

Statement by  
**H.E. Mr. Peter Burian,**  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to the United Nations  
in the Open Debate Security Council debate on  
**“Maintenance of international peace and security:  
natural resources and conflict”**  
(June 25, 2007)

Mr. President,

Let me express our appreciation to Belgium for bringing the theme of natural resources and conflict into Security Council's consideration. We believe that this issue is relevant and important to the work of the Security Council.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement to be delivered later on by the German Presidency of the EU. Let me add a few additional comments my delegation considers important to stress.

It is well documented in various Security Council resolutions and through various existing commodity-based sanction regimes, that natural resources often play a role in causing or even further fuelling conflicts. Natural resources can also cause a relapse to conflict in situations where post-conflict management of natural resources is not addressed properly.

Illegal exploitation deprives the population of affected states of the wealth that belongs to them. There is no coincidence that post-conflict countries like Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, DRC or Liberia, after years of plundering, belong to the most impoverished nations in the world.

It would be too simplistic to see the problem of illegal exploitation of natural resources as a separate or isolated issue. We have witnessed a number of conflicts where a lack of rule of law, the presence of undemocratic and unaccountable governments and weak security services has helped illegal exploitation of natural resources to flourish.

Therefore issues like democracy, good governance, rule of law, transparency and fair distribution of revenues, and security sector reform are inextricably linked to the problem we are discussing today.

It is especially important that in post-conflict states resources are transformed into a positive tool that can be used to encourage peace and stability. We believe that peace-building initiatives should address reform of resource management at an early stage of post conflict consolidation. It must be more transparent, efficient, equal, and subject to both rule of law and good governance. In this regard it will be important for the PBC to pay special attention to the issue of natural resources in its efforts to manage post-conflict situations.

Mr. President,

The Security Council by its resolution 1625/2005 already reaffirmed its determination to take action against illegal exploitation and trafficking of natural resources and high-value commodities in areas where it contributes to the outbreak, escalation or continuation of armed conflict. In this regard the Security Council should closely monitor and analyse the role of resources in conflicts that are on the agenda of the Council and take the necessary action.

One of the crucial areas of Security Council's responsibility in this field is related to implementation of sanction regimes. Sanctions can be instrumental in limiting the scope of a conflict, maintaining and restoring peace and stability. The sanctions should be utilized with much prudence in order to prevent the sanctions from further degrading the humanitarian conditions of the victims of the conflict. More should be done in the field of individual sanctions that could target those who benefit from the illegal exploitation of natural resources. There is also room for improvement of the effectiveness of sanctions regimes. Let us in this regard recall the valuable work done by the working group on general issues of sanctions.

Last but not least, the international community as a whole and neighbouring countries in particular have a crucial role to play in insuring that resources are not used to sustain intrastate wars or even begin wars. Much more attention should be paid to cross-border smuggling and trade in natural resources and international mechanisms such as the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme or Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative should be further promoted.

There is also a question of impunity for those responsible for looting minerals from resource rich countries. These individuals should be prosecuted alongside those who are being brought to justice for major violations of human rights or international humanitarian law.

In conclusion, let me recall our previous thematic debate on climate change. Resource conflicts usually arise in the developing world. However, in the Security Council open debate on climate change another dimension of possible conflicts on resources scarcity have been highlighted, where more developed and affluent countries are not likely to be spared from damaging and destabilizing effects of the global climate change. With sea levels rising, water and energy becoming increasingly scarce and agricultural land diminishing, conflicts over access to vital resources can become a global phenomenon.

This all underlines the importance of today's thematic debate on natural resources, further supports the shift concerning natural resources and conflict from country-specific treatment to thematic consideration by the SC and stresses the need for a more integrated role of the SC in this field.

We support the Presidential Statement prepared by the Belgian presidency.

Finally, Slovakia supports further discussion of the Security Council on natural resources and conflict and ways how to improve UN response in this respect.

Thank you, Mr. President