STATEMENT

BY

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Second Secretary of the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
to the United Nations

at the Second Committee Debate on agenda item 23: Groups countries in
special situations

(Check against delivery)

22 October 2018
Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for giving me the floor. My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by Egypt on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Paraguay on behalf of the Group of Land-locked Developing Countries (LLDCs), and Malawi on behalf of the group of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

Mr. Chairman,

Least Developed Countries and Landlocked Developing Countries are the ground on which we will truly measure the success of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It is fundamental to pursue a balanced and integrated approach in responding to the development challenges facing countries in special situations, as well as building synergies and bringing coherence among all relevant UN Agendas, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Istanbul Programme of Action, and the Vienna Programme of Action.

Mr. Chairman,

As a conflict affected, least developed and landlocked country, Afghanistan is experiencing the challenging task of implementing the SDGs while remaining at the forefront of countering global terrorism. Despite the security and development challenges, we are deeply committed to the full implementation of the SDGs, having already incorporated them into the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF 2017-2021), the National Priority Programs (NPPs), as well as the national budget. Afghanistan has finalized the nationalization process of SDGs, incorporating its targets (121) and indicators (188) into the Government’s programs and projects.

In this regard, I would like to highlight a few important priorities for countries in special situations:
First, infrastructure development, including in the areas of transport, energy and ICT remains pivotal for the economic development of LDCs and LLDCs. Afghanistan and the surrounding region are facing a huge infrastructure gap which needs to be addressed collectively and through an integrated approach.

Second, international assistance is essential for the implementation of the SDGs in countries in special situations. In the case of Afghanistan, while the Afghan government is committed to gradually reduce the level of our aid-dependency, continued international support is needed throughout our transformation decade (2015-2024). It is crucial that our development partners honor their ODA commitments, in particular the ones made towards LDCs.

Third, regional economic cooperation and integration plays a crucial role in achieving inclusive growth and sustainable development. There is a need for intensified collaborative efforts towards integration of countries in special situations into regional and global value chains, with a view to expand their export markets and diversify their export baskets. Afghanistan, due to its geo-economic location, plays a crucial role in regional and inter-regional connectivity. In our view, regional cooperation can serve as a cross-cutting enabler in the implementation of the SDGs and other development agendas. Hence, it should receive greater attention during the work under this agenda item.

Fourth, climate change and its impacts disproportionately affect LDCs and LLDCs. In reiterating our call for the full and timely implementation of the Paris Agreement, we would like to highlight the need of streamlining climate change adaptation and mitigation in the work of Second Committee under this agenda item.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, we would like to reassure you of our firm commitment in working closely and constructively with our development partners during the deliberations and negotiations of the resolutions under this agenda item. We hope that it will result in enhanced support to LDCs and LLDCs in order to make their development gains sustainable, inclusive and meaningful.

I thank you