

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Ardasher Qodiri, Ambassador of the  
Republic of Tajikistan to Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Permanent  
Representative of Tajikistan to the UNESCAP at the 79<sup>th</sup> session of ESCAP  
15 May 2023, UNCC Bangkok**

**Hon. Fekitamoeloa Katoa ‘Utoikamanu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tonga,  
Chair of the seventy ninth session,**

**Madam Executive Secretary of UNESCAP,**

**Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

The issue of climate change and its consequences is one of the crucial topics that concerns the global community. The growing challenge of climate change requires that our actions be coordinated and based on proven short- and long-term measures. Especially over the past decade the negative impact of climate change has manifested itself more frequently and clearly. Every day in the news we see the impact of this phenomenon (climate change) across the planet, including a spike in deaths from lightning strikes and a searing heat wave in South Asia, drought and famine in Africa, wildfires in Australia, Europe and North America, devastating hurricanes and floods in New York, shortages of drinking water, famines and epidemics, blows to biodiversity, rising sea levels and uninhabitable areas.

I am confident that the 79<sup>th</sup> session under the theme “Accelerating climate action in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development” is another opportunity to review our cooperation on lessening climate calamities, challenges and its influence to the achieving the SDGs.

I believe that a fruitful discussion of policy options and features of our mutual cooperation to accelerate climate action in the region and beyond will contribute to defining a common vision and identifying opportunities, effective solutions to meet the goals and commitments to reduce the risks and impacts of climate change.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The long-term observations of experts testify of the increasing impact of climate change on the environment and social and economic situation in Tajikistan. Being as a mountainous country with difficult geographic conditions, Tajikistan is one of the most vulnerable countries to the impact of climate change.

By the influence of global warming, more than a thousand glaciers, which are vital to entire Central Asia, have melted and completely disappeared. According to available data, due to climate change in the country, up to one thousand glaciers have disappeared, and about 35% of glaciers have degraded. Furthermore, the impact of climate change on the quantity and quality of freshwater resources is becoming increasingly evident.

Glaciers as the primary source of freshwater and their intense melting, along with an increase in water consumption associated with population growth and economic development, could lead to negative consequences. The current situation of glaciers worldwide requires the adoption of measures together with international and regional structures, including the organization of expeditions to study glaciers.

To address and raise awareness about the issue, the President of Tajikistan, H.E. Mr. Emomali Rahmon proposed an initiative to declare 2025 as the International Year for Glaciers Preservation and establish an International Fund for Glacier Preservation under the auspices of the United Nations. Fortunately, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December 2022, the UN General Assembly unanimously supported this initiative and almost 160 countries co-sponsored it. It is inherently unique, as it simultaneously proclaims both the International Day and the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation. Moreover, the Resolution envisages establishment of a UN Trust Fund in support of activities for glaciers' preservation and convening the International Conference on Glacier's Preservation in Dushanbe in 2025.

The 2025 Conference as a the wrap-up event, is aimed at achieving the goals and implementing the Resolution on Glaciers. Therefore, we will make efforts to host several important events and exhibitions in cooperation with partners in different countries and regions. The results of these activities will help to summarize specific proposals for the development of the programme and draft documents to be adopted at the Conference. We believe that this Conference will approve a strategy, road map and other important international documents for the implementation of the necessary joint measures to address the issues of preventing the rapid melting of glaciers, protecting glaciers and their effective use at the global and regional level as the main sources of clean drinking water.

We also need to establish cooperation with international institutions to monitor the state of glaciers in Tajikistan and the region, including through satellite images and modern technologies. We already started such a cooperation with UNESCO, and we will make every effort to involve international research centers, stakeholders and donors in the implementation of this initiative.

We are convinced that the initiative will gave an impetus to a new global movement to take necessary collective action and to protect glaciers from intense melting.

Tajikistan attaches particular importance to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction for 2015-2030, which calls for improving early warning systems, increasing investment in disaster risk reduction programs, and providing financial assistance to developing countries. The country's per capita emission of GHG is 10 times less than the average world index, and Tajikistan's share in the total amount of detrimental emissions in Central Asia is equal only to 3 percent.

Thus, Tajikistan has set an unconditional goal of achieving zero emissions by 2050, focusing on energy and water resources, industry and construction, land use, agriculture and horticulture and grazing, forestry and biodiversity, and transport and infrastructure. The adoption of the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for the period up to 2030, the Fourth National Report on Climate Change and the Biennial Report on Greenhouse Gases are the country's solid steps in this direction

**Distinguished colleagues,**

We are concerned with the changes in hydrological cycles that adversely affect water, energy and food security and can lead to additional risks of floods and severe droughts. The increase in water-related natural disasters highlights the inextricable link between water resources and climate change.

In this context a demographic growth and shrinking glaciers and snowfields, which are the primary sources of rivers in the region and are affected by climate change, are leading to increased water consumption and decreased river flows.

Under these circumstances, we have to revise our programs and strategies for water use, especially in agriculture and take joint measures to promote sustainable development and adaptation to climate change.

As the current chair of the International Fund for Saving Aral Sea (IFAS) Tajikistan has been continuing efforts to strengthen dialogue and cooperation to address water problems related to climate change, as well as reforming the Fund and enhancing collaboration between the UN and the IFAS.

In late March Tajikistan and the Netherlands jointly organized the UN 2023 Water Conference (in New York) that offered a once-in-a-generation opportunity to galvanize commitments and accelerate actions on water across multiple sectors.

It upraised the urgency of action, emphasizing the importance of leveraging existing tools and effective coordination to advance on all water related goals and targets by 2030, through the Water Action Decade “Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028”, the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework, and the Water Action Agenda.

We are convinced, that in today's conditions, it is the nexus approach that can lay a solid ground to addressing daily challenges, develop “green economy” and facilitate sustainable development.

Therefore, it is important to take on board the outcomes of the Water Action Agenda in existing, relevant intergovernmental processes in order to ensure that proposed commitments will get concrete follow up through existing processes like the HLPF, Sendai, COP on Climate and on Biodiversity, as well as the Dushanbe Water Process.

**Mr. Chairman,**

During recent years the water dialogue has been almost suspended in ESCAP and mostly UNECE is involved in water dialogue. We are of the view that we should continue our efforts to strengthen dialogue and cooperation to address water problems in Asia and the Pacific.

Concluding, Let me reiterate that we are committed to continue our efforts in this direction and invite all to join us in this process. I should mention that strengthening existing financial mechanisms and cooperation in the direction of creating effective methods of technology transfer and promoting the capacity of countries, especially developing countries, to adapt to climate change, as well as reduce the risks and consequences of natural disasters, is important.

I wish we will have a constructive discussions throughout the session.

**I Thank you for your attention**