

**Mr. President, Excellencies, Heads of Delegations, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On behalf of the National Unity Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, I have the pleasure to congratulate HE the Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji and COP23 President, as well as the UNFCCC secretariat for their well-organized events. I also take pleasure in thanking all of those who have facilitated the Parties' participation in this important climate change conference here in Bonn. We take note of the importance of COP23 as a key milestone in the process of finalizing the work program for the Paris Agreement and thank all distinguished delegates for their valuable contributions to this end.

Excellencies,

I would like to start by giving a simple and yet profound example of what impoverished nation of Afghanistan is facing today. Every year, at this exact time, our people begin to pray for rain and snow in order to get from our mother earth good harvest. Our prayers continue for the next 4-5 months. And every year, our prayers get louder as climate change brings severe regional drought. This year, in particular the prediction of regional drought will leave tens of millions food insecure in Afghanistan and beyond.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

For the people of Afghanistan, peace of mind is a luxury they have been deprived of for over four decades of armed conflict. The climate change has been an added pain we feel far too real. Afghanistan is at the heart of a most densely populated region in the world, hence the effect of climate change are paramount. Being at the forefront of an imposed War on Terror, the lines between the ideological menace of terror and the natural resource conflict are very blurry. The fight against destructive climate change is no less of a global fight than is the War Against Terror. And once again, it is the people of Afghanistan, which is in the frontline. And once again, we will not shirk our global responsibilities.

We, despite huge challenges in terms of security, socio-economic, and living conditions, have participated actively in the entire process of negotiation of parties to limit the average global temperature rise to less than 2 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial level, and to finalize another legally binding agreement at the Paris Climate Conference in December 2015.

Afghanistan, as a Least Developed Country and one of the countries most vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change, has committed in November 2015 to setting itself on a Low Emissions Development Path. By signing the Paris Agreement in November 2015, ratifying it in February 2017, and submitting our first NDCs, we have agreed to take the necessary steps for curbing emissions and building adaptive capacity to the adverse impacts of climate change.

Mr. President,

We acknowledge and emphasize the need for acceleration of climate action leading up to and beyond 2020.

Therefore, our country has prepared its:

- Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan,
- National Adaptation Plan,
- Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action,
- And has focused on capacity enhancement and better organization of its National Climate Change Committee.

We are also planning to develop a Roadmap for a better implementation of our NDCs.

The active engagement of Afghanistan's citizens and local communities on climate action over the course of 2016 and 2017 in alignment with the Paris Agreement has been a key element in the preparation of our country's strategies and plans. Keeping in line with this methodology, the outcome and follow-up shall remain transparent and continue to actively involve citizens, women, youth, and local communities in addressing climate change.

Throughout this preparation process, the National Unity Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has been in close communication with bilateral and multilateral partners to actively engage Afghan citizens, women & youth, civil societies, the academic community, NGOs, and international partners in formulating plans for appropriate actions on both mitigation of and adaptation to climate change. We thank these partners for their ongoing support towards the efforts of the National Unity Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to address the growing threat of climate change.

Furthermore, our country looks forward to a continued collaboration on facilitating access to climate resources such as finance, capacity building, and technology transfer as outlined in the Addis Ababa LDC Ministerial Communiqué on Climate Change issued in October 2017. This will enable LDCs such as my country to take fair and equitable action towards fulfilling the ambitious targets outlined in their NDCs.

In conclusion, I would like to reconfirm our commitment to the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the common voice of the global population for a prosperous, sustainable and climate-resilient future.

Thank you.