



Statement by
H.E. Djoomart Otorbaev
Vice Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic

at the Plenary Meeting of the
United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
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Dear Chairman,

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor and privilege for me to speak at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development. On behalf of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic let me express deep gratitude to UN and the government of Brazil for warm hospitality and excellent organization of this meeting.

Ladies and gentlemen!

Last two years were difficult for our country. Following the corrupted regime change in April 2010 the country managed to conduct the constitutional referendum, fair and transparent parliamentary and presidential elections highly assessed by international community. Now we build the first parliamentary democracy in Central Asia.

In the center of attention of our state is the human being. Maintaining the human rights of our citizens will be our absolute priority. How to create an opportunity for the citizens to get decent education, access to health care services, to provide employment opportunities and protect the vulnerable

groups of population? The position of my country is that it can be achieved only through the “green” sustainable development.

We came here to learn. To learn on how to make the lives of our people better, on what to do to leave the better country to our children

There are several fundamental challenges for the “green” development in the Kyrgyz Republic.

1. **Mountain ecosystems.** More than half of our territory lies above 2 500 m above sea level, only 12 % of the territory is lower than 1 500 m. Glaciers cover almost 4 % or 8 000 km², which accumulate 650 billion m³ of fresh water. The latest observations show that under the impact of the climate change the glaciers area has decreased for 20% so far. The economy pushes us to develop the **mineral resources** in mountainous area. We fully realize that without proper ecological control these developments could potentially lead us to the catastrophic consequences. **Mountain forests** experience the high anthropogenic pressure, which mainly grow in river beds. The continuing tendency of displacement of the population in river valleys results in their degradation and replacement by the crop lands. **Mountain pastures**, which are 9 million hectares or half of the country territory, are the important part of employment and incomes for rural residences. However the pastures are degrading. Different sources indicate that the area of degraded pastures make up at least of 30%.
2. **Threats for loss of ecosystems.** The very existence of life in the mountains demand at least 50% more energy costs than in the flat land. Significant part of our mountains half a year lies under the snow cover. One of the results of human-induced factors is the decrease in the number and reproduction of species. The Red Book of Kyrgyzstan (2007) includes 57 birds, 23 mammals, 8 reptiles, 18 jointed-footed animals, as well as 87 species of plants and mushrooms that are under the risk of extinction.
3. **Water resources.** There are 3 500 rivers in the country. The total runoffs are 50 km³. Water is the strategic resource for the “green” economic growth and must be used in a rational way through the protection of glaciers and natural ecosystems. We will be willing to join all initiatives aimed at conservation of glaciers and natural ecosystems. We are willing to learn more on existing best practices on water management systems, rehabilitation and construction of efficient irrigation systems. With that we realize that any development of infrastructure is capital intensive.

4. **Hydropower.** Already now 90% of the electricity in the country is generated by the hydropower stations. Gross hydropower potential of 267 rivers exceeds 250 billion kWh. We are looking for “green” investments into our hydropower sector. In the future we will further increase the share of power generation through the clean “green” hydropower.
5. **Agro processing.** Currently half of our population has their own land. As of 1 January 2012 there were 270 000 private farms. Depending on a region the average land user possesses from 2 (Batken area) ha to 12 ha (Naryn Area) of agricultural land. Among the factors influencing the bio productivity are erosion, salinization, and swamping. Our country today has huge potential for production of “organic” products. We need modern technologies to increase the crop yield and to sell our production to other countries. Again we need the best advice and investments on how to do it.

There are few poor land locked and mountainous countries in the world. UN classifies them as under the definition the “The countries with special needs”. There are at least 11 of them with the GDP per capita of less than 1 000 USD. However up to now those countries were unable to unite to present to the international community their specific problems and needs. Here we would like to propose to start the process under the conditional title “The Mountainous Initiative”, which would advocate for the recognition and support of the developing and indebted mountainous countries. On a base of previously adopted UN resolutions herewith we would like to propose to ask multilateral financial institutions to significantly reduce or write-off the multilateral debts for those countries on exchange of sustainable “green growth”.

The Kyrgyz Republic has been the key initiator of an International Year of Mountains in 2002 and our capital – Bishkek had hosted the Global Mountain Summit the same year. We know how to organize it and we can do it again. As first step already we would like to propose to organize the international conference on climate change in mountainous countries, and invite all interested parties to attend it.

Your Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our Future is with us. Let’s unite and make it better together.

Thank you for your attention.