STATEMENT

by

H.E. Mohammad Ismail Rahimi

Technical Deputy Minister of Economy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

at

The Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries

27-29 May 2016

Antalya, Turkey

(Check against delivery)
His Excellency under -Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Excellencies, Distinguished Heads of States, Heads of Governments, honorable Ministers,
Permanent Representatives to the UN,
Senior Officials and Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to thank the UN-OHRLSS and Government of Republic of Turkey for convening and hosting this important meeting and for the warm hospitality provided to me and other LDC delegations.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by Thailand, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and Bangladesh, on behalf of Group of the Least Developed Countries.

Mr. President,

The broad participation and high level of representation at this event for us is reason for great gratification and hope. The Midterm Review of the Istanbul Programme of Action for LDCs could not happen at a more appropriate time. The international community and the UN system are at a critical and historical juncture: the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and the adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction created a new framework for conceiving and implementing Sustainable Development Goals.

Mr. President,

As we gathered here today to undertake a comprehensive review of the implementation of IPoA, to share best practices and lessons learned, and most importantly, to identify obstacles and constraints encountered us and not allowing us to move forward. In this context, I would like to highlight the following points:

- We welcome the draft political declaration of this Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review as a comprehensive, balanced, and forward looking
document and we appreciate the efforts of co-facilitators, the Permanent Representatives of Benin and Belgium to the United Nations in this respect.

- As stipulated in the 2030 Agenda and I quote “There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.” Development challenges posed by conflict not only impede, but can reverse decades of development gains. Among the LDCs, countries in conflict and post-conflict situations are the ones facing the direst challenges in achieving sustainable development, as well as the realization of IPoA. My country’s best efforts for realization of the economic growth and sustainable development are impeded by the conflict emanating from international terrorism and extremism. As a member of LDCs, LLDCs, and as a conflict affected country, Afghanistan is combating terrorism on a daily basis and paying a high price in terms of resources for ensuring peace and stability in the country. We thus call on the international community to support LDCs in conflict and post-conflict situations to achieving the realization of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. In this regards, we would like to welcome the inclusion of the reference to the New Deal by the Group of Seven Plus in the political declaration of this Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review.

- Financing for development is a crucial factor in the implementation of the 2030 development agenda as well as IPoA. In this regard, the realization of the commitments made in the Addis Ababa action agenda is of highly importance. As a country highly dependent on aid, we also recognize the great importance of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to support our efforts for reaching sustainable development goals and economic growth.

- We cannot stress enough the added value of regional cooperation and economic integration, trade and investment promotion and strengthening of South-South cooperation as a complementary to North-South cooperation for attaining IPoA.

- I would like to express my government’s deep appreciation for the Government of Turkey for hosting the UN Technology Bank for LDCs to be operational in 2017. Transfer of technology to LDCs constitutes a crucial
element for their structural transformation and an important priority when implementing the recently adopted development agendas. In this context, we would also like to highlight the importance of strengthening the national statistical capacities of LDCs, in order to increase significantly the use and availability of high quality and reliable data to develop efficient policy making strategies and for an effective follow-up and review of development plans.

Distinguished delegates,

While Afghanistan in the last one decade and half had many positive achievements, inter alia, in health, education, human rights, particularly, women rights, agriculture, and mining sector, there are serious economic, human and social developments challenges still exist. The burden of poverty will continue to be felt in the coming years unless concrete steps are taken to tackle its root causes in a sustainable way. My country notes in this regard the importance of the ICPD beyond 2014 and the Sustainable Development Goals for the achievement of national development priorities.

Supporting the Afghan National Unity Government robust agenda for national reforms described in “Realizing Self-Reliance” strategy paper, the upcoming Brussels Conference on Afghanistan in early October this year will build on the set of mutual commitments between the Afghan Government and its development partners. It can send a signal of renewed hope, confidence and change underlining that the gains of the past 15 years in Afghanistan are irreversible.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, as the deadline for achieving the Istanbul Programme of Action is just 5 years away, I would like to emphasize on the importance of continuing in the profusion of ambitious and concerted efforts by the international community, including LDCs, development partners, UN Agencies, civil society and the private sector. The Istanbul Programme of Action constitutes an ambitious program, but we are confident that with your support and our collective efforts, we will be able to implement this programme timely and effectively.

I thank you Mr. President.