

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Hamrokhon Zarifi**  
**Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan**  
**at the General Debate of the 66<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly**  
*New York, September 26, 2011*

**Mr. President,**  
**Excellencies,**  
**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Allow me to congratulate H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser on his assumption to the post of the President of the 66<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly. I have full confidence that his wealth of experience will contribute to the achievement of important results in our collective work.

I would further like to congratulate H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon on his re-election as the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

1. Two weeks ago the people of Tajikistan celebrated a solemn event in their modern history – **the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Independence of the Republic of Tajikistan**. Despite the numerous difficulties and challenges, the Republic of Tajikistan, during the years of its independence, succeeded in achieving considerable progress, which laid down the foundation for its evolutionary social and economic development. We highly appreciate the contribution made by the United Nations and UN member states to the establishment and development of independent, sovereign, governed by the rule of law and democratic Tajikistan.

2. **Maintenance of peace and security** remains an issue of top priority for the entire international community. For this reason, in order to stop wars and settle conflicts the international community must bear responsibility and undertake urgent collective measures. We welcome the peaceful settlement in South Sudan and the **accession of the Republic of the South Sudan as the 193<sup>rd</sup> member of the United Nations**.

Tajikistan calls upon all those concerned to maximize their efforts for a speedy and full settlement of the long-term conflict in the Middle East. **We support the state of Palestine in its efforts to take its well-deserved place in the community of nations as its full-fledged member.**

3. The Government of Tajikistan, being aware of its responsibility for addressing the social and economic issues, consistently enhances efforts at using, to the maximum degree, its own capacity for achieving the MDGs. The implementation of the **National Strategy for Development of the Republic of Tajikistan** remains the key area in the Government activities. Proceeding from the principles of sustainable development of economy, the Government of Tajikistan identified three major goals: to ensure energy and food security, and to overcome transportation and communication isolation of the country.

We are also undertaking efforts at ensuring food security and poverty reduction, and rational use of the available resources. At the same time in recent years, repeatedly, the agricultural sector of **my country and the entire region suffered from a plague of locusts, and was threatened by other natural disasters**. Despite all the requisite measures undertaken by the Government addressing these issues requires regional coordination and actions. More efficient assistance is required from the relevant UN institutions and agencies, as well as from donors.

4. **International trade and direct investments** also can be instrumental for achieving the development goals. We believe that the system of international trade must remain open, fair, based on agreed upon rules, predictable and non discriminatory. Guided by these principles, Tajikistan is currently holding negotiations on joining the World Trade Organization (WTO). In this regard, **we seek support of the state members of the Organization in accelerating the process of Tajikistan's accession to the WTO.**

**Mr. President,**

5. **The problems of climate change** and its negative impact cannot be resolved without collective and coordinated efforts on the part of the entire international community.

It is known, that climate change also affects the freshwater resources and intensifies extreme floods, landslides, mudflows, droughts and other water related natural disasters. In Tajikistan, where about 60 percent of all water resources of the entire Central Asia originate, in the last thirty years more than 35 percent of glaciers disappeared.

Accelerated melting of glaciers creates additional risks for sustainable development and regional water, energy and food security. In this regard, at the Copenhagen Summit on Climate Change held in December 2009, Tajikistan put forward a proposal to establish an **international fund on saving glaciers** in order to combine the efforts of the entire international community in this strategically important area. Our hope is that the member states will support this initiative.

6. **Energy resources** are of paramount importance for sustainable development. Access to energy is an imperative for ensuring social and economic development, eradication of poverty and hunger. That is why we fully support the initiative of providing a universal access to modern energy services and reducing global energy intensity by 40 percent by 2030.

Complex **development of hydropower**, combined with other renewables, will not only allow to increase the capacity of energy systems, but also to promote their stability and increased efficiency, and to considerably decrease detrimental emissions into the atmosphere.

**For over ten years, in the winter season, the Republic of Tajikistan has experienced a severe shortage of electrical energy supply.** Since Tajikistan lacks other sources of energy it is of vital importance for the country, which possesses huge hydropower potential, to develop a hydro energy economic sector in a consistent and complex manner.

Tajikistan is prepared to closely cooperate on issues of rational use of water and energy resources with all the countries of the region, with due consideration to the common regional interests. **This idea was repeatedly emphasized by the President of Tajikistan, H.E. Emomali Rahmon, including during the General Debates of the UNGA at its 63<sup>rd</sup> and 64<sup>th</sup> sessions,** and at other recent international water forums.

7. It is widely known that in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Central Asian region faced a severe ecological crisis that is **degradation of the Aral Sea**. It was irrational, careless and irresponsible use of the natural resources that caused actual death of the Aral Sea. The numerous water reservoirs, which were constructed and continue to be constructed in the vast downstream areas, cause considerable degradation of the Aral Sea. The number of the operating facilities of this kind exceeds one hundred, and their total water volume exceeds the today's volume of water of the Aral Sea more than 1.5 times.

To resolve the Aral Sea crisis the countries of the region should not only make huge capital investments into the water sector and reduce the area of irrigated lands intended for agricultural products, with high water absorbency, but also demonstrate political will and readiness to implement collective long-term measures on rational use of water-energy resources of the entire basin of the Aral Sea. For this reason, Tajikistan made a proposal to implement, under the UN auspices, **comprehensive expertise to the entire system of water use in Central Asia**, including efficiency and rationality of functioning of all existing water reservoirs and comprehensive examination of the ecological situation in the region. We hope that this proposal will be supported by all the countries of the region.

8. **Water is an essential and vitally important natural resource:** it is essential for sustainable development and preservation of life on the planet. It is necessary to strengthen international and regional **water cooperation** through efficient use of the potential and available mechanisms and instruments.

Water should become a uniting factor rather than a divisive one. Proceeding with this assumption, the Republic of Tajikistan initiated proclamation of 2013 as the International Year of Water Cooperation.

**Mr. President,**

9. **Terrorism** remains one of the major threats to the international peace and security. Tajikistan resolutely and unconditionally condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We believe it is necessary to speed up the adoption of a universal convention on combating international terrorism. Combating terrorism is a long term task because of a multidimensional nature of this phenomenon, alien to humanity.

10. **Prevention of illicit drug trafficking** is one of the components of the common struggle against terrorism. The urgency and scale of the problems caused by narcotics and their illicit trafficking clearly attest to a global menace that threatens international stability and security as a whole. My country makes its contribution to combating drugs. A solid anti narcotics structure has been established in the country, which, in cooperation with the international organizations and similar services of other states, is undertaking requisite measures at combating illicit drug trafficking in our region. We are confident that the struggle against drug trafficking could be a success only if collective efforts are consolidated and specific measures are taken with regard to all links of the chain of illicit drug trafficking.

11. Tajikistan reiterates its commitment to a full and efficient implementation of the Ottawa Convention on prohibition of use, stockpiling, production and transfer of antipersonnel mines and on their destruction in cooperation with all the parties concerned. **My country firmly supports a mine free zone in the Central Asian region.** We stand for adoption of practical measures on removing mines from the mined areas of the region and for resolution of other problems related to the consequences of mining.

12. The situation in Afghanistan is a source of great concern for us. The news about the **assassination of President Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani** was perceived with deep sorrow and indignation. He was one of the greatest persons of modern history of Afghanistan, the region, and the world. We express our heartfelt condolences to the government and people of Afghanistan for this irretrievable loss.

Tajikistan supports the international strategy for a comprehensive resolution of the conflict in and post conflict rehabilitation of **Afghanistan**. In this context we believe that involvement of Afghanistan into the process of regional integration through economic and trade cooperation with the neighboring states is an important factor. In this regard, I would like to note the activities of “**The Dushanbe Quartet**”, which comprises Afghanistan, Pakistan, Russia and Tajikistan, within the framework of which the efforts are strengthened with regard to regional trade and economic cooperation, counteraction to the threats of terrorism, narcotics and organized crime, as well as development of human resources for military and civil needs of Afghanistan. Tajikistan attaches much importance to the implementation of the transportation and communication projects that promote development of interregional economic relations. As of today, five bridges have been commissioned at the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan, and three more bridges are under construction or being designed.

This year the construction of a 220 kV power transmission line from Tajikistan to Afghanistan has been completed. **The project CASA-1000**, which will be using the hydro-energy potential of the Central Asian states, will address the issue of energy shortage in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The issues of further post-conflict rehabilitation of Afghanistan are included on the agenda of the 5<sup>th</sup> Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan to be held next spring in Dushanbe.

**Mr. President,**

It is impossible to address global issues and most urgent regional tasks without strengthening the UN system. The process of reforming the UN should be rational, and the revitalized United Nations themselves should become strong and capable of responding quickly and adequately to the developments in the world, and to efficiently meet numerous global challenges and threats of a new generation. Tajikistan will continue to render every possible support to the United Nations in its efforts at preservation of a secure, prosperous, ecologically sound and healthy planet.

Thank you for your attention.