



**STATEMENT
BY THE PRESIDENT OF TURKMENISTAN
HIS EXCELLENCY
MR. GURBANGULY BERDIMUHAMEDOV
AT THE 73RD SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

New-York, September 29, 2018



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Dear Mr. (Mrs.) President,
Dear heads of delegations,
Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, allow me to congratulate Mrs. Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garces on her election to the post of the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly and wish her success in the forthcoming responsible work. I would also like to express my appreciation to Mr. Miroslav Lajcak, President of the 72nd session on his knowledgeable and effective work on this post.

Distinguished Participants,

The current session of the General Assembly is taking place against the background of complex trends in international politics. In spite of the efforts of the international community, primarily represented by the United Nations, situation in a number of regions of the globe continues to remain complicated and we witness a proliferation of conflict prone areas and simultaneously with this a decrease in the general level of trust and mutual understanding in our views on the ways and prospects of global development.

Under those circumstances the issue of ensuring general, reliable and long-term security becomes all too apparent and acute thereby imposing the responsibility for mankind's destiny on every state.

We believe that the United Nations is called upon to play the main and decisive role in preserving the foundations of international order on the basis of the principles of mutual respect and peaceful political dialogue. The validity of this mission of the United Nations cannot be cast in doubt. The United Nations is the only universal international organization designed to ensure multilateral

cooperation aimed at strengthening international security and sustainable development.

Turkmenistan believes that the current GA session is called upon to contribute to the solution of the crisis of trust and strengthen mutual understanding among member states. In this regard Turkmenistan advances the initiative of marking the year 2019 as the year of Peace and Trust. Our initiative envisages elaboration of specific measures aimed at reducing tensions, peaceful political and diplomatic resolution of disputes and contradictions and adoption of appropriate responsible and substantiated decisions.

Distinguished members of the delegations,

Ensuring long-term and comprehensive security represents a key issue for the Central Asian states.

Fight against terrorism is the most important issue of the regional agenda. However, cooperation on disarmament matters, fight against drug trafficking and omni-lateral economic support for Afghanistan is a no less important issue with respect to ensuring security and stable development. In this regard we believe that it is crucially important to involve Afghanistan in the implementation of major energy, transport and communications projects as a full-fledged partner. We regard this issue as a strategic guideline for Afghanistan, its role in regional and global processes and the guarantee of the prosperity and well-being of the Afghan people.

By steadfastly working towards this goal our country is implementing the project of building the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan – Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas line, carrying out the construction of a power supply line and a fiber optic communications network that are supported by international partners and major financial institutions. A new railway leading towards Afghanistan has also been completed. We continue to provide humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan by building social facilities, sending humanitarian aid convoys, training of qualified national specialists for various segments of the Afghan economy and social sphere.

Distinguished participants,

Turkmenistan has taken an active part in the⁴ elaboration of the Sustainable Development Agenda for the period up to the year 2030 and has tabled a number of specific proposals. Following the adoption by the World Summit of the Global

Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals our country was among the first nations that embarked on the adaptation of the SDGs to its national plans and social and economic development programmes. In this regard we have established the appropriate standing mechanism for cooperation with the United Nations.

Implementation of the SDGs in Turkmenistan has an especially prominent social orientation. By this we mean such important issues as ensuring food security and improvement of people's nutrition, all-round promotion of a healthy way of life, ensuring full gender equality by guaranteeing the rights and opportunities for all women and girls, and creating the conditions for a comprehensive, equitable and high-quality education. Parallel to this we devote great attention to achieving the goal of ensuring the availability and rational use of water resources and sanitation for all.

Distinguished Participants!

Turkmenistan firmly adheres to the principle stipulating that water is the common heritage of all the nations of the planet and that equal and equitable access to clean drinking water is the fundamental right of human beings. Development of states, their economy and social sphere as well as the level of well-being and quality of life of the people directly depends on access to water resources and their effective use. Therefore equality of rights, mutual respect and responsibility should become the main criteria that determine relations among Central Asian states. By steadfastly adhering to those positions Turkmenistan has always declared that water and energy issues existing in our region should be resolved:

- First, on the basis of generally accepted rules of international law;
- Second, on the basis of the consideration of the interests of each country;
- Third, on the basis of active participation of international organizations and primarily of the United Nations.

This is our principled position and proceeding from it we shall continue our work on building effective negotiating mechanisms between state and international entities with a view to elaborating coordinated approaches. I am convinced that only by doing so can we achieve positive results and ensure a stable and sustainable balance of interests.

The issue of saving the Aral Sea stands prominently among the major topics of cooperation between the countries of the region and the international community. It is apparent that preservation of the Aral Sea can no longer be considered as an internal regional problem. Its successful solution requires assistance from the

international community, an innovative purpose oriented and comprehensive international approach and systematic participation of the United Nations in this endeavour. In this connection we have embarked on the implementation of Turkmenistan's initiative regarding the elaboration of a Special UN Programme for the Aral Sea basin and earmarking the Aral problem as a separate sphere of Organization's work. I call on the United Nations member states to support our initiative. The UN resolution on the cooperation between the United Nations and the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea adopted by consensus on 18 April this year can serve as a good basis for this.

Distinguished participants,

The Caspian Sea is yet another major issue. The signing of the Convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea by Heads of the Caspian Sea states on the August 12 this year opens prospects for transforming the Caspian Sea region into one of the strategic transit transport and energy hubs of international importance, an area of broad investment, trade and economic activity and cooperation.

Turkmenistan stands ready to meaningfully discuss with all interested parties the implementation of projects in those spheres that are fully economically and commercially feasible and are beneficial for all potential participants, can significantly influence strengthening of continental security and have a long-term nature. It is no exaggeration to say that investment in those projects is an investment in the future.

We highly value effective participation of the UN specialized agencies epresented in Turkmenistan in the life of our country and its dynamic development and well-being and I would like to express our specific gratitude to the personnel of those agencies for their selfless work. I would also like to thank UN Secretary General Mr. Antonio Guterres for his constant personal attention to UN cooperation with Turkmenistan and support of our initiatives and endeavors.