure, ensuring population's employment, and resolution of acute problems of combating poverty.

It is necessary to do everything to provide for a respectful attitude towards national and religious values, centuries-old traditions and customs of multinational and multi-confessional people of Afghanistan, and seek on that basis the consolidation of confronting forces in Afghanistan.

An important instrument in achieving such goals can be the return to the so-called 6+2 Contact Group on Afghanistan that successfully functioned in the middle of 90s under auspices of UN, having transformed it to a 6+3 Group by also including to its make-up, taking into consideration contemporary realities, the NATO along with neighboring states, Russia and the U.S.

As the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov has numerously underscored, the realization of such initiative which has already been enunciated from international rostrums will be a worthy alternative to achieve peace, stability and revival of Afghanistan.

Mr. Chairman,

The outcomes of the high-level meeting that took place on September 25 on implementing the Millennium development goals demonstrated that the world community needs to persistently seek the concrete results in implementing goals in the sphere of development formulated in the Millennium declaration.

In this context, all of us are laid with responsibility for reasonable use of natural resources, including the transboundary rivers in Central Asia.

The life itself inevitably proves that ignoring the certain UN Declarations and international norms on joint use of water resources of transboundary rivers may lead to very serious and at times to tragic ecological catastrophes about which witnesses the ongoing catastrophe - the drying up of Aral Sea with all of its unpredictable consequences for tens of millions of people that reside in the region.

According to the fundamental requirements of the UN conventions, all decisions on the use of watercourse of transboundary rivers in Central Asia, including in constructing the hydro-energy facilities, must in no way inflict damage to the ecology and infringe upon the interests of the population of countries on the neighboring territories, neither violate the established balance of using the watercourse of transboundary rivers by all states located in the basin of those rivers.

In the case of infliction of damage all measures must be taken to liquidate or abate such damage, and if needed the issue of compensation is put forward.

We are convinced that the fulfillment of these requirements must be mandatory in implementing various projects on building the hydro-energy facilities in Central Asia, including for international financial structures that express wish to participate in implementing such projects.

We are also convinced about importance of expanding cooperation and extending interaction between the United Nations and International Fund to Save Aral. In this respect, we consider it timely and necessary to grant the Fund an observer status at the UN General Assembly and we call upon the UN member-states to support the draft of respective resolution during the 63rd session of the General Assembly.

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

This year the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights is broadly celebrated in Uzbekistan. The Action program dedicated to this landmark event was approved.

Starting January 1, 2008 Uzbekistan fully abolished the death penalty, introduced a democratic institute of justice “habeas corpus”.

Adoption of Law “On guarantees of the right of child”, ratification of Convention of International Labor Organization on minimal age for hiring for job and elimination of worst forms of child labor became important steps in ensuring human rights in Uzbekistan.

Realizing the urgency of problem of trafficking in persons both at international and domestic level in April 2008 Uzbekistan adopted the Law “On counteracting trafficking in persons”. At the moment, the country realizes the National action plan.

Being committed to the ideals and principles of rights and freedoms of person Uzbekistan supports evolutionary, gradual nature of reforms and transformations. Their main goal is to ensure peace in society and increase the well being of people.

In conclusion, I want to underscore once again that Uzbekistan stands ready for further constructive multilateral interaction in the UN framework in terms of addressing urgent issues of international agenda.

Thank you.