

Statement by H.E. Dr. Asad M. Khan at the Summit of the Future

(September 23, 2024 New York)

**Your Excellency Mr. Dennis Francis, President of the United Nations General Assembly,
Heads of State and Delegations,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentleman,**

Around eighty years ago, learning from the two world wars and a global pandemic, we came together in San Francisco to collectively embrace peace, security and development and pledged to pursue them through institutionalized dialogue and cooperation. The global pact that we forged then through the adoption of the UN Charter and its principles gave almost uninterrupted peace and prosperity to our successive generations for decades. That compact is clearly under stress today.

More recently the global pandemic reminded us afresh of our interconnectedness and interdependence and the merits of collaboration, while also exposing our shared vulnerabilities.

Beyond interstate relations where we are definitely facing a crisis, we are also challenged in how our societies are organized and individual consumption patterns prioritized. This has produced a crisis of trust and confidence both in our interpersonal and interstate relations.

Technologies, while offering us the hope and the tools to realize a safer, better resourced and equal opportunity future also give us the unprecedented power to harm each other.

As the theme of the Summit and ensuing discussions aptly highlight, many of the old-established multilateral structures have become weak and are getting irrelevant, failing to meet the expectations heaped upon them. Luckily this summit gave us a unique opportunity to reflect on the past and chart a new course for better future. The choices are clear. We can either have a breakthrough or a breakdown.

By successfully negotiating and adopting “The Pact for the Future,” “Global Digital Pact,” and “Declaration on Future Generations” we have not only highlighted the significant challenges facing humanity but also made commitments to collectively and effectively deal with these challenges and

threats to create a better future. Besides, through this summit we are also reaffirming the UN Charter, committing to reinvigorating multilateralism, boosting implementation of our commitments, and restoring trust among member states. We are happy to see that the Summit has also prioritized technology through the digital compact. Technologies remain the big equalizer and force multiplier for many in the developing world.

While these renewed commitments echo past promises, it is crucial that we fulfill our obligations and bring these commitments to fruition in a timely manner. We firmly believe that the time to act is now.

In an era where multilateralism often falls short of delivering effectively, where our ability to reach common ground to tackle pressing challenges is getting constrained, where optimism for win-win solutions seems to wane, cooperative regionalism is the way forward as a building block for an inclusive and more effective multilateralism.

UN is and must remain at the center of all our efforts in pursuing stronger cooperation and reinvigorated multilateralism. However, the work should start at the regional level to build a strong foundation for lasting international peace and security. Therefore, strengthening regionalism would serve the purpose of enhanced multilateralism where our hopes and aspirations for better tomorrow are rekindled.

The ECO, as one of pioneers in regional development cooperation in Asia, is acutely aware of the pressing realities of our time and the needs of the future generations.

Aligned with the Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030 (SDGs), we crafted the ECO Vision 2025, which aims to boost trade, enhance connectivity, secure transition towards green energy, and promote sustainable economic growth and the welfare of our people. We also intend to double the volume of intraregional trade. We are steadfast in our pursuit of these goals.

The ECO is also in the process of finalizing its post-2025 strategy, where we would incorporate the outcomes of this Summit and update the document to reflect key elements of the Pact. Henceforth this strategy will guide regional cooperation towards addressing global needs sustainably.

Recognizing the interconnectedness of global challenges and the necessity for effective governance and stronger multilateral cooperation, ECO is committed to enhancing regional collaboration and positioning itself as an active player on the global stage. We firmly believe that better connected and more integrated regions capable of working together to address their peace, security and development related challenges only make the reinvigorated multilateralism easier. It is therefore time to prioritize regionalism. Without strengthening regionalism, we cannot build a solid foundation for multilateralism.

I thank you for your kind attention.