Revised

Statement by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan

High-level Segment

COP16 / CMP 6 Cancun, Mexico

9th December 2010

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished President,

Distinguished heads of delegations,

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to express my appreciation to the Government of Mexico for the extraordinary arrangements for this Conference of the Parties. We would like to thank the people of Mexico for their warm and generous hospitality. Here in beautiful Cancun, the future of our planet and future generations is being decided.

Ladies and gentlemen,

There can now be no serious doubt that our planet's climate is changing and that this is largely the result of our own activity – there can also be no doubt that climate change will pose serious consequences to all of us. In recent years we have seen a number of catastrophic events across the world that give us a flavor of what the future holds if we fail to dramatically change our behavior. My country – Tajikistan – is a beautiful land locked mountainous developing country with thousands of glaciers, lakes and rivers.

But we face enormous challenges due to the accelerated melting of glaciers. The *United Nations Environment Programme Report on High mountain glaciers and climate change,* which was launched few days ago, confirms the work of bodies such as the IPCC and the World Glacial Monitoring Services: namely that the overall trend for glaciers is one of loss and shrinkage. This report highlights the vulnerability and exposure of mountainous people to floods, droughts and eventually water shortages as a result of changes in the melting and freezing cycles linked to climate change. Over recent decades, the glaciers of Tajikistan have shrunk by a 1/3. However, water in Tajikistan also offers huge benefits for global mitigation efforts, as hydropower provides our country with a clean and renewable source of energy. Our hydropower plants generate more than 95% of the power in the country which, unlike thermal power plants, are not sources of greenhouse gases. Tajikistan has the potential to develop 527 billion kilowatt hours per year and this capacity exceeds the current needs of the countries of Central Asia by over three times, but the sector currently only operates at 5 to 6% of potential capacity. Its further development would not only allow emissions reductions of billions of tons of carbon dioxide, but would also save reserves of oil, gas and coal. The role of reservoirs constructed under the hydropower stations is also important. Reservoirs can play a crucial role in ensuring water security, as well as helping to prevent such extreme hydrological phenomena as floods and landslides that can lead to such tragic consequences.

Extreme events such as droughts and floods are already leading to severe and negative consequences that are affecting the living standards of our people and significantly reducing the ability of our country to achieve sustainable development. And to our deepest regret, sometimes lives are also lost. We know that floodwaters have recently caused massive destruction worldwide, and particularly in Asia, over a hundred million people are strongly affected by floods every year.

It is clear to us that climate change poses **additional and urgent risks** to human welfare, economic activity and the environment although Tajikistan's contribution to global warming is minimal.These risks will compound existing and pressing development challenges. Adaptation is for us a real challenge because of our very high vulnerability, limited capacity to adapt and the lack of scientific information.

For Tajikistan there are two problems that are particularly important. Firstly, accessing relevant, timely and focused knowledge and information to help us to understand more clearly the nature of the risks we face and so inform an appropriate response to adapt to climate change. This is a critical gap in our capacity to take immediate action in a flexible manner on the basis of clear priorities. On this point, we raised our concerns during this session about the scope and breadth of the Nairobi Work Programme to date. This in no way detracts from the achievements of the Programme, but we would like to draw your attention to what remains, in our opinion, an important gap. Our primary concern is that the NWP has failed to make a contribution to increase the understanding of impacts, vulnerability and adaptation planning measures in mountainous Landlocked Developing countries and developing countries with mountainous fragile ecosystems. We must ensure that any future activity and mandate of the NWP is fully inclusive and considers the specific needs of all parties in an equitable manner. This is especially important in light of the need to share experiences and knowledge to enhance action on adaptation and acknowledge where gaps exist.

A second point is the availability and accessibility of financing. Without adequate funding of adaptation measures, our efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to transfer technology will lead to nothing.

For all these reasons we appeal to you, the international community, to:

- Strengthen glacial research and trans-national collaboration with an emphasis on monitoring and particularly the effects of glacial retreat on water resources, biodiversity and availability downstream,
- Urgently prioritize support for adaptation actions to address water- related disasters,
- Establish a New Fund to support adaptation, capacity building and technology transfer in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change,
- Reach an agreement that would ensure a global temperature rise below 1.5 degree C.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In conclusion, I once again wish to underline the willingness of Tajikistan to support the efforts of the international community in addressing the causes and consequences of climate change and to express my country's firm support to the adaptation that is crucial for the future of mankind.

Thank you for your attention