

7 September 2007

**Statement of H.E. Ms. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa,  
President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly,  
on “Preventing and Overcoming Conflicts: Climate Change and the  
Role of a Culture of Peace”**

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Friends,

At the outset, I would like to thank the Foundation for a Culture of Peace for organizing this important event on the issue of “Preventing and Overcoming Conflicts: Climate Change and the Role of a Culture of Peace”. Indeed, today’s panel is timely both in the context of current initiatives at the United Nations, and, more broadly, in view of current events worldwide.

We now know that climate change can pose a threat to peace and stability. Indeed, it can provoke conflict, as fears arising from insecurity of water, food, or land, exacerbate pre-existing tensions and prejudices, especially among people of different backgrounds or cultures vying for the same scarce resources.

It is up to us to counter this negative potential, as climate change can also provide us with opportunities for greater collaboration among diverse stakeholders.

This is why I am pleased that the General Assembly convened a thematic debate on Civilizations and the Challenge for Peace, and a thematic debate on Climate Change, bringing together representatives of diverse sectors, including Member States, academia, the media, civil society, and the private sector, to identify ways in which we can advance our common goals in the areas of promoting understanding and coexistence among us all, as well as in combating the adverse effects of the changes facing our environment.

In order for peace to be long-lasting, we must understand that political accords are a foundation to be built on with the active involvement and support of all sectors of society.

In this regard, I cannot emphasize enough the important role of civil society, and of women in particular, as articulated in the Declaration and Plan of Action on a Culture of Peace.

Women are indispensable in fostering the culture of peace, as their commitment to peace will ensure the continuity of such efforts through the education of future generations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

True peace is more than the absence of conflict; it is a state of being that can be realized at the individual level, and in all relationships, whether among people and among nations, or between human beings and the environment that we depend on for our livelihood.

In this respect, promoting the culture of peace helps to foster greater respect for the environment, thus enabling us to view the necessary measures to counter climate change not as a sacrifice, but as a shared responsibility for the benefit of us all.

This understanding is vital, especially when we consider that the countries least responsible for climate change are the most vulnerable to suffering from its disastrous consequences, including conflict.

Together, we can create the conditions in which long-term, holistic measures aiming to address climate change and prevent conflict can be adopted and implemented.

However, in order to achieve the global consensus that is required for this endeavor, we must ensure that all countries can share in the benefits from action to address it.

Let us work towards a new framework that sees economic growth, social justice and environmental care advance hand in hand, protecting everyone's right to a peaceful and prosperous existence.

Thank you.