

UZBEKISTAN

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS



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ADDRESS

**by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan
H.E. Mr. Abdulaziz Kamilov at the 68th Session
of the United Nations General Assembly**

New York, 27 September 2013

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by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the
Republic of Uzbekistan H.E. Mr. Abdulaziz Kamilov
at the General Debates of the 68th Session
of the UN General Assembly

Dear Mr. Chairman!
Distinguished heads of delegations,
Ladies and gentlemen!

The rapidly changing situation, the growing tension and radicalization, as well as security challenges and threats in various regions now cannot but raise a serious alarm and concern in the entire world.

In this regard, it is needless to speak about the fact that it is these very problems that acquire a special significance in the today's agenda of the United Nations General Assembly.

The war in Afghanistan, which has been ongoing for more than thirty years, remains to be one of the serious sources of threats to regional and global security.

The situation unfolding in Afghanistan, according to experts, is mainly uncertain and unpredictable.

In these conditions the drawdown of the ISAF troops in 2014 may lead to escalation of the confrontation in the country, stirring up of terrorism, extremism, drug trafficking and aggravation of inter-regional standoff. Undoubtedly, it may render a negative impact on the situation in the vast region of Central Asia and contiguous regions as well.

It should be recognized that an unambiguous view came about in the world that there is no military solution to the Afghan problem. The only way out of the Afghan crisis is the political one through the negotiations of the main confronting forces and achievement of consensus regardless of how difficult it might be and given the active assistance on the part of the international community and the United Nations.

Uzbekistan adheres to an open and clear policy with respect to Afghanistan based on the principles of good neighborliness and non-interference in the internal affairs. Uzbekistan shall further develop the mutually beneficial and friendly ties with Afghanistan on bilateral basis supporting the government elected by the Afghan people themselves. We shall also continue to render a practical assistance in restoring the economy of Afghanistan while considering it as an indispensable condition of ensuring peace and prosperity in this country.

These principles and approaches towards Afghanistan are enshrined in the Foreign Policy Concept of Uzbekistan which has a status of law.

Second. Today a new global development agenda is under elaboration at the United Nations which must reflect the interconnection of a human being with the environment, contribute to supporting the economic and social development while maintaining the ecological sustainability.

Uzbekistan attaches a priority attention to sustainable development and ecological safety. Recently adopted Action Program on Environment Protection for 2013-2017 serves as a confirmation of such an attention. The government of Uzbekistan will allocate nearly 2 billion dollars for the implementation of this Program aimed at further maintaining a decent condition of the environment, reasonable use of natural resources and introduction of ecologic basics of a sustainable development in the sectors of economy.

The loss of the Aral Sea is one of the largest global ecological catastrophes in the contemporary history. Each year it becomes evident that the problem of drying up of Aral Sea, and above all, the impact on the environmental, social and humanitarian situation, gene pool and people's health take on a baneful and irrecoverable nature.

We are grateful to the United Nations and personally to the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for a keen attention paid to the problem of the Aral Sea. This is an enormous support which gives us a confidence that the countries of the region will not be left alone in the struggle against this planetary catastrophe.

I would like to draw attention of the public that today we speak, firstly, about preventing full destruction and protecting remaining the environmental system of the Aral Sea region, ensuring the minimum living conditions for people and preserving the available flora and fauna. It is these key issues that are in the focus of attention of the message put forward by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan – the Chairman of the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea as an official document of the United Nations General Assembly.

Taking this opportunity, we call upon the international donors to extend assistance in implementing the «Program of Measures on Eliminating the Consequences of Drying up of the Aral Sea and Averting the Catastrophe of the Ecological Systems in the Aral Sea Region» which is fully consonant with the Millennium Development Goals, and particularly, in achieving the ecological sustainability, combating diseases and improving motherhood and childhood protection.

Third. Ensuring the reasonable use of water resources is an acute problem in the conditions of worsening ecological situation and shortage of potable water in our region and on a global scale.

It is an open secret that the Amudarya and Syrdarya rivers – the two major transboundary rivers of Central Asia have historically been a common good and the source of life for the nations of the region. The Aral Sea basin is supplied with water from the flow of these rivers.

In this regard, we cannot but be concerned with the plans of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to construct the new large hydropower stations with gigantic on a global scale dams, i.e. the Rogun Hydropower Station with a 350-meter high dam in the upstream of the Amudarya River and the Kamabarata-1 Hydropower Station with a 275-meter high dam in the upstream of the Syrdarya River. The implementation of such plans, according to many competent specialists, shall lead to disruption of the natural flow of the rivers which is fraught with most dangerous ecological and social-economic consequences. The already fragile water and ecologic balance in Central Asia shall radically be disrupted. Moreover, the construction of these facilities is planned in the areas where there is a tectonic fracture with a seismicity of not less than 9-10 points Richter scale which brings about a high risk of manmade catastrophes.

Taking this into consideration, we firmly adhere to the principle position of unacceptability of constructing hydropower facilities at the international watercourses without a preliminary endorsement by all interested countries. It is necessary in line with international legal practice to mandatorily conduct the fair international expert examination of the projects on Rogun and Kamarata-1 under auspices of the United Nations to assess a possible impact of new hydropower facilities on the natural water regime, environment, flora and fauna.

Uzbekistan's position is based on the norms of international law, and in particular, the provisions of the UN Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes of 1992 and the Convention on the Law of Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses of 1997.

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The year 2015 is approaching – a deadline for implementing the UN Millennium Development Goals set in 2000. In this regard, it should be underscored that the achievements of the Republic of Uzbekistan during the years of independence in the economic sphere, social policy, tackling specific issues of raising the well-being of population, quality of education, healthcare services and ecological sustainability allowed to ensure a priority implementation of the Millennium Development Goals by Uzbekistan.

I will bring only some figures and facts which reflect the current potential and development rates of our country.

In comparison with the year 2000 the gross domestic product of Uzbekistan grew 3,1 times and the GDP per capita grew 2,6 times. The nominal salary grew 22 times, average amount of pensions grew 12,7 times and real income per capita grew 8,4 times. During the last six years the economic growth of Uzbekistan steadily exceeds 8 percent. One can rightfully be proud of these indicators.

The state expenditures for social sphere and social protection in Uzbekistan grew more than 5 times. About 60 percent of all state expenditures goes to funding the sphere of social development, including more than 34 percent goes to education and over 15 percent is spent for public healthcare.

The life expectancy in the country increased on average from 66 to 73,5 years. The maternal mortality decreased more than 3,2 times and infant mortality by 3,4 times.

All of this testifies to a long path of growth and development, and a real increase in living standards of the people.

I am confident that Uzbekistan's continued participation in the UN efforts in the sphere of sustainable development shall contribute to further raising the living standards of the people, achieving the high goals of ensuring security and stability in the entire region.

Thank you for your attention.