



AFGHANISTAN

Statement by:

His Excellency Ahmad-Zia Massoud

Vice-President of the
Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

At the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the 60th Session
of the General Assembly, United Nations

New York

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In the Name of Allah, Most Compassionate, Most Merciful

Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary General],
Distinguished Heads of State and Government,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

At the outset, allow me to express my heartfelt condolences, on behalf of the Government and people of Afghanistan, to the Government and people of the United States of America, on the tragic loss of life suffered and widespread destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina.

It is a great and distinct privilege for me to address this High-Level Plenary Meeting of the 60 Session of the United Nations General Assembly on behalf of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

This occasion presents a unique opportunity for all member-states to review the lessons learned, appraise the present situation and assess the future prospects.

The United Nations has been engaged for the past sixty-years in the maintenance of international peace and security, development, as well as the protection and promotion of human rights.

The values and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations are still valid. However, the end of the cold-war, the new geo-political realities of today's world, and the emergence of new threats and challenges require a re-thinking of the organization's role.

We welcome the presentation of the three comprehensive reports: A more secure world: Our shared responsibility; Millennium Project; and In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All.

Mr. President,

When the Millennium Summit convened in September 2000, due to the prevailing situation, Afghanistan was unable to adopt a national strategy for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's). However, since the beginning of the Bonn process, Afghanistan, with the assistance of the international community, has made impressive gains in the social, political and economic fields.

We have convened two Loya Jirgah's - one which resulted in the formation of a Transitional Government, and the other, adopting a new constitution establishing an Islamic democratic State. Furthermore, we successfully concluded Presidential elections, and in less than three days, will hold parliamentary and provincial elections.

More than 5 million children, including girls, have returned to school throughout Afghanistan, and approximately 4 million refugees have returned to their place of origin from neighboring countries. However, the resulting effects of the armed-conflicts imposed on my country continue to exist. Poverty, high rate of infant and maternal mortality, and the lack of resources necessary to ensure the provision of basic social services demand the continued assistance of the international community.

Mr. President,

The successful conclusion of the Parliamentary elections will mark the last step towards the implementation of the historic Bonn Agreement of December 2001. The sustained support and engagement of the international community is required over the coming years for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the country, as well as for the consolidation of peace and security.

In this regard, we emphasize on the following key principles necessary to further enhance the cooperation between the Afghan Government and the international community:

- The leadership role of the Afghan Government in all aspects of the reconstruction process;
- The need for a just allocation of resources throughout the country;
- The need to ensure that international efforts serve to build lasting capacity and sustainable institutions and finally;
- The need to ensure public transparency and accountability at all levels.

Afghanistan is in the process of preparing its national development strategy, which also includes a program of action aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Due to the circumstances faced by Afghanistan at the time of the 2000 Summit, we have set our target date for achieving the MDG's by 2020 rather than 2015.

Mr. President,

Afghanistan is one of the Least-Developed Countries of the world. We firmly stress on the importance of the implementation of the Program of Action of the United Nations Conference of the Least-Developed Countries, held in Brussels on 20 May 2001.

We also emphasize on the need for continued, coordinated and effective international support for achieving the development goals in countries emerging from conflict. In this context, my Government welcomes and expresses its full support to the proposal of the

High-level Panel to establish a Peace-Building Commission and Peace Building Support Office, within the framework of the United Nations.

While recognizing the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, would like to emphasize on the long due needed reform of the Council, both in terms of its composition and working methods.

Mr. President,

Terrorism continues to pose one of the main threats to international peace and security. More than any other country, Afghanistan continues to suffer from this global menace. The Government of Afghanistan strongly condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and reaffirms its commitment to cooperate with the international community to eliminate this scourge.

Afghanistan welcomes and supports the ongoing efforts, rendered within the framework of the United Nations, to finalize the draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

Let me conclude by expressing Afghanistan's full support to the Outcome Document before us. We are confident that this historic gathering of world leaders will result in a more efficient and effective Organization better able to address the challenges of the 21st century, and ensuring the prosperity, security and dignity of the peoples of the world.

Thank you Mr. President.