The topics before the General Assembly (II) are Strengthening International Strategies for Disaster Reduction, Addressing External Debt Sustainability, and International Trade and Development. The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is dedicated to collaborative multilateral approaches to ensure the promotion and advancement of economic growth and development among member nations.

I. Strengthening International Strategies for Disaster Reduction

Afghanistan is fully committed to strengthening all instruments and mechanisms for natural disaster management. We remain diligent to further compliance and cooperation of the Istanbul Process and the newly formed Sendai Framework that has recently replaced the Hyogo Framework. Though committed to the new framework, Afghanistan has some concerns. One of Afghanistan’s most costly and elusive natural disasters are earthquakes, which is what we perceive to be the natural disaster that the Sendai Framework is least prepared to deal with. The Sendai Framework is focused on incentive schemes and prediction in order to mitigate the difficulties associated with natural disasters. Unfortunately, these approaches to dealing with earthquakes are not efficient. According to the USGS, large earthquakes at this time are not predictable and will not be in the near future. The Sendai Framework focuses on identifying areas that are prone to natural disaster, allocating and budgeting millions in investment funding to encourage that the necessary preparations will be made to mitigate natural disaster damages. Though the incentives are innovative and will most likely help prepare for more predictable natural disasters, there are no built-in budget allotments for earthquakes specifically. The lack of independent monetary allotments for earthquakes could lead to an over spending in preparing for natural disasters that can be foreseen. Another obstacle that the Sendai Framework struggles to confront is the rebuilding process after an earthquake has occurred. After the April 2015 Neapolitan earthquake occurred, the USGS claimed there were over 100 aftershocks following the initial quake. Contemporary building techniques and city planning have made earthquake resilient towns achievable if the construction were to be executed properly. Aftershocks make rebuilding and preplanning very difficult for the disaster relief community. With proper rebuilding being essential for future disaster risk reduction, it is pertinent that the issue be confronted in some way within the Sendai Framework.

II. Addressing External Debt Sustainability

Through recent joint efforts of the IMF and World Bank, The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan’s economy has stabilized. The IMF and World Bank have been involved with Afghanistan since 2002 and have taken many steps in order to ensure economic stability. Aside from having a permanent resident representative in Kabul between 2002 and 2014 and providing technical
assistance, the two institutions launched a debt relief program in 2010 that allocated 1.3 billion USD after Afghanistan met HIPC requirements. Though our economy is in disarray due to decades of war that has destroyed infrastructure and entrepreneurial capabilities, it is our position that the debt relief provided by the IMF and World Bank be continued along with LDC member nation’s persistent pursuit for HIPC compliance in order to achieve further debt relief. It is worth noting that Afghanistan also received nearly 70 billion USD from the international community between 2003 and 2010. This type of philanthropy should be encouraged for other LDC member nation’s economic development. Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world and relies heavily on grants to fund security and development spending. In order to safely stimulate economic development it is imperative that our country is not the center of predatory loans. Recent resolutions such as the Basic Principles on Sovereign Debt Restructuring Processes have provided a sturdier legal framework for those exploited by such loans. However, exploitation of “third world” countries by powerful economic institutions are still prevalent and real.

III. International Trade and Development

It is Afghanistan’s view that the utilization of agricultural subsidies would be the preferred action and the foremost economic primer for agriculturally underdeveloped countries. Economically powerful nation states are able to heavily subsidize their agricultural sector, allowing for a surplus to occur that negatively effects the agricultural markets of developing nations. To mitigate the effects of this inequality, agricultural subsidies should be used more liberally in the global market. For Afghanistan, agricultural subsidies would help combat the production of the illegal opium crop by incentivizing legal crop production; make our pomegranate, date, and melon markets more relevant and competitive; and increase quality of living and job creation for farmers.

Internet is considered a basic human right today, but for 94% of Afghans and for roughly 60% of the world, access to the internet is not domestically available. To be globally relevant as a business today, it is pertinent that entrepreneurs have access to the World Wide Web. This is a major hurdle for promoting international trade and market access at an individual level. To promote the proliferation of access to the internet, UNESCO’s Bureau of the Intergovernmental Council should allocate more money to the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) and work in a collaborative effort with UNDP. Since the creation of the IPDC, Afghanistan has received only 500 USD and total grant funding for all countries is just 104 million USD to help develop communications. In a world that has experienced exponential growth and development in the tech sector, the rest of the world has experienced a growing inequality caused by the lack of opportunities that modern technology provides.