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Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding – Broadening the Perspectives

Opening Speech at the Conference on
Integrating Environment, Development, and Conflict Prevention

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Check against delivery!

I. Words of welcome; introduction

Ladies and gentlemen,

- In 2004, Wangari Maathai became the first environmentalist to win the Nobel Peace Prize. The Nobel Committee thus sent an important signal, sensitizing the global public to the link between peace and environment.
- Maathai succinctly described that link in her Nobel Lecture delivered in Oslo on 10 December 2004: "There can be **no peace without equitable development**; and there can be **no development without sustainable management of the environment** in a democratic and peaceful space. This shift is an idea whose time has come."
- The past few weeks of intensive debate have shown to everyone that climate change is not just a matter of a few degrees centigrade more or less. Protecting the environment, and that includes containing climate change, is one of the most essential prerequisites for development and peace worldwide.
- "This shift is an idea whose time has come," Wangari Maathai said. With our conference, we want to help ensure that this shift in our way of thinking is translated into policy.
- Today and tomorrow, we want to succeed in
 - **getting together** different players from the fields of politics, academia, and civil society;
 - **putting our heads together** to think about the environment, security, peace, and development in a holistic way; and
 - **linking together** activities in all of these areas, combining them into harmonized sets of measures.

II. Relationship between development, environment and conflict

Ladies and gentlemen,

- Environmental change, development processes and conflict dynamics have major mutual impacts – positive impacts and, sadly, far too often, negative impacts as well.
 - It is still too often that dynamic economic development takes place at the expense of the environment. A great deal of our own prosperity has been achieved through ruthless exploitation of natural resources. We are currently witnessing history repeating in the emerging economies, above all China and India, which are increasingly confronted with environmental problems. If resource use is too intensive, it can cause environmental damage that destroys people's livelihoods in the long term, resulting in poverty and in conflict over increasingly scarce resources.
 - Armed conflict causes severe and lasting damage to the environment, thus making post-conflict reconstruction more difficult (take the example of Lebanon: Israeli air raids on the Jiyeh power plant caused the most severe oil spill in the eastern Mediterranean ever, with 15,000 metric tons of heavy fuel oil spilling into the sea, causing mass de-

struction of plants and animals and losses to the fishery and tourism sectors). Armed conflict poses the greatest impediment to development because it often destroys what had been achieved through many years of hard work.

- Moreover, the illegal exploitation of natural resources constitutes an important source of financing for armed conflict. This applies especially to resources whose exploitation and export are lucrative. Particularly negative examples include diamond mining in Sierra Leone and the exploitation of coltan deposits in eastern Congo.

These examples highlight complex interdependencies that may prove difficult to tackle.

- However – and this is a decisive point –, **cooperation on environment and development issues can also help build confidence**. Resulting in a kind of "environmental peacemaking," it can open up suitable channels for peace policy efforts on a broader scale.

III. The role of development policy

Ladies and gentlemen,

- Security means averting threats. As a development policymaker, I define security not only in military terms. We rely on an extended concept of security which also takes account of the political, economic and ecological dimensions of security.
- Security is more than the absence of war. Security also means that people are protected from hunger, life-threatening diseases, and environmental disasters.
- This is why development policymakers have a special contribution to make at the intersection of environment, development, and crisis prevention!
- Development policy as a global structural and peace policy makes a decisive contribution to ecological and human security.
- We must tackle this challenge, because

1. the developing countries are not the main contributors to climate change, but they are most affected by it.

- The G8 countries account for 57% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Africa will be most affected by climate change. The continent has already frequently hit the headlines because of drought and flooding. 14 countries there are already suffering under water scarcity. Another 11 will be added to that list over the next 25 years.
- This is particularly dramatic because people there depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. It is expected that yields will decline by 30 to 40 per cent. Regions where people are struggling to survive from day to day cannot cope with that.

2. The impact of climate change exacerbates typical development problems, resulting in a particularly explosive constellation:

- Logging, land degradation, massive population growth and, *on top of that*, the consequences of climate change are resulting in increasing scarcity of natural resources. This is a vicious circle from which the developing countries cannot break free on their own. They lack the specialists and financial resources to do so. Corruption and poor governance are making the job even more difficult.
- This is resulting in social and political conflict (such as the conflicts in Sudan and Rwanda), displacement and migration. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), as many as 20 million people are already becoming "environmental refugees" every year. There are fears that this number could rise to 50 million by 2010.

3. Development cooperation will increasingly be taking place in a setting characterized by environmental problems and conflict.

- This will make our job more difficult and present us with new requirements to which we must respond. If we fail to design our cooperation programs in such a way that they are conflict-sensitive and environmentally sound, development cooperation may even exacerbate problems. So we must take care to ensure that we help, based on good in-country cooperation with partners on the ground, to achieve effective adaptation and response strategies.

IV. Development policy approaches and examples

- Our activities must be combined at three levels:
 1. At the international level, we need regulatory instruments to contain climate change and to ban trade in conflict resources from developing countries.
 2. In our cooperation with partner countries, we need to develop adaptation strategies and options for conflict resolution. Structural causes of violence need to be reduced, and mechanisms for nonviolent conflict transformation, fostered.
 3. In Europe and Germany, too, we need to integrate the policy fields of environment, development and conflict management more closely, and we need to develop more responses that are based on a multi-sector, whole-of-government approach. Coherence between our national policies and between EU policies is a crucial prerequisite for successful development policies.

Ladies and gentlemen,

- There are numerous examples of successful approaches:

1. Conflict resources: EITI, FLEGT and Kimberley processes

- I would like to highlight the example of resources which continually fuel conflict and help to sustain conflict through the emergence of economies of violence.
- We in the industrialized countries share the blame for the instability and violence caused by such conflict, because it is their access to global sales markets and arms markets that enables the parties in the conflict to make a profit from their resources and to finance their operations in this way. So there is an urgent need for players to shoulder responsibility for ensuring that such resources are extracted in a manner that is environmentally and socially sound and sensitive to conflict.
- Promising examples of relevant initiatives include **EITI** (Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative), the **FLEGT** process (Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade), and the **Kimberley process**.
 - In Ghana, German development cooperation supports the implementation of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) in the gold sector, strengthening districts' capacity for managing gold mining revenue in a transparent, pro-development manner. In this way, poor people too benefit directly from the revenue.
 - If our work is to succeed, we must not only cooperate with official agencies but also foster dialogue with the private sector and strengthen civil society.
- While these processes are undoubtedly exemplary, they still leave many loopholes. How can we address them? What levers can we pull? And what have we learned? I look forward to the findings of the working group with great interest.

2. Regional cooperation: Nile Basin Initiative

- Air and water have no boundaries. Natural geographic regions and river basins do not take account of issues of sovereignty. So resource management, too, must transcend

national borders! There are numerous examples of transboundary environmental cooperation which illustrate the potential for conflict prevention and peace stabilization inherent in activities related to the environment:

- Take the **Nile Basin Initiative**. The potential for conflict along the Nile is great, as people's livelihoods in the riparian countries depend on access to Nile water. The riparian countries are pursuing the initiative in order to attain sustainable socio-economic development by using the water of the Nile basin in an equitable manner.
- The international donor community supports that process with regard to governance issues and by means of investment in infrastructure.
- We are working for the harmonization of water policies and have achieved the first successes: the incendiary rhetoric of earlier years has given way to intensive, constructive dialogue. A cooperative framework for the use of Nile resources is being negotiated.
- We will be discussing this later on and find out more about the opportunities and the tricky sides of this cooperative endeavor.

V. Conclusion

Ladies and gentlemen,

- Environmental degradation and climate change are the greatest challenges of our time, because they are so complex, both in terms of their causes and in terms of their impact.
- The examples I mentioned show that prevention is possible! Only if we take action today will we be able to prevent future conflicts over environmental issues and the exploitation of resources for the benefit of civil war, and only then will we be able to foster development in the long term.
- Kofi Annan called climate change a global threat to peace and security, urging the international community to give climate change the same priority as preventing wars and curbing the spread of weapons of mass destruction (15 November 2006 at the opening of the 12th UNFCCC COP).
- This fundamental change in the way we define security must, however, also be reflected in our funding priorities. But, sadly, the opposite is true. Global military spending is rising and reached an estimated 1,118 billion US dollars in 2005. Spending on development cooperation, by contrast, was about 100 billion US dollars in 2005 – just a tenth of the amount!
- The industrialized countries bear special responsibility for altering the course. We cannot demand that the developing countries do more than we are ready to do.
- The environment and climate issues are therefore a priority of our twin presidencies. We will make use of this special year to place these issues firmly on the agenda and to achieve concrete action.
- An initial success of our EU Presidency has been the agreement of specific environmental targets: by 2020, the share of renewable energy in total EU energy consumption is to reach 20 per cent. And greenhouse gas emissions are to be reduced by 20 per cent by that time – and even by 30 per cent if other industrialized countries, above all the United States, join the effort!
- Ladies and gentlemen, let us make use of this conference to discuss the main challenges and identify responses!
- In this spirit, I wish us all a successful, stimulating conference.

Thank you very much.