

25 June 2007

**Statement of H.E. Ms. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa,  
President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly,  
at the Security Council Open Debate on Maintenance of International  
Peace and Security: Natural Resources and Conflict**

Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,

I am pleased to address the Security Council once again at an open-debate. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the President of the Security Council for the month of June 2007, His Excellency Mr. Karel De Gucht, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium, for inviting me to participate in today's debate.

At the outset, I would like to underline that my participation in today's thematic debate, in my capacity as the President of the 61st session of the General Assembly confirms the need for more cooperation and coordination between the General Assembly on the one hand as the chief deliberative, representative, and policy-making organ of the United Nations; and the Security Council on the other hand as the organ with the primary responsibility for issues related to the maintenance of international peace and security.

It is in this light that I welcome this opportunity to provide the Council with the perspective of the General Assembly regarding the issue at hand. I believe that, addressing the various and complex aspects of the relationship between natural resources and conflict, extends beyond the Charter prerogatives, of one principal organ, and should be addressed through the collaboration of all organs, namely the General Assembly, Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,

I wish to commend the Kingdom of Belgium for the concept paper they have prepared to serve as a basis for our discussions in today's thematic debate on "Maintenance of international peace and security: natural resources and conflict".

The linkages between natural resources and growth and development cannot be overstated. Furthermore, the linkages between natural resources and the potential conditions for conflict are increasingly becoming more apparent and well-documented.

Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,

One very important aspect in this regard is the ownership of natural resources and their revenues. Questions relating to the distribution of revenues among the various groups in many countries provide fertile environments for initiating or prolonging conflicts. Furthermore, over-dependency on natural resources is not conducive to viable development strategies in many poor countries, thus leading to fragile circumstances that might lead to the eruption of internal conflicts.

While I agree that there must be a distinction between the successive phases of a conflict, we all must agree on the responsibilities of Member States as well as the different organs of the United Nations to deal with these phases.

Sustainable and equitable management of natural resources lies in the heart of today's debate. I agree with the concept paper in that improving governance of natural resources in the absence of conflict is not the primary responsibility of the Security Council. However, we have to encourage, while respecting the sovereign rights of all Member States, a more efficient and effective use of natural resources. This has to be clearly linked with the development agenda of the international community.

In post-conflict situations, the General Assembly, the Security Council, and the Economic and Social Council should collectively debate on how best to develop an approach, through the Peacebuilding Commission, that is development oriented, and to foster the factors of stability and prosperity and prevent the relapse of countries into conflict.

Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,

We all stand to gain from working together to address the many aspects of this issue. Member States, the United Nations, regional organizations, the private sector and multinational corporations; as well as non-governmental organizations have a role to play in the different phases of dealing with this issue.

The Kimberley Process provides a good example of how everyone can work together to stop the illicit trade in natural resources - in this case, conflict diamonds.

I look forward to the results of the deliberations of today's thematic debate, which I hope will provide an important input in the collective work of the United Nations with all its organs.

Thank you.