



**The Asia Conference of the Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA)  
Dhaka-Bangladesh  
30-31 May 2010  
Afghanistan Statement**

**Dear Organizers, country representatives, journalists, guest, ladies and Gentlemen!**

On behalf of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the National Environmental protection Agency, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the organizers of the conference for the support of Afghan delegate's participation in this important event on the regional climate change conference.

Afghanistan is an arid country that covers 652,089km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>3</sup> The dominating feature is the central massif that forms the spine of the country. The Hindu Kush is the general name given to this 1,000 km mountain system that extends southwesterly from northern Pakistan, descending in elevation into the low-lying semi-deserts of western and north-western Afghanistan. The highest point in Afghanistan is Mount Nowshak at 7,484m and the lowest about 400m in the Sistan. Approximately 27 percent of Afghanistan lies above 2,500m elevation. The mountains grade into semi-desert open woodlands and shrublands forming a great crescent surrounding the northern, southern and western parts of the mountainous regions. Extensive desert regions are found in the southwest while the extreme east is characterized by monsoon-influenced forests.

Afghanistan has been in war for more than three decades and the environment in this country suffered second after the human losses. This has resulted that the country is back for 30 years to collaborate national and International decisions in the issues pertaining to environment and climate change.

There are many impacts of climate change in Afghanistan that has directly affected Afghanistan and its fragile resources. Observations suggest that climate change has potentially disrupted agricultural development by exacerbating drought (i.e., a decline in surface or subsurface water resources, such as rivers, lakes, reservoirs and ground water) and has increased the severity and frequency of heat waves.

The key climatic hazards in Afghanistan is periodic drought, floods due to untimely and heavy rainfall, flooding due thawing of snow and ice, increasing temperature, frost, and cold spells, hail, thunder and lightning, 120 day long winds, desertification due to drought.

Despite the fact that the country does not contributes to regional and global change in climate, but can be first to suffer of these changes. To date, general measures for



environmental management have been undertaken in Afghanistan with the elaboration of overarching national policies, strategies and legislation that address natural resource and land management issues. However, specific activities that directly address adaptation to climate change are limited in their number and scope. Afghanistan signed the UNFCCC on 12th June 1992 as a Non-Annex I Party to the Convention (ratification took place on 19th September 2002 by the Transitional Authority and the Convention entered into force on the 18th of December 2002). Afghanistan is yet to comply to the Kyoto Protocol. Afghanistan made efforts to undertake a National Capacity Needs Self-assessment for Global Environmental Management (NCSA) and a National Adaptation Program of Action for Climate Change (NAPA) with the support of Global environmental Facilities (GEF) and United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). The objectives of the NCSA are to: (1) identify, confirm or review priority issues for action within the thematic areas of biodiversity, climate change and desertification, respectively; (2) explore related capacity needs within and across the three thematic areas; (3) catalyze targeted and coordinated action and requests for future external funding and assistance; and (4) link country action to the broader national environmental management and sustainable development framework. It will need to consider the best approach to ensuring that Afghanistan can adapt to climate changes in the long term – and to start, it would be helpful if we develop our own understanding of what tomorrow's changes are likely to look like, today. The country needs to develop its human, institutional, judiciary and capacities to tackle the problems of environmental disruption and to reduce climate change impacts. In these cases, a research effort to better understand the effects of climate change on Afghanistan broadly, its natural heritage and agricultural productivity in particulars is largely needed.

**Afghanistan**, facing major developmental challenges and being ranked 174 out of the 178 countries on the 2007 Human Development Index, has very limited internal capacity to fund and implement adaptation activities. These barriers include:

- Conflicts over three decades (1979-2001),
- Lack of law and regulations
- The ongoing security issues
- poverty and low incomes
- lack of clean energy and dependency on solid fuel, wood, and agricultural residues
- Low literacy rates,
- Lack of linkage with regional and international climate change networks.
- Lack of capacity in terms of human resources;
- Low levels of awareness of the current and potential impacts of climate change;
- Limited analytical capability, especially for analyzing climatic data to assess threats and potential impacts, and develop viable solutions; and
- Limited resources, as funds of donor partners are currently overstretched addressing other priority issues that include security, health, education, gender, conflict resolution and agricultural development, amongst others.