

Afghanistan: Statement at COP 19

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Head of Delegation

Mr. Chairman, His Excellencies- the Head of States and Governments; Honorable Ministers; Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

We all are gathered here in this historic city of Warsaw in the aftermath of the Super Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines. On behalf of His Excellency the President Hamid Karzai and people of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and myself, I took this opportunity to offer our deepest condolences and solidarity to the people of the Philippines. The devastation caused by the typhoon is heart-breaking, but the strong and inspirational response of the people of the Philippines, and particularly their delegation here in Warsaw, has inspired us all.

Mr. Chairman,

Scientists are linking this devastating typhoon to climate change. The burning of fossil fuels warmed the ocean waters to increase the energy of the typhoon, building a weapon of mass destruction.

The World Meteorological Organization's recent report states that the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere reached a record high in 2012 and continuing the upward and accelerating trend. The IPCC's latest finding reaffirms that the human-generated climate change is real. In these circumstances, it is critical that we act. It is my wish that COP 19 be remembered for many years and generations for the agreements that reversed the trend of the green house gases.

Mr. Chairman,

Afghanistan is a country that has survived storms of a different kind, with tremendous loss of life. Afghanistan has endured decades of conflict. We continue to face many security challenges as well as social and development challenges. More than one-third of the population lives in extreme poverty. Millions of Afghan

children are still unable to attend school. Millions of Afghan lack electricity and clean drinking water, and millions more are living with very poor sanitary facilities. Besides historic and ongoing conflict, many social and environmental constraints such as lack of infrastructure, access to markets, social inequalities, and various productivity constraints are among the factors contributing to poverty in Afghanistan. Despite these challenges, Afghanistan is moving ahead with double digit economic growth since 2001, and now we are experiencing that the impacts of climate change in this land-locked, mountainous, and least developed country, is beginning to confront the impacts of climate change as biggest hurdle in achieving our socio-economic objectives.

Afghanistan is a country facing multiple challenges. We are a post-conflict nation with significant economic, political and social challenges. We are a least developed country. We have decades of experience of loss due to security threats.

It is difficult to comprehend how some of these major powers can be so much less committed to addressing the more serious, global and pervasive security threat posed by climate change. Real global security is impossible if whole nations are destabilized by increasingly severe extreme weather events. The future forecasts, if we fail to avoid the threat of a world with more than 2 degrees global average temperature increases, are of an unliveable world. We must keep a pathway open to avoiding any global average temperature increase in excess of 1.5 degrees. We do not accept that political failure is an option. But at the pace of our current negotiations, with the very disappointing failure of the G-8 to meet previous commitments, Afghanistan wishes to express deep concern that we are unlikely to avoid 2 degrees.

Mr. Chairman,

This year Afghanistan submitted its Initial National Communication and also we began to implement the prioritized actions of our National Adaptation Plan of Action (NAPA). The Government of Afghanistan is has made the development of hydropower and other renewable sources of energy its highest priority. We are moving ahead with a national strategy to move ahead with low carbon energy path. Some demonstration projects on harnessing the high potential of renewable energy, more efficient use of water through integrated water management practices,

community based natural resources management and livelihood of communities, introduction of draught resistance crops, and similar small scale activities that could demonstrate the sustainable future path are being prioritized by the Government of Afghanistan. We are now working towards having the National Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan for mainstreaming climate change adaptation and mitigation into our sectoral development prioritizes. We are fully committed to contribute to the objectives of UNFCCC and on behalf of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan would like to reiterate our commitment here today.

Mr. Chairman,

The biggest challenge we are facing today is lack of resources to finance the infrastructures that we need to build and upgrade that helps to reduce the emissions of green house gases and also make us capable to adapt to the impacts of climate change. Afghanistan, as a least developed country, was encouraged by the commitment made by developed countries in Copenhagen to scale up climate financing to \$100 billion annually by 2020, but it is disappointing to know that the current flows are nowhere towards this. We sincerely hope COP 19 will ensure the Green Climate Fund actually has funds. It is not credible that there will be nothing in the bank until 2020, when suddenly \$100 billion every year will appear. A pledge of this kind requires milestones on the way, as resources are scaled up.

Underlying much of our discussion has been the issue of equity. Afghanistan has proposed that the parties develop an Equity Reference Framework to allow an assessment of fair sharing of the challenges and benefits of action. We need a neutral mechanism to determine the reasonable fair share of the huge global effort of each party, both to minimize the risk of dangerous climate change and enable adaptation to the global warming which has already been caused primarily by the Annex 1 countries.

Mr. Chairman

I would like to repeat again that we realize the damage and loss of the devastating Typhoon Haiyan and many more such human induced disasters we are experiencing for many years now, and hope COP 19 will succeed to take steps to enable developing countries to protect vulnerable populations from climate related loss and damage. We support calls for the next global agreement to come into force

by 2017. 2020 may be too late. And I am equally hopeful that we make visible progress towards reaching agreement in 2015 to place all of us in a path to ensure we keep the global average temperature increase to below two degrees.

Thank you