



**Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram  
at High Level Side Event: Conserving the Markhor: Strategies  
and Success Stories**

**(July 22, 2024)**

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## **Excellencies, Colleagues,**

Allow me to express my appreciation to the Permanent Mission of Tajikistan for convening this High Level Side Event in collaboration with UNEP and IUCN in order to exchange views on strategies for the conservation of the Markhor.

2. Undoubtedly, the Markhor is ecologically important specie that plays a vital role in its ecosystem. Markhors offer a significant opportunity to bolster the economy, foster conservation efforts and promote sustainable tourism and economic growth.

3. For Pakistan, the Markhor holds a special significance as it is our national animal. It resides in the mountainous terrain of the Chitral, Kohistan and Kalam regions, as well as in northern Gilgit-Baltistan, southwestern Balochistan and parts of Azad Jammu & Kashmir.

4. The population of Markhors is declining globally, with less than 6000 mature individuals remaining. Yet, the Markhor population in Pakistan has been increasing for the past ten years, reaching between 3,500 and 5,000, due to our proactive conservation programmes, and community engagement.

5. In Pakistan's experience, strengthening community governance structures and promoting local ownership over sustainable natural resource use is a crucial first step to building more capacity for wildlife management activities. Allow me to share one example in this regard.

6. In 2000, we formulated a policy for trophy hunting that allowed a quota initially of 6 and later 12 Markhors to be hunted in a season. This programme is recognized under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

7. Under this policy, local communities are trained to monitor markhor populations, fully run trophy hunts and operate independently across large, isolated areas. 80% of trophy permit fees are retained by the local community, which has created a powerful incentive for conservation and led to significant livelihood improvements and community development projects. Moreover,

proceeds from the fees are also spent on improvement of Markhors breeding spaces and habitats.

8. Pakistan is keen to share our knowledge and experience on strategies for the conservation of the Markhor conservation and looks forward to learning from other countries experiences in this regard as well today.

9. The GA resolution 78/278, which decided to proclaim 24th May as the International Day of the Markhor, will go a long way in promoting collaborative efforts for the long-term preservation of this iconic species and its habitat.

**I thank you.**