



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Mr. President,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by wishing all of our Muslim colleagues a happy Eid al Fitr. I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to Preside over the 52nd General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency. My delegation is confident that under your leadership, the deliberation of our discussions will conclude with substantive results. I assure you that my delegation supports you.

My delegation also welcomes to the agency membership of the Kingdoms of Oman and Lesotho, as well as the Republic of Papua New Guinea. We look forward to working with them.

My government wholeheartedly recognizes Director Dr. Mohammad El Baradei for his transparent and inspiring hard work in translating the Agency's mandate into concrete results within an adverse and challenging environment. My government also applauds his team's acceptance of the vested trust placed in them, and their dedicated efforts towards achieving the Agency's objectives.

Mr. President,

Since we gathered last September, we have experienced a year of great hopes and grave fears. We witnessed the hope-inspiring glory of human accomplishment at the Olympic games in Beijing, but shuddered at the loss of life due to natural disasters; we have a growing global understanding on climate change issues, but see millions of lives threatened every day by food shortages, and have witnessed with disbelief the brutal, wholesale slaughter of innocent people at the hands of terrorists

in Afghanistan, Algeria, India, Pakistan, Syria and just last Sunday in Lebanon.

Undoubtedly, terrorism cannot be ended until we dismantle the elaborate institutional support perpetrators enjoy in our region, and eliminate their secure sanctuaries. Sincere regional and international cooperation can make this possible.

Afghanistan is honored to have been a part of the Agency's work since the ratification of the charter in 1956, and to have been deeply invested in the evolution of this exceptional organization. We hope that the Agency continues to flourish in the future, as my country's relation with the agency rests upon all three areas of the IAEA's work: enforcement, protection, and innovation of nuclear technologies.

First and foremost, Afghanistan supports the IAEA as the world's most effective enforcer of nuclear safeguards. As a country that is geographically challenged, and which faces the added internal dangers of terrorist control of weapons, the thorough monitoring and regulation of nuclear and radioactive material is critical to Afghanistan's security.

Secondly, new generations of nuclear power reactors may provide an answer to the combined problems of global energy shortages and greenhouse gas emissions. However, this requires that the security of medium- and small reactors be enhanced in order to be suitable for a small grid. The IAEA must take the lead in instituting protective measures so that these technologies can be used safely.

As a result of its demonstrated success in areas of enforcement and protection, the Agency now has the opportunity to push forward with its third branch of work: innovation. The application of nuclear energy in medicine, agriculture, industry, among others, can be instrumental in allowing for rapid progress in international development.

These three distinct areas of work are inherently connected. We cannot seriously consider the potential of nuclear power as a sustainable energy source if safety and security are not actively ensured. Yet, given the reassurance of the IAEA's capabilities in this respect, we may now look toward a cleaner, safer, and more efficient future.

A need exists for the development of safe, peaceful nuclear technologies in Afghanistan. We are a recovering country, a country; that is rebuilding

and at a pivotal, critical time in our nation's history. The development of sustainable industries is essential – particularly in the areas of agriculture, food security, health, and water management. As we search for sustainable solutions, we recognize a great potential for the beneficial use of peaceful nuclear technologies.

To this extent, I am happy to announce the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's candidature to the Board of Governors through its regional group for the upcoming term of 2008-2010.

Industrial applications of nuclear technology include devices ranging from gas exploration to road construction, as well as imaging technologies to resolve medical crises through imaging innovations. Nuclear technologies can improve safety and quality of food sources, as well as increase control over food production. The strategic use of ionizing radiation destroys the various contaminants that can cause illness or render food shipments inedible. Additionally, these techniques may help to regulate the production quantity and quality of food, helping to prevent the uncertainties that arise from agriculture and then cause food crises.

Nuclear power also affords energy independence. There is a future in which, with a sufficient and adequate nuclear power infrastructure, Afghanistan will not be dependent on oil. This is particularly important to the growth of Afghanistan as an autonomous, sovereign nation.

Additionally, the environmental solution posed by nuclear power is beneficial to the world. As responsible citizens of this planet, we should not create fossil fuel-dependent industries. Given our knowledge of the environmental impact of fossil fuels, we must be good stewards of our world and find alternatives.

Advancements in nuclear technology and research provide Afghanistan a unique opportunity for growth and development: with the oversight of the IAEA, we can develop our own industries, tackle the greater food crisis and prevent climate change issues through the use of peaceful nuclear technologies. This is significant to Afghanistan's development as a functioning, stable nation.

In this regard, we welcome Czech Republic's statement that was in support of the Technical Cooperation Program. Initiatives like the TCP can open the door for nations such as Afghanistan to make significant advances in development.

However, we must, as nuclear technologies continue to advance, reiterate that these breakthroughs can and should work toward the advancement and betterment of society, and not destructive ends.

We strongly support the undeniable right of each member state to acquire nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, with the view that all activities are under the IAEA's comprehensive safeguard regime. We must renew our commitment to work together to strengthen the mutual trust between nuclear and non-nuclear states, in order to reach a goal of a global non-proliferation environment.

To encourage that trust, I reiterate Afghanistan's strong, unwavering stand opposing nuclear proliferation for military purposes. The threat of weapons of mass destruction directly relates to the propensity of use; the threat decreases with nuclear disarmament.

Additionally, we wholeheartedly support the universalization of the non-proliferation treaty (NPT), and additional protocols to ensure that parties adhere to these – and even higher – standards of practice. The actions of member states must be transparent, as this transparency is necessary to fortify the trust required for accomplishing goals of international cooperation and safety.

Afghanistan calls upon member states that have not done so to expeditiously join, ratify and implement NPT for the sake of a safe world, in addition to concluding their comprehensive safeguard agreements with the Agency. At the same time, it is unfortunate that CTBT is still waiting for its Annex 2 member States ratification, to be enforced.

Afghanistan shares its extreme concern with the majority of member states about military testing of WMD throughout the world, and especially in our region.

Furthermore, we concur with the view expressed by the Libyan government during the last board meeting that if and when an incident of nuclear terrorism takes place, the responsibility must be borne by those states which possess nuclear weapons and technology.

It is imperative to note that A.Q. Khan's network's decision to pass on sensitive nuclear technology is a clear violation of international norms, including NPT. It is regrettable that his confession clearly indicates the

willingness of his own government to participate in such acts. We call upon the Agency to avail its agenda and discuss this matter with serious consideration. We can not sit and watch while such international treaties are violated in a dangerous and irresponsible manner.

We call upon the agency to hold accountable regimes that support or advocate these irresponsible acts.

Globally, we are building trust through joint deliberations and collaboration. We appreciate China's leadership in the six-party talks, and firmly support the objective of disarming the Korean Peninsula. Our concern about regional proliferation, especially in South Asia, is significant. We urge all member states to bring their nuclear installations and materials under the trusted guidance of the IAEA and their safeguard regime, for the safety of all.

The creation of nuclear weapon-free zones (NWFZ) is a logical way to achieve collective safety. Militaries and governments control WMDs, yet innocent civilians are the ones who suffer from rogue proliferation. We must protect the innocent and contain this devastating weaponry with safe zones.

To improve the efficacy of these policies, we welcome the establishment of NWFZs in Latin America, Africa, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and the South Pacific. We adamantly support and encourage the creation of a NWFZ in the Middle East.

Diplomacy is the only way to truly resolve security concerns worldwide, and we need the IAEA's assistance in order to protect Afghanistan, while we seek to move forward with our progress. The world recognizes that they should not turn their backs on Afghanistan. They recognize that Afghanistan must succeed in its efforts to stabilize and modernize. We require additional long term fellowships and hope that together we can work to ensure stability, advancement, and success in Afghanistan.

Thank you for your attention.