

16 April 2007

**Statement of H.E. Ms. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa,
President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly,
at the Debate on the Recommendations of the High Level Panel on
System-Wide Coherence of United Nations Operational Activities**

Secretary-General,
Excellencies,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the General Assembly today to discuss the important issue of the coherence and effectiveness of the United Nations operational activities.

Before the Secretary-General briefs us on his report on the Recommendations of the High-Level Panel on System-wide Coherence, I would like to offer a few thoughts of my own.

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

All Member States have an interest in a more effective United Nations; a United Nations that can better deliver on its promises to the world.

The promise to achieve the Millennium Development Goals is central to delivering our broader development agenda. It is part of our collective duty to ensure global economic stability and prosperity, but also, to guarantee that we live in a fair, just and safe global community.

But as we approach the halfway point to 2015, I think we can all agree that urgent action is needed.

The United Nations - more than any other body - is uniquely placed to take a leading role in achieving these goals. But in order to do so, and like any other organization, it must strengthen itself to make sure that it is equipped to respond to new global challenges.

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

The report of the High-level Panel on the System-wide Coherence of the United Nations operational activities presents us with an important opportunity to do so.

Since it was received by member states on 9th November 2007, I know that there has been much informal discussion of the report and its recommendations. I have also had the opportunity to talk too many of you about your views.

What has struck me is that both donor countries and developing countries agree that;

the United Nations system has a critical role to play in development;
that the United Nations must remain at the heart of the multilateral development system;
that its development activities need to be strengthened; and,
that the UN can deliver more and better development assistance.

In his report, the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, has expressed his broad support for the recommendations in the Panel's report.

The Secretary-General also emphasizes the need to take urgent steps to enhance the overall coherence and effectiveness of the United Nations operational activities.

Nationally owned pilot schemes are already underway to test the 'One country' approach. The outcome of these pilots will be an essential element for the intergovernmental consultations on the operational effectiveness of the UN.

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

At the recent informal thematic debate on gender equality and the empowerment of women many member states highlighted the importance of this issue to the development agenda.

You also expressed strong support for a more coherent, better coordinated and better resourced United Nations gender architecture to strengthen the impact of gender equality and the empowerment of women at the country level.

It is my hope that through the consultation process on the Secretary-General's report, this desire for action can be translated into results that have a positive impact for women.

In order to move forward, the constructive and collective effort of the UN system, and, of Member States will be necessary.

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

Being strong on development is a core strategic objective of the United Nations. It is an objective common to all Member States, and the Funds, Programmes and agencies involved in operational activities at the country level.

The report invites us to deal with challenging issues, such as finance and governance of UN activities. I look forward to the in-depth intergovernmental consultations on these issues.

We need to deal with these and, other issues with the common objective of strengthening the United Nations.

So I appeal to all of you, to offer your views and suggestions on the substantive issues that we must discuss and on the process to move this agenda forward.

Based on your views and on the consultations that I will shortly conduct, I am hopeful that I can outline a process for considering all the issues before us that require your collective support.

We have an important and timely opportunity to build on our shared objective to strengthen the UN system; so that it remains at the heart of the multilateral development system; so that it is fit to deliver on the goals that we cannot afford to miss.

I therefore appeal to you all not to shy away from dealing with the issues at hand, and, to work together to build broad consensus on how to address them.

Thank you very much.