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ADDRESS

by

H.E. Mr. Abdulaziz Kamilov
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at the United Nations Summit
on Sustainable Development Goals

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Dear Mr. Chairman!
Distinguished heads of delegations!
Ladies and Gentlemen!

It gives me a profound satisfaction to welcome all of you present in this hall, and very briefly dwell on our comments and proposals on the problems being discussed today at the United Nations Summit on Sustainable Development Goals for 2016-2030.

First, I would like to underscore that the Republic of Uzbekistan supports the new agenda for the future of humanity put forward by the United Nations Secretary-General – the Sustainable Development Goals aimed at 2016-2030, which must become a logical and appropriate continuation of the Program for Millennium Development Goals for 2000-2015 coming to an end.

We have already used this high rostrum of the United Nations in 2010 to inform the UN General Assembly about the concrete steps made by Uzbekistan along the path of achieving the goals stipulated in Millennium Declaration.

Assessing the work accomplished for over the past years, today we have all grounds to state that Uzbekistan despite enormous challenges and trials, - once one of the most backward republics on its potential and poverty with a lop-sided economy has turned into a steadily and stably developing country with a modern diversified economy, which ensures a radical growth of well-being and living standards of population, as well as confident advancement along the path of democratic renewal and modernization.

According to the international financial and economic structures, at present the Republic of Uzbekistan occupies a fifth place in the world among the states with rapidly developing economy, and during the last 10 years in spite of ongoing global economic crisis the average GDP growth rates made up more than 8 percent.

For over the years of independent development, i.e. during 24 years, Uzbekistan's economy has grown more than 5,5 times, the population's real incomes have grown 9 times. The average life expectancy of people grew from 67 years to 73 years, and of women – up to 75 years.

About 60 percent of state budget is being channeled to social development of the population, including to education – 10-12 percent of the GDP and the share of item of expenses in the state budget expenditures makes up 35 percent.

This is especially important if to take into account that over 60 percent of the country's population makes up the youth at the age of up to 30 years.

The large-scale reforms in the sphere of health allowed yet in 2009 to achieve, as envisaged in the Millennium Development Goals, the decrease of the mortality rate of children of up to 5 years by third. And the decrease of maternal mortality by one third was achieved in 2013.

From 2009 the reduction of the level of spreading of *HIV/AIDS* was ensured. The indicators of *tuberculosis* sickness rate decreased as compared to the peak level of 2002 to 1,6 times. Starting from 2013 not a single case of *malaria* was registered in the country.

The measures undertaken in the country in the sphere of *raising the ecological sustainability* allowed to reduce the volume of pollution emissions per capita from 95 kilograms in 2000 to 61 kilograms in 2015. For over the last 15 years it was able to reduce the GDP energy intensity more than 2 times.

The state of affairs with regard to gender equality has tangibly changed. About 50 percent of total number of engaged in the economy make up women.

Dear participants of the Summit!

We should say that in Uzbekistan we well comprehend how rapidly is changing our surrounding world of globalization and Internet; the financial and economic crisis and unpredictability of global markets are continuing; the confrontations and conflict situations, the scale and severity of competition are growing, which in their turn, put forward yet new extremely responsible goals and tasks before each and every state.

Adding to the aforementioned there are more large-scale natural cataclysms and climate change, which lead to unpredictable and sometimes tragic consequences.

There is no need to speak that the experience accumulated by us for over the past period will serve as a good basis to achieve the program objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals which will be adopted at today's United Nations Summit.

I would like to especially underscore that the Program of deepening reforms, structural changes and modernization of economy, expanding the scale of private ownership and entrepreneurship aimed at 2016-2020 and adopted in Uzbekistan early this year will be a wonderful basis for this.

Our main target goal, as has already been spoken about, to ensure Uzbekistan's joining the ranks of democratically developed countries with a steadily developing diversified economy and high level of living standards of population.

A major guideline for us will be Uzbekistan's joining by 2030 the ranks of states with an income level of over average world indicator.

A special attention is being paid to creating the decent living conditions for a rural population, eradicating the dividing line between town and village in terms of access to housing and municipal services, to the services of social and market infrastructure. We will continue the realization of a unique comprehensive program on construction of comfortable individual rural housing. The construction of such housing, apart from quality improvement of housing conditions, renders an enormous influence on radical change of lifestyle, worldview of the rural population and narrowing the gap between the urban and rural way of life.

Dear friends!

Today the problems of ecology and climate change of a global nature – unprecedented both on their scale and destructiveness – are continuing to remain on the focus of attention of the international community.

The largest in the newest world history ecological catastrophe of a planetary scale – the tragedy of Aral Sea, which for over a span of lifetime of one generation

turned out to be on the verge of full disappearance, takes a special place in this row on its scales and consequences.

The dramatic climate change felt not only in Central Asia, but also in other regions became as a direct consequence of drying up of sea. The new saline desert with an area of 5,5 million hectares of land has emerged on the exposed part of Aral. For more than 90 days a year the sandstorms are raging there carrying to atmosphere annually over 100 million tons of dust and poisonous salts to many thousands of kilometers.

The threatening impact of the Aral catastrophe is now observed throughout the world. According to international experts, the poisonous salts originating from the Aral region are discovered on the Antarctic coast, Greenland glaciers, Norway forests and many other parts of the Earth.

The Aral tragedy rendered the most serious impact on the living conditions and gene pool of 65 million people residing in Central Asia. The extreme adverse ecological environment, lack and decrease in quality of potable water, the growth of dangerous diseases – this is just a short list of consequences of the Aral tragedy far from being full.

Uzbekistan hopes that the catastrophe of the Aral Sea region will be surely taken into consideration in implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. We understand that the climate change and everything related to many problems, which are today being discussed over the course of this summit, have an immediate relation to this issue that requires in line with the words pronounced by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon during his trip to Aral in 2013 «a collective responsibility of the entire world and not only of the countries of Central Asia».

In 2013 the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly has already approved «The Program of Measures on Eliminating the Consequences of Drying up of Aral and Averting the Catastrophe of the Ecological Systems in the Aral Sea Region» as an official document proposed by Uzbekistan.

Taking into account the universal nature of the Aral catastrophe, it is necessary to expand the concerted actions and form purposeful financial mechanisms in this direction.

In this regard, it is expedient to establish under the UN auspices a special Trust Fund on the Aral Sea and Aral Sea Region, the main task of which will be the coordination of efforts and implementation of purposeful programs and projects in the following key directions:

- protecting health and preserving population's gene pool, elaborating the system of effective stimuli for a social and economic development of the Aral Sea region and creating the necessary conditions to ensure decent living conditions for population residing in this region;

- preserving the ecological balance of the Aral Sea region, adopting the consistent measures to fight desertification and introducing the reasonable water consumption;

- recovering and preserving the unique biodiversity of flora and fauna which now remains on the brink of extinction;

- using the limited water resources of the region, firstly, the transboundary water arteries – Amudarya and Syrdarya in the interests of all countries of the region and in strict compliance with the norms of international law.

We cannot allow so that, as a result of realization of plans of construction of gigantic dams and large hydropower stations on the tributaries of Amudarya and Syrdarya on the basins of which the oases of life support of millions of people are concentrated, the natural flow of these rivers is disturbed and the situation with water supply in the lower reaches is more worsened, which would lead to radical breach of the water and ecological balance, aggravation of the problem of Aral and undermining of ecological safety of the vast region.

Thank you for your attention.