



Permanent Mission of I.R. of Afghanistan to the United Nations

STATEMENT

BY

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**At the General Debate of the
Ministerial Segment of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)
Convened under the Auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**

19 July 2016

NEW YORK

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Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to thank you for your efforts in convening the Ministerial Segment of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered by Thailand on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Bangladesh on behalf of the Group of the Least Developed Countries, and Zambia on behalf of the Group of the Landlocked Developing Countries.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor to address this Forum today. As the first meeting of the forum after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, this is a great opportunity for all of us not only to reaffirm our commitments toward the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, but also to share our experiences, successes, challenges and lessons learned. In this regard, we are encouraged by the 22 countries presenting their voluntary national reviews at this year's HLPF.

Mr. President,

We attach critical importance to the concept of “Ensuring that no one is left behind”, the HLPF theme for this year. In this regard, we call for special attention to countries in special situations, including LDCs, LLDCs, and countries in conflict and post-conflict situations. 2016 is the year when we lay the foundation of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and it is imperative to appropriately include the most vulnerable and challenged countries in the process.

As a member of ECOSOC, we are committed to contribute to the work of the Council during our three years of membership, and we are glad that our membership coincides with the time when we embark on the SDGs implementation.

Mr. President,

Afghanistan is fully committed to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and has made significant steps forward. Learning from our national experience implementing the MDGs, we have developed a national roadmap for the implementation of 2030 Agenda. To this aim, we have already established several working groups with our stakeholders to ensure that “no one is left behind”. The National Coordination Committee (NCC) is the highest coordination body mandated to follow up on the SDGs implementation at the national level. Meanwhile, several other technical

working groups, involving the government, parliament, UN agencies, civil society, and the private sector have been established to support the implementation of the Agenda.

In order to effectively plan, coordinate and monitor the implementation of the SDGs, many national consultation forums have been held and many more are underway. Similarly, the technical working groups regularly come together to finalize the contextualization process of the SDGs. We are about to produce our own context SDGs document within the next few weeks.

Mr. President,

My country is currently in the third phase of its transformation process. After the political and security transformation, we are now focusing on economic transformation from an aid dependent economy towards self-reliance. We are working on new policy reforms to readdress our fiscal deficit and balance of payment and make sure every dollar is spent effectively. In addition to that, several measures have been undertaken to fight corruption and build strong and capable institutions to ensure accountability and transparency.

The Afghanistan National Development Framework (ANDF), which will serve as a basic national policy document, has been established in accordance with the existing realities and needs of the country, focusing on economic growth, poverty reduction, job creation, and self-reliance. The SDGs will be mainstreamed into the ANDF, as well as other national and sub-national plans, policies, and strategies to ensure their proper implementation.

Supporting the Afghan National Unity Government's robust agenda for national reforms described in the "Realizing Self-Reliance" strategy paper, the upcoming Brussels Conference on Afghanistan in early October this year will build on a set of mutual commitments between the Afghan Government and its development partners. It is a realization of Goal 17 of the SDGs and sends a signal of renewed hope, confidence, and change underlining that the gains of the past 15 years in Afghanistan are irreversible.

We are also working closely with UN agencies, donors, international institutions, the private sector and civil society to mobilize the necessary means for the implementation of the SDGs. At this end, we have recently developed our public private partnership (PPP) model which will attract more domestic and foreign investment and create new jobs to finance the SDGs in our country.

Mr. President,

Despite remarkable achievements made at the global level, many countries, especially LDCs and LLDCs, still face a range of fundamental challenges related to lower levels of development, productive capacities, and increased vulnerabilities to external shocks arising from volatile commodity prices, conflicts, climate change, and natural disasters.

As a member of G7+ countries, Afghanistan stands as a fragile state with high level of political and economic instability, as well as high dependence on international assistance, at least for the next decade. The successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda in countries like Afghanistan will require special attention to address these specific development challenges. In this context, addressing the five years overlap between MDGs and SDGs is important for Afghanistan.

We reiterate the importance of transition from relief to development. Countries like Afghanistan cannot achieve peace without development, nor development without peace. My country's efforts for the realization of the economic growth and sustainable development are impeded by the conflict emanating from international terrorism and violent extremism. We are combating terrorism on a daily basis and paying a high price in terms of resources for ensuring peace and stability in the country, which is also a battle for the security of the region and the world at large.

In this regard, we would like to emphasize the importance of SDG16 (building peaceful and inclusive societies) for Afghanistan, and welcome the fact that time has been allocated to discuss it during HLPF. We would also like to welcome the reference in the Draft Ministerial Declaration of this year's HLPF to the New Deal by the Group of Seven Plus.

Mr. President,

To conclude, I would like to thank ECOSOC for organizing this Forum and providing a great opportunity for discussion and exchanging ideas on the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals at the global, regional, and national level. We look forward to the adoption of a comprehensive Ministerial Declaration as the outcome of this forum, which addresses concerns of all countries. We also look forward to an inclusive Global Sustainable Development Report 2019 and the scope, methodology, and frequency of it to be endorsed by this forum.

Thank you.