

Mr. Abdulle also addressed the plight of education in Somalia “which is nothing but one of grief and sorrow. At this time and age of a new millennium, Somalis live in pre-history era of illiteracy. Almost all teaching facilities including universities were plundered, destroyed, and mostly apprehended by rebels in crises zones; and refugees in recovery zones.”

“The basic education rights are denied for the vast majority of Somali children. There are no public schools, and the few operational private schools are very costly and accessible for the wartime rich minorities. Children of other less fortunate families seek employment to support the family household instead. Others, such as orphans, join militias and street gangs under the tribal umbrella as their last window of opportunity and shelter.”

In his conclusion, he demonstrated how the Somali people and their leadership are required to have a strong will and determination to overcome these extreme difficulties: “The question is though, how many more dying children, crying mothers or helpless aging heroes do we need to see before we act? We must understand that war is one thing, peace is quite another. In war time competition is the dominant attitude, but the search for peace can be achieved through collaboration, concession and compromise. What is required is not fund raising, it is rather a far-sighted and capable leadership, which can illuminate the path to peaceful coexistence and can take drastic and hard decisions towards peace. Prioritizing and investing in health and education will become real means that would save Somalia in the short and long run.”

Dr Osman Salad Hersi, researcher and geologist presented a paper entitled “ Exploring Somalia's natural resources: A Geological Perspective.” Dr Osman divided the natural resources of Somalia into three categories: i) Marine resources including fish and salt, ii) surface resources (e.g., forests, wild life, frankincense and myrrh, surface water, etc), and iii) subsurface resources (e.g., rocks and minerals, fossil fuels, and groundwater). Only subsurface natural resources of Somalia were considered in his short contribution. Rocks and minerals that are known to exist and available for development in the Somali Republic include tin in the Majiyahan - Dhalan area (south of Bosaso - Ceelayo), sepiolites in the Ceel Bur district, iron-ore in the Precambrian terrain of the Bur region, quartzite, granite, marble, sandstone, limestone and gypsum in different regions of the country. Occurrences of uranium-, titanium-, chromium-, zircon-, nickle-, and rubidium-bearing minerals are also known in different places of the country.

These natural resources include primary raw materials for various kinds of industries, e.g, cement, ceramic and glass industries, wallboards, roofing and wall tiles, paving stones, aggregate and concrete production, and industrial minerals. Minerals with high exploration potential include gold, zinc, lead, manganese, copper and others. Existence of good petroleum indicators has been known for a while, and recent data is highly encouraging concerning the hydrocarbon exploration potential of the country. Water resources are the most needed commodities in Somalia, and many areas with promising groundwater accumulation have been identified as well.

Since we have so many surface, subsurface, and marine resources, Dr. Osman asked why are the Somalis starving? The answer could be summarized as follows:

- lack of technology, security, and political stability;