

18 October 2007

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Srgjan Kerim,
President of the 62nd Session of the General Assembly,
on the Report of the New Partnership for Africa's Development [64 A
and B] and 2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing
Countries, particularly in Africa [47]**

Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,

On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to welcome the Secretary-General to this meeting, and to thank him and the World Health Organisation for their respective reports on each item.

The three issues under consideration today are central to the overall work of the United Nations system, and the link between them is self-evident. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which is an African-owned vision and strategic framework for the Continent's renewal and development, aims to address the very issues that lie at the heart of conflicts on the Continent, namely, issues of governance and socio-economic development. Durable peace and sustainable socio-economic development are inextricably linked. As the Secretary-General's panel on threats, challenges and change recognised, development is the first line of defence in a collective security system. Eradicating poverty and promoting development not only saves lives that would have otherwise been lost to hunger and disease, it also strengthens the capacity of States to ensure durable peace.

As we all know, disease impedes development. Each year there are an estimated 350-500 million cases of malaria, resulting in over one million deaths. Over 90% of those deaths are in Africa, mostly children under five years of age. The estimated annual economic cost due to malaria in Africa has been estimated at around \$12 billion. It is difficult to envisage development, and therefore durable peace, in Africa under these circumstances.

In his 5th report on progress in implementation of international support to NEPAD, the Secretary-General highlights policy measures and actions taken by African countries and organizations in the implementation of NEPAD in a number of key areas like infrastructure development, agriculture, health and education. Commendable progress has been made in these areas. In Agriculture for example, progress was made in translating the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme Framework into specific actions, while in the health sector, there was progress in advancing the African Union/NEPAD health strategy.

Clearly there is still a long road ahead. As the NEPAD principles recognise, African ownership and leadership is critical, and must continue to guide responses to the challenges that lie ahead.

The NEPAD principles also recognise the imperative for strong international involvement and partnership. During the reporting period covered in the Secretary-General's 5th report, there was commendable progress in the response and support of the international community, particularly in the areas of debt relief by extending and deepening debt relief through the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative, HIPC and other bilateral debt relief initiatives. The report also recognises a further increase in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), greater South-South Cooperation and some progress in market access for trade. The need for measures to accelerate further implementation of commitments on ODA and trade is also acknowledged.

Excellencies,

We also have before us the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. While we welcome the fact that there are fewer conflicts in Africa today than a decade ago, we also recognise that one fifth of the population on the continent still lives in areas affected by conflict. The effectiveness and readiness of the international community, including African countries, to respond to conflict on the Continent is a major factor in the improvement of security. Initiatives by the African Union, notably the creation of an African Peace and Security Architecture comprising the African Union Peace and Security Council, a Panel of the Wise, a continental early-warning system, and the beginnings of an African standby force, are all commendable and should be encouraged.

The continued support of the UN system in assisting Africa address these challenges is critical. I agree with the Secretary-General that more action is needed both to strengthen and support Africa's own efforts to bring peace to the continent and to tackle the wider global sources of armed conflict. I therefore welcome his intention to revamp efforts for UN support to Africa, including deepening the engagement in support of the African Union through capacity-building.

Finally Excellencies,

The report of the World Health Organisation reviews developments in case management and prevention, and prospects for the elimination of malaria. It also addresses the problems associated with malaria in pregnant women among other issues.

It is most encouraging that some interventions, like long-lasting insecticidal nets, have begun to yield progress in recent years. We can also witness an increased access to effective case management and coverage with indoor residual spraying, though progressing at a slower pace. Yesterday's announcement that tests on a malaria vaccine conducted in Mozambique are safe and providing a high level of protection is very promising. This is potentially a ground breaking development in the fight against malaria. Challenges are significant, particularly the lack of funding and a lack of capacity which act on each other in a vicious circle, and which fall dramatically short of what is needed to effectively combat the disease. Also noted was a shortage of reliable and accurate data.

I would therefore encourage the General Assembly and the UN system to continue to work together to combat this disease. It is unacceptable that an entirely preventable disease claims over a million lives every year, mostly children. National programmes in malaria-epidemic countries must continue to be implemented and supported, as the international community continues to support the Global Fund, the WHO and UNICEF.

The issues before us in this debate call for the active involvement of all States, and illustrate the necessity for Member States to recommit themselves to implementing the Millennium Development Goals. To that end, I look forward to the continued support of the General Assembly for my plan to convene a Leader's Meeting on the MDGs during this session.

I thank you.