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STATEMENT

by

the President of the Republic of Tajikistan

H.E. Mr. Emomali Rahmon

at the

High-level Event on the

Millennium Development Goals

Thematic Round Table III

on Environmental Sustainability

25 September 2008, New York

Esteemed colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General and to the President of the General Assembly for convening and organizing this High Level Event on MDGs set up by the Millennium Declaration.

When adopting this fundamental document we all hoped that it would determine the direction that would guide the world community towards universal wellbeing, justice and long-term development. Regrettably, despite the progress gained in the implementation of certain goals and objectives, one has to state that on the whole we are lacking behind the timetable and are getting farther from the determined trajectory.

Besides, the challenges of global climate change, sharp rise in prices for energy resources and food, natural and technological disasters coupled with the known challenges and threats of modern time, are introducing certain corrections to our way towards the achievement of MDGs. For this reason, we believe that a systematic review of the achieved progress is of great significance, and, from this point of view, our today's meeting gives us a good opportunity for assessing our resources and short-term objectives.

In this regard, Tajikistan supports the proposal made by the President of the General Assembly to convene a UN regular annual *review* meeting for assessment of progress gained in the achievement of MDGs, and is prepared to make a contribution, within its capacity, to the implementation of this initiative.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today we are at an historic juncture in our management of the earth's resources.

We have come to recognize that the current epoch is one in which human activities leave a measurable and growing footprint on global ecosystems and life-support systems. There is a growing agreement among scientists that the coming 5-10 years are critical for reverting the damages to our life-supporting ecosystems. Failing to act urgently could well cause irreparable damage to our planet.

Sustainable development has become the imperative of the day. All current global issues should be addressed and global challenges should be met, with sustainable development in mind.

Sustainable development can be achieved only when the human needs and aspirations are coordinated with the needs of environmental sustainability.

The Aral Sea can serve as an example of what happens when this approach is violated. Today the Aral Sea has grown into an urgent global environmental problem caused by irresponsible usage of natural resources. The ecological crises in the Aral Sea basin, which is inhabited by almost 60 million people from the Central Asia states, also entailed complicated social and economic consequences on the territory of all states of Central Asia, and the current situation, despite multilateral efforts of the states of the region, can not be dealt with without the support of international organizations.

At the global level Tajikistan, who initiated the *International Year of Freshwater, 2003* and the International Decade of Action "*Water for Life, 2005-2015*" focuses his efforts on increasing the awareness of the international community of the priority significance of water issues and conservation of environment in the context of an integrated approach towards development of water resources, their management and rational usage. In this regard, at the initiative of Tajikistan, Japan, the Netherlands and Germany yesterday there was held the partnership side event on water and sanitation entitled *Water and Sanitation for All*.

Based on the discussions of the side event the Press Statement was issued, which calls for specific actions aimed at acceleration of the achievement of the development goals on water and sanitation. I do hope that these proposals will also meet support of the UN member states and international organizations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The threat of climate change calls out for concerted efforts by the international community, to address both mitigation and adaptation.

Significant new financial resources and technology development and transfer will be crucial to meeting the challenges posed by climate change to sustainable development. We as human beings have caused these problems and, in principle, we have the capacity and the ingenuity to solve them.

I would like to urge this round table to focus, in particular, on the following set of issues:

1. How can we equitably share the costs of meeting these challenges, across countries, across members of society and across generations?
2. How can the public sector work more efficiently with the private sector and with civil society in making our societies more sustainable?
3. How can we mobilize sufficient financial and technical resources to tackle our common sustainability challenges, from safe drinking water supply, sanitation and slum upgrading to biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation and adaptation?
4. How can we capitalize on the push towards environmental sustainability to create whole new industries and to develop and train a new workforce with skills suited to the technologies and sustainable consumption and production patterns of the future?
5. How can we best prepare our cities and our communities to cope with natural diseases and to be more resilient in the face of heightened risks from climate change?

When addressing the theme of this round table, I would like to invite the distinguished speakers also to focus on the following questions that touch upon the two cross-cutting issues, namely, gender equality and the empowerment of women, and global partnership for development.

I hope that the discussions at our today's meeting will be fruitful and will allow to develop new ideas on how to make our common efforts at achieving the MDGs more efficient.

Thank you for attention.