STATEMENT

BY

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TO THE

FIRST COMMITTEE
GENERAL DEBATE

OF THE

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OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Mr. Chairman,

I wish to add my voice to others who spoke before me to congratulate you on your election to chair the deliberations of the current session of the First Committee. Allow me also, to congratulate other Members of the Bureau and to extend to you the assurances of the fullest co-operation of my delegation. I also take this opportunity to extend our thanks to H.E. Ambassador Erdos of Hungary, for the manner in which he steered the proceedings of the last Session. A special tribute goes to Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs and the staff in his Department, for their dedication and continued support in the furtherance of the work of this Committee and the cause of disarmament, international peace, stability and security. My delegation has taken note of the comprehensive opening statement of the Under-Secretary-General.

Mr. Chairman,

The end of the Cold War a little over a decade ago, had the promise of a world with less tension, a world more united, a world in which co-operation would replace competition in global security issues. Such optimism has since been dispelled by disquieting new developments including the upholding still of strategic doctrines based on nuclear weapons. Tension and war continue to threaten many regions of the world. The spectre of asymmetric warfare and terrorism with the possibility of the use of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) has made all nations most vulnerable. The terrorist attacks without prior warning in Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998, and the terrorist attacks here in the United States of America on September 11, 2001 which resulted in colossal loss of lives and property, call upon all nations to act in concert to avert future attacks as unilateralism can no longer guarantee security in any country however well armed.

Mr. Chairman,

No nation can enjoy peace and security until the same is guaranteed to all other nations. The world must therefore, seriously address the root causes of terrorism founded in despair, denial of basic human rights, poverty, hunger and marginalization. It is disquieting therefore, that the post-Cold War era has seen a rising curve in military expenditure, running in 2001 at $839 billion, according to authoritative sources. In the years
1987-1998, world military expenditure increased by 7% in real terms, this at a time when the majority of the people in world are living on less than one dollar per day. The world must wake up to the reality that security, stability and peace will be achieved through investment in the human person, rather than in the sophistication of armaments. This is the sure path to meaningful disarmament and security.

Mr. Chairman,

No doubt, the biggest danger to the survival of the human race is posed by nuclear weapons, either by accident or by deliberate action. The present stocks of weapons can annihilate the world over several times.

Since 1959, the item "General and Complete Disarmament" has been considered by the General Assembly in recognition of the grave threat posed to mankind by armaments. My delegation therefore, notes with appreciation the signing of the Strategic Offensive Reduction Treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States of America on May 24, 2002. Although the reduction of strategic nuclear weapons agreed upon between the two nuclear powers is very significant, nevertheless, my delegation notes that the balance still presents an over-kill capacity. The Moscow Treaty therefore, does not render the world any safer. The two principal nuclear weapon countries and the others in the league are called upon to move towards the establishment of a nuclear weapons free world as called for in the May 2000 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference.

At this juncture, my delegation would like to congratulate Cuba for the bold action it has taken to become a State Party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We call upon the other three States who are not yet parties to the Treaty namely: India, Pakistan and Israel, to follow suit.

On the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), my delegation believes that it is a key component of nuclear disarmament. While on one hand we are witnessing agreements on reduction of nuclear armaments, it is worrying that some nuclear states continue to uphold doctrines of national defence and security strategy based on nuclear weapons. Even more alarming is the possibility of continued nuclear tests to improve these weapons to fit into the configuration in different scenarios of war. Such improvements could only lead to greater insecurity overall as
more rather than less States are targeted. In the end, such doctrines and postures are counter-productive, and could lead to a new arms race as targeted States take counter-measures to protect themselves.

Mr. Chairman,

Although 2002 saw some interesting initiatives and deliberations in its Sessions, the Conference of Disarmament (CD) did not agree on a Programme of Work. It thus, did not carry out any substantive work. Lamentably, this is the fourth year in a row that this has happened. The trend is worrying not only for members of the Conference on Disarmament, but also to the international community as this is the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament issues. The Conference has an obligation to the global community to faithfully discharge its mandate and thereby contribute to international peace and security. The resort to the use of Special Co-ordinators is an attempt to wiggle out of the stalemate but it is not enough as such recourse is of limited use. We note that the stalemate has been caused by lack of political will on the part of some major players.

My delegation calls upon the Conference on Disarmament to re-focus its efforts on the resumption of substantive work and not to waste resources on procedural matters.

Mr. Chairman,

Given the dangers posed by chemical weapons, Kenya hopes that the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) will be speeded-up towards the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). My delegation has no doubt that the new Director-General of the Organization, Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter will inject new vigour. The dangers posed by chemical weapons in the hands of terrorist groups demand for urgency in dealing with the matter.

Mr. Chairman,

The Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects adopted last year, was a big step in placing the matter on the international agenda and especially in the search for solutions to the grave problems posed by the weapons. It is hoped that we can seize the occasion of the first biennial
meeting to re-visit the two contentious issues namely, provision of arms to
individuals and non-state actors which the Conference did not agree upon.
These issues have a direct bearing on the security of individuals, of States
and indeed on international peace and security.

Kenya wishes to express gratitude on behalf of Member States of the
Nairobi Declaration on Small Arms and Light Weapons for the support
given so far in implementing the Programme of Action in our sub-region. In
July/August, 2001, the United Nations Department of Disarmament Affairs
sent a Fact Finding Mission to Nairobi to assess the problem of small arms
in Kenya, the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes Region. Contacts have
continued since, with the goal of supporting regional disarmament
measures. The Foreign Ministers of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of
the Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Uganda and
the United Republic of Tanzania held the First Ministerial Review
Conference of the Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of the Proliferation of
Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in the sub-region on August
7-8, 2002 in Nairobi, Kenya. They undertook to improve the co-ordinating
mechanisms that will facilitate smoother implementation of the Programme
of Action. My delegation, on behalf of the States Parties to the Nairobi
Declaration, appeals for financial, technical and political support from the
international community for the effective implementation of the Programme
of Action. We also call for the strict adherence to arms embargoes
imposed to certain countries at war.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me conclude by calling upon States to invest in the human
person as opposed to more expenditure in armaments as the sure road to
security, stability and peace. We call for the adoption and implementation
of adequate measures to rid the world of the threat posed by armaments
from nuclear weapons to small arms.

I thank you!