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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT BY  
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DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN  
TO THE  
17th SPECIAL SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
TO CONSIDER THE QUESTION OF INTERNATIONAL  
CO-OPERATION AGAINST ILLICIT PRODUCTION,  
SUPPLY, DEMAND, TRAFFICKING AND DISTRIBUTION OF  
NARCOTIC DRUGS AND PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES

NEW YORK

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Mr. President,

Allow me at the outset to express to you the best congratulations of my delegation on your unanimous election as the President of the Seventeenth Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Your vast skills and experience as well as your exemplary guidance of the deliberations of the 44th Regular Session of the General Assembly and its Special Session on Apartheid, gives us every confidence that the deliberation of this Session would be crowned with success.

The question before us, Mr. President, is a vitally important one. Illicit production, supply, demand, trafficking and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances has reached such a vast scale that it is no longer possible for any individual state, small or big, to cope with it alone. Vast international cooperation is obviously called for if we are to free the present generation, and the generations to come, from the scourge of drug abuse and the multiplicity of social and economic problems that go with it.

One of the primary areas that require immediate and concerted attention is clearly reduction and eventual elimination of drug abuse. Although much has to be done in this area by individual states, international cooperation is of vital importance. The Division on Narcotic Drugs, the International Narcotic Control Board and the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control must be strengthened to play their indispensable parts both individually and in collaboration with other United Nations bodies. Similarly, international assistance, particularly through the United Nations

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System, is much needed for the effective implementation of national treatment and rehabilitation programmes.

If reduction and elimination of drug abuse require international cooperation, it is even more so in the case of controlling the illicit supply and trafficking of such drugs. For such cooperation to be effective, it is necessary to make it free from any political consideration for the sake of common good. Particular attention should also be made to adopting effective measures to prevent putting arms at the disposal of mercenaries and other groups and individuals who make use of them for illicit drug cultivation, processing and trafficking. The question of saving millions of youth and children from the scourge of drug abuse must receive priority over any political consideration that might be involved.

Drug supply reduction and interdiction entails, in the case of many countries, expenditures of scarce financial and economic resources which are urgently needed for developmental efforts. Therefore, fresh commitments for economic, financial and technical assistance to these countries are required to help them carry national policies for crop substitution and elimination of supply. Tariff and non-tariff preferential treatment to provide access to international markets as an incentive for adoption of commercial crops is a pre-requisite to any success in supply reduction.

Most countries are also in need of technical assistance, exchange of information and expertise on preventing drug trafficking from or through their countries. The United Nations Convention

against Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 go a long way toward suppressing drug trafficking in international level. We believe regional and sub-regional agreements and other forms of cooperation in effectively dealing with drug trafficking is likewise necessary.

Mr. President,

The Republic of Afghanistan has undertaken all legal and practical measures to curtail production and illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs in line with the Comprehensive Multi-disciplinary Outline of 1987. The First Article of the Law on Banning Drug Production and Abuse stipulates, and I quote, " The cultivating, production, import, transportation, trade, trafficking, storage, spread and usage of narcotic drugs is totally prohibited in the Republic of Afghanistan. The perpetration of such acts are punishable by law....." On the basis of a decree issued by H.E. President Najibullah, in 1987, the war against drug trafficking was intensified. As a result, so far 28,088 kgs of hashish, 10,325 kgs of opium and 14,205 kgs of heroin and other drugs have been captured in the country. In 1989 alone, 716 kgs of heroin, 1,590 kgs of hashish and 28,940 Mandrax tablets were set on fire.

Due to favourable traditions of our people and the teachings and values of the sacred religion of Islam, fortunately, drug abuse is regarded as evil and deplorable act in Afghan society. However, drug addiction is not rare in Afghanistan, and attention must be paid to treatment and rehabilitation. So far, 3,000 people have been properly treated in the rehabilitation center. However, the possibilities of the center remains very limited and is in

need of technical and financial assistance from United Nations bodies. Our efforts to educate the population, particularly the youth and the children on the dangers of drug abuse , which is carried by mass media with the cooperation of the Ministries of Education and Public Health, also requires international support and encouragement.

The need for international assistance is particularly felt in the field of fighting illicit drug trafficking. Due to its geographic location, Afghanistan lies at the crossroads of much drug trafficking. The frontier areas between Afghanistan and Pakistan has also been nicknamed the "golden crescent" because significant amount of drugs, particularly heroin, sold on the streets of the United States, Canada and Europe, originate from this area. Although our success in interdiction efforts have been significant by any standard, it is impossible to cope with the problem without concerted regional cooperation and international assistance.

What is more alarming, recent years have seen a many-fold increase both in the area of cultivation and the volume of illicit trafficking. While in 1976, some 120 tons of heroin was produced, the figure for 1989 was 580 tons. In the same period, the area for hashish cultivation jumped from 500 hectares to 1,400 hectares.

This sorry situation is the direct result of a larger tragedy which is the war and bloodshed that is still flaring in Afghanistan. The war has created an ideal situation for the leaders of the Seven Alliance, their close associates and some of their commanders

to get deeply involved in illicit drug production, processing and trafficking. These so-called leaders now constitute important links in the chains of international drug networks operating in north America and western Europe.

International mass media has abundantly reported on the involvement of these so-called leaders in drug production and trafficking on a large scale. In fact, on different occasions, several of their associates in their talks with the media have justified drug operations as means of financing their so-called jihad. Mawlawi Mohammadi, Defense Minister in the so-called interim government justified poppy seed cultivation as a tradition to Daily Times. The B.B.C. , quoting the paper, reported on 27 September 1989 that Mohammadi stated, and I quote, "Our farmers are poor. They should be able to carry on their livelihood. The cultivation of poppy seeds constituted one of our traditional products." End of quotation.

According to the information collected by competent organs of the Republic of Afghanistan, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who is at the head of the Islamic Party of Afghanistan, is far ahead of the others both in terms of the volume traded and extensive connection with the international drug networks. He is running the largest single factory of drug processing located in Rabat, bordering Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. His other laboratories are located in Jaji, Samkani and Teri Mangal areas. Areas cultivated by Hekmatyar inside Afghanistan are mainly located in Nengarhar, Zabul and Kandahar provinces, all located in the frontier areas.

Another so-called leader, Yunus Khalis, so-called Minister of Interior, controls the greater part of drug production in Nengarhar and Kandahar provinces. Rasul Sayyaf, the so-called Prime Minister, and Rabani, so-called Minister of Reconstruction are also engaged in drug trafficking. Gailani, the so-called Chief Justice, is active in Goshta sub-district, Nengarhar province, as well as in districts of Paktia province, while Mujadeddi, the so-called president runs several laboratories as well as tracts of poppy fields.

While the greater part of the narcotics produced by these leaders are smuggled to west Europe and North America, a portion is set aside for consumption by their rank and file to bolster militancy and increase their dependency to the extremist leaders. Indeed, the spread of drug abuse in the ranks of the opposition has created a serious problem to Afghanistan's today and tomorrow, requiring tremendous efforts for treatment and rehabilitation which might prove beyond the means available for the country.

As reported by international mass media, the question of narcotic drug trafficking by the Afghan armed opposition has figured in the United States Administration's efforts for curbing the illicit supply of drugs to the streets of American cities and towns. According to a Voice of America dispatch on 4 December 1989, United States Ambassador to Pakistan, Mr. Oakly, has raised the question of drug production and trafficking with Sebghatullah Mujadeddi of the so-called interim government. According to other reports, the United States has promised an amount of two million

dollars to a certain commander in Helmand province of Afghanistan called Mullah Nasim, in exchange for putting an end to poppy cultivation.

However, we are convinced that the good intentions of such acts notwithstanding, they are not likely to serve their intended purpose. Spending millions of dollars in encouraging some local commanders to good behavior will not work in the absence of effective control. Such measures are fraught with the real danger of back-firing.

International and regional cooperation, on the other hand, can facilitate exchange of information, experience and expertise towards more effective interdiction and eradication. The Republic of Afghanistan stands ready to cooperate, to the largest extent possible, with all the countries of the region, Pakistan, Iran, the Soviet Union, India and others as well as with the United States of America, and the western European countries to fight the scourge of illicit supply and trafficking of narcotic drugs from our region. We shall make use of all the possibilities and information in our disposal, to make a fruitful cooperation in this field possible.

Mr. President,

In a message addressed to His Excellency, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the eve of this august special session, H.E. Najibullah, President of the Republic of Afghanistan has stated, and I quote:

"The question of illicit production, supply, demand, trafficking and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances has

become a source of grave concern to the international community. We, in the Republic of Afghanistan, fully share this concern. This is more so because, unfortunately, the frontier areas between Afghanistan and Pakistan has been turned into a huge base for illicit narcotic drugs cultivation, processing and supply, negatively afflicting the lives and well-being of hundreds of thousands of individuals, particularly the youth, both in the area and overseas. According to statistics released by United States Drug Enforcement Agency, 90 percent of heroin captured in the United States and 70 percent captured in Europe has originated from this area.

The Government of the Republic of Afghanistan has done everything to fight this scourge with all the means at its disposal. Indeed, our record of success is significant. However, the problem has been compounded because of the fact that the greater part of those dealing in the illicit cultivation, processing and trafficking of narcotic drugs constitute of the leaders of armed extremist groups and greedy circles close to them. Their direct participation in the international illicit drug dealing networks is the root cause of the tremendous increase in recent years of narcotic drugs in the said area.

The Government of the Republic of Afghanistan hopes that the concerned organs of the United Nations adopt immediate comprehensive measures to cope with this serious problem. In this context, we propose that a special commission should be set up to study the scope of the problem with a view to recommend to the United Nations bodies, as well as to the countries of the region, a joint comprehensive plan of action to eradicate illicit supply and

trafficking of narcotic drugs from the area. To this end, the commission should also facilitate regional cooperation and invite international technical and financial assistance that would be required. The Republic of Afghanistan stands ready to cooperate with all countries as well as with the proposed commission, providing it with all the information and documents at its disposal.  
End of quote.

Thank you, Mr. President