ENERGY, SECURITY and CLIMATE

Expected Council Action
On 17 April the Council will hold a ministerial-level open debate on the relationship between energy, security and climate. The meeting, organised at the initiative of the United Kingdom, this month's Council president, will be chaired by UK Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett.

The debate is expected to focus on the security implications of climate change and related issues such as access to energy, water and food. Phenomena such as the risks of increased migration, humanitarian crises or border disputes are also expected to be raised. The debate may also explore ways the Secretariat can keep the Council informed about this issue and the potential role of the Security Council in an integrated United Nations approach to address climate change.

No Council action is expected to emerge immediately. However, the UK hopes that the debate will reveal widespread agreement in the Security Council about the seriousness of the issue and some recognition that aspects of climate change, and especially the cumulative effects in vulnerable areas, may pose potential threats to international peace and security. It is also expected that this debate will raise overall awareness and recognition of the urgency of the wider climate change issue. It may also reinforce those like the Secretary-General interested in promoting a wider integrated approach to climate change across UN bodies.

It remains to be seen whether concerns by some G77 members about "encroachment" of the Security Council into General Assembly domain will be voiced in any significant way.

Background
On 5 April the United Kingdom circulated a concept paper (S/2007/186) on the relationship between energy, security and climate. The debate is conceived by the UK as part of the Council's ongoing efforts to develop the conflict prevention aspects of the

1

Council's role outlined in resolution 1625, adopted at a Council Heads of State-level meeting during the 2005 World Summit.

The UK concept paper places discussion of climate change within the resolution's reaffirmation of promoting sustainable development as one of the broader strategies required to prevent conflict. The concept paper argues that increasing dependency on fossil fuels could result in climate change being accelerated, which would result in several types of impacts which combined might in turn increase the risk of conflict and insecurity. It identified the following wider implications of climate change and discussed their potential impact on issues closely associated with threats to international peace and security:

- border disputes;
- migration;
- energy supplies;
- other resource shortages, such as water, cultivable land and fish stocks;
- societal stress; and
- humanitarian crises.

The paper stressed that while the physical effects of climate change and its potential solutions were important issues, the debate aimed to focus on the potential impact on security. Within this scope, it suggested a number of issues the debate could address, including:

- prioritisation of the risks climate change poses to international peace and security and the identification of new risks;
- the role the Security Council can play in an integrated UN approach to conflict prevention, including a greater emphasis on climate-related factors;
- the role of the Secretariat in better informing the Council and the wider UN membership of the security risks posed by climate change and the promotion of a more coherent response throughout the UN system.

There has been growing talk about the need for a global meeting on climate change within the UN context. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has suggested the possibility of an early high-level meeting on climate change, perhaps on the margins of the 62nd General Assembly this year.

Ban, who has made climate change one of his priorities, has not ruled out the possibility of a summit in 2008 or 2009 but is currently focusing his action on the discussion of climate change at a G8 meeting in June and at the UN Climate Change Conference in Bali in December of this year. In Bali the Secretary-General will be encouraging progress towards a new international regime to reduce greenhouse gas emissions before the Kyoto Protocol expires in 2012.   Ban's main concern before organising a summit is securing the participation of major actors, in particular the US.

2

The release this month of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's report, *Climate Change 2007: the Physical Science Basis,* will be a guiding document for these upcoming international discussions on climate change.

Similar Thematic Debates
The proposal for this debate inevitably raised some questions as to whether it belongs in the Security Council. In this regard it bears similarities to the January 2000 American initiative to debate the impact of HIV/AIDS on peace and security in Africa, an issue previously viewed principally through a public health lens. In both cases, organisers have had to strive to get the Council to acknowledge the linkages between new emerging world-wide phenomena and security issues.

In 2000, there was no immediate outcome from the January HIV/AIDS debate. However, the Council did take up HIV/AIDS again in July of that same year when it discussed HIV/AIDS in the context of international peacekeeping operations and passed resolution 1308 which encouraged voluntary HIV/AIDS testing and counselling for peacekeeping troops. Now many peacekeeping operations include raising HIV/AIDS awareness as part of the mission's activities (for example UNOMIG, UNMIL, UNOCI) and the Secretary-General has reported to the Council on HIV/AIDS, both in terms of awareness and prevention (as in Somalia and Chad/CAR) and as a long-term threat to stability (as in his report on cross-border issues in West Africa).

Council and Wider Dynamics
Questions have been raised by some UN members at large as to whether the Council is encroaching on the prerogatives of the General Assembly. Members of the G77 and China group, in particular, during a meeting on 10 April, expressed reservations similar to the concerns raised in 2006 about the Council debates on peacekeeping and procurement.

The Non-Aligned Movement, however, included climate change within the parameters of peace and security issues in a September 2006 letter to the Secretary-General. It seems that the NAM caucus members in the Security Council were prepared to support the 17 April debate because they accept at least some scope for Council involvement in the issue.

Russia and China apparently had some reservations about holding the debate on the grounds that is was unclear whether or not climate change could usefully be addressed within the Council's mandate. The UK concept paper seems to have largely addressed those concerns by limiting discussion to security impacts of climate change, recognising the primacy of other UN bodies, in particular the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. In addition, the clear indication that the UK was not proposing specific Council action at this stage to address the broader issue was also clearly persuasive.

The US has not expressed publicly any reservations about holding the debate. Zalmay Khalilzad, in his testimony to the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations during his nomination as the US ambassador to the UN, said one of his UN peace and security priorities would be,

> "promoting effective approaches to address climate and clean energy objectives in a way that supports economic growth in the coming decades…and pursuing [this] objective through….the formal channels of UN decision making in the Security Council and other fora…[and] partnership involving allies and other countries as well as the UN."

In February of this year an international meeting was held in Washington DC of the G8 plus Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa on climate change resulting in a non-binding declaration to put a successor agreement on climate change in place by 2009, three years before the Kyoto Protocol expires.

Other Council members seem to have attached weight to the fact that climate change has not been entirely absent from previous Council debate and thinking. As early as 2003, members discussed climate change in the context of debates about the situation in Africa. More recently, two current elected Council members, Peru and South Africa, have also noted climate change as an issue worthy of Council attention in debates on threats to international peace and security and cooperation with regional organisations (both in 2007) and on Haiti and small arms (both in 2006).

Options
No presidential statement or resolution is expected. However, as the debate on HIV/AIDS shows, broader thematic Council discussion of climate change could result in a more specific focus in particular country situation resolutions in the future.

In addition, possible follow-up action could be a future Council discussion on climate change in the context of conflict prevention, along the lines of resolution 1625, with more concrete definitions of security impacts. One option from such a debate could be an outcome with a reporting role for the Secretary-General.

Selected UN Documents

Security Council Resolutions
• S/RES/1625 (14 September 2005) was a declaration on the effectiveness of the Security Council's role in conflict prevention, reaffirming the need to adopt a broad strategy to conflict prevention, which addresses the root causes of armed conflict in a comprehensive manner, including by promoting sustainable development. • S/RES/1308 (17 July 2000) encouraged voluntary HIV/AIDS testing and counselling for peacekeeping troops.
Security Council Debates
• S/PV.5649 and resumption 1 (28 March 2007) was the debate on the

4

relationship between the UN and regional organisations, in particular the AU, in the maintenance of international peace and security. South Africa noted addressing climate change in the context of sustainable development as part of the effort to strengthen peace in the Sudan.

- S/PV.5615 (8 January 2007) was the debate on threats to international peace and security. Peru noted that climate change, among other environmental issues, affected international peace and security.

- S/PV.5529 (20 September 2006) was the debate on cooperation between the UN and regional organisations in maintaining international peace and security. The UK noted climate change as a critical challenge and welcomed the Council's commitment to strengthen regional and sub-regional cooperation.

- S/PV.5397 and resumption 1 (27 March 2006) was the debate on Haiti where Peru noted that Haiti's recovery from ecological damage would be extremely difficult as global climate change will worsen the social and physical imbalance there.

- S/PV.5390 and resumption 1 (20 March 2006) was the debate on small arms. Peru noted climate change as one of many new threats which should be addressed with an integrated and preventive approach toward maintaining international peace and security.

- S/PV.4736 (7 April 2003) was a briefing on Africa's food crisis in which Mexico mentioned climate change and HIV/AIDS as challenges which keep conflict-ridden societies from achieving sustainable development.

- S/PV.4172 (17 July 2000) was the debate on the responsibility of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security regarding HIV/AIDS and international peacekeeping operations.

- S/PV.4087 and resumption 1 (10 January 2000) was the debate on the impact of AIDS on peace and security in Africa.

Security Council Letters

- S/2007/186 (5 April 2007) was the UK's concept paper for the 17 April ministerial-level debate on energy, security and climate.

- S/2007/137 (9 March 2007) was the letter transmitting the report of the workshop for newly elected and present Security Council members. The UK noted the importance of holding more thematic debates on broader conflict prevention issues, such as the debate on HIV/AIDS.

- S/2006/718 (7 September 2006) was the letter from NAM to the Secretary-General noting climate change as a peace and security issue.

General Assembly Resolutions

- A/RES/60/1 (24 October 2005) was the World Summit Outcome document which noted the need to urgently address, through the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, climate change and its effects on sustainable development. It also noted the particular vulnerability of Africa, among others, to climate change.

Secretary-General's Reports

- A/59/2005 (21 March 2005) was the Secretary-General's report, *In Larger*

Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All, which noted climate change as one of the greatest challenges facing the development and consumption of energy in the 21st century. • A/59/565 (2 December 2004) was the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change report, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility,* which noted the need to address climate change with new long-term strategies that go beyond the Kyoto Protocol.
Secretary-General's Press Releases
• SG/SM/10935 (9 April 2007) welcomed the release of the IPCC findings on climate change and encouraged progress towards a comprehensive framework to replace the Kyoto Protocol which expires in 2012.
Other
• FCCC/Informal/84 (9 May 1992) was the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol of 1 December 1997.

Useful Additional Sources

- *Climate Change 2007: the Physical Science Basis*, Summary for Policymakers, IPCC, 6 April 2007
- UN Environmental Programme http://www.unep.org/
- UN Division for Sustainable Development http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/policy.htm
- *Confronting Climate Change* (Executive Summary)*,* UN Foundation, February 2007
- *Stern Review: The Economics of Climate Change*, Independent Review published by the UK Treasury, 30 October 2006

6

Security Council Report One Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza, 885 Second Avenue at 48th Street, 31st Floor, New York NY 10017

Tel 212 759 9429   Fax 212 759 4038   www.securitycouncilreport.org