



**STATEMENT BY
THE HONOURABLE AHMAD ZIA MASSOUD
FIRST VICE PRESIDENT OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC
OF AFGHANISTAN
AT THE SECOND SOUTH SUMMIT
DOHA, 15 JUNE 2005**

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Your Highness Sheikh HAMAD Bin Khalifa Al Thani Emir of the State of
Qatar,

Your Majesties,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me at the outset convey to your highness Sheikh HAMAD Bin Khalifa Al Thani Emir of the State of Qatar our deep appreciation for your most generous and traditional hospitality accorded to us and to congratulate you for the excellent organization of this summit. On behalf of the people and Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, I extend warm wishes to your Excellencies Heads of States and governments of the member countries of the Group of 77 and China, and representatives gathered in this summit.

Since the situation in Afghanistan is a matter of interest to you all and is in the focus of the world attention, I would like to say a few words about our achievements during the past three and a half years.

After 23 years of war that disrupted the state and social institutions in Afghanistan, when we began the reconstruction of our country three years ago, it was very clear to us that we have a very long and difficult journey to go. However, with the support of Almighty Allah, our people's determination, and generous support from the international community, we have made considerable progresses.

During the last three years, the Grand Council (Loya Jerga) adopted Afghanistan's new Constitution. The first presidential election was held with great involvement of men and women across the country, in which the participation of women was around 45 percent of the electorate.

Security has greatly improved. The national demobilization, disarmament and reintegration program is being implemented successfully and all the targets are being achieved. Armed militia around the country are being disarmed and decommissioned. With the assistance from international community, work is under way to train a national army and a national police force.

The independent election commission has been established and the parliamentary election will be held in September 2005. To make a long story short, Afghanistan is moving towards institutionalizing democracy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The aforementioned achievements have increased the desire of Afghans to have peace, stability, security, rule of law and strong institutions alongside opportunities for economic development.

In spite of all improvements, our country is still facing enormous challenges. For clear and historical reasons, Afghanistan is lagging behind in many of economic, social and human development indicators.

Today, Afghanistan is requesting and urging the international community to collaborate and invest even further in various fields such as establishment of infrastructure, improvement of education and health sector, modernization and mechanization of agriculture system, and better exploitation of natural resources. Laws and regulations adopted and approved in the past three years, provide more facilities and opportunities for the private sector particularly in trade and industry.

Afghanistan's location in the region as the crossroad of southern and central Asia is a great opportunity for economic development in the region in general and in Afghanistan in particular. This, from one hand, can help ensure

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security and strengthen relationships across the region, and on the other hand, can contribute to poverty reduction in a region that houses a large number of people from developing countries.

To eradicate cultivation of poppy and trafficking of drugs as its main priority, Afghanistan needs more extensive support of the international community. The struggle against drugs is a challenge in front of Afghanistan and international community. We are determined to make a comprehensive fight against this vicious manifestation in Afghanistan. Given the current situation, realization of this important objective requires joint and coordinated interventions by Afghanistan and international community including the provision of alternative livelihoods to farmers which can play an important role in this front.

His Highness the Chairman,

I would like to reaffirm the commitment of Afghanistan as an active member of the international community and as a member of Group of 77 to achieve the objectives of this organization; and we are hopeful and optimistic towards the results and accomplishments of this historical summit.

We believe that this summit will address the issues related to the reconstruction of Afghanistan and continuation of aid and attention of the international community towards Afghanistan, a war-stricken and least developed country. This will make a significant contribution to bringing peace, security and stability in the region and the whole world.

On behalf of the people and government of Afghanistan, I want to express my appreciation and gratitude to all friends particularly to the host country, Qatar, and His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani Emir of Qatar.