STATEMENT

BY

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OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

AT

THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE
FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE 65TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK
Thursday 7th October, 2010

Please check against delivery
Mr. Chairman,

I wish to add my voice to others who spoke before me in congratulating you on your election to chair the deliberations of this important Committee. My delegation has confidence in your leadership abilities and commitment to guide our work. Allow me also to congratulate the other members of the bureau and extend to you the assurances of our fullest co-operation.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by Nigeria on behalf of the African Group and by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

Mr. Chairman,

We are encouraged by the positive developments that have taken place during 2010. This has indeed been a good year for disarmament. During the course of the year we managed to discuss and agree on the way forward on Nuclear disarmament as evidenced by the adoption of the consensus outcome document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. We managed to have an enlightening debate on the state of the UNPOA during the 4th BMS and we took the first step towards the conclusion of a treaty on the arms trade by deliberating and developing elements, principles and parameters of an eventual ATT, during the ATT Prepcom in July 2010. The Convention on Cluster Munitions entered into force in August 2010. We also saw action, led by none other than the Secretary General of the UN, aimed at revitalizing the work of the CD.

All this is encouraging and commendable work which needs a concerted and robust follow-up. It is therefore of utmost importance that the momentum thus far built up should not be allowed to wane. Dialogue and engagement on all disarmament fronts must continue at full speed.

Mr. Chairman,

Kenya believes that multilateral negotiations and agreements are the only viable path to meaningful disarmament and security. In this regard Kenya acknowledges the crucial role that the First Committee plays in addressing important disarmament issues. The importance and the relevance of this committee can only be underlined by the collective, constructive action of its membership. Let us all therefore rise to the occasion and use this important organ of the disarmament machinery to advance the cause of arms control and disarmament.
Mr. Chairman,

Kenya remains committed to the goals of a nuclear-weapons free world. We continue to advocate the belief that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only surest guarantee that the danger that such weapons pose to humanity will never take place. During this year, we have witnessed very encouraging movements in the nuclear disarmament agenda. These have included the signing of the new START treaty between the USA and the Russian Federation in April and the adoption of the Consensus Final Document of the NPT Review Conference in May.

Mr. Chairman,

As a member of the Conference of Disarmament (CD), Kenya participated in the negotiations and drafting of the CTBT. Kenya signed the Treaty in 1996 and ratified it in 2000. We welcome the ratification of the treaty by the Central African Republic, Trinidad and Tobago and the Marshall Islands.

Kenya reiterates its unwavering support for the universalization and early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and in this regard we call upon those states that have not yet signed or ratified the CTBT to do so as a matter of urgency. We especially call upon the states in annex 2 of the CTBT and whose ratifications are crucial for the treaty's entry into force, to ratify as soon as possible.

The entry into force of the Treaty of Pelindaba confirms Africa’s commitment to strengthen the global nuclear weapons regime and greatly contributes to international efforts on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We note that while this Treaty commits the continent to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, it also provides for the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology. This aspect is very important for Kenya and many developing nations especially in seeking alternative sources of energy to spur the development agenda.

Mr. Chairman,

As we deliberate on nuclear disarmament and proliferation we should not lose track of a really immense problem in our part of the world, namely the issue of small arms. For Kenya and the major part of Africa, small arms are our weapons of mass destruction.

The problem of proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons continues to be a great source of worry to Kenya and indeed the rest of the African Continent. The volume of weapons diverted from the legal trade in small arms and light weapons to a thriving black market, continues to grow at an alarming rate. Those who carry out and benefit from this illicit trade do not have the slightest regard to the suffering and violence unleashed on the most vulnerable populations in Africa. In addressing the problem of illicit small arms and light weapons, it is important that we address such challenges as absence of export and import controls, failure to enforce already existing mechanisms due to loopholes in the law, and more importantly the root causes for demand of these weapons. It is imperative that states implement the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, both at a national as well as regional level, as the problem of SALW’s is often a cross-border one. In this regard, in the East and
Central African region, the efforts of the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA) are commendable.

Mr. Chairman,

We are pleased to note that significant progress has been made towards achieving a legally binding treaty governing the transfer of conventional weapons. Kenya strongly supports the establishment of an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) to govern the trade in arms and we look forward to constructive engagement towards the convening of a UN Conference in 2012 on the ATT.

Kenya signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions in December 2008. As in the case of the Ottawa Convention, my country is not a mine affected state nor does it possess cluster munitions, however, we believe it is crucial to give support to both these conventions that seek to make our world safer and more humane. We have commenced internal processes that will enable us eventually ratify the convention.

Mr. Chairman,

The cost of armed conflict and violence as well as the concomitant human tragedy in Africa is estimated at over $18 billion annually. The effects of armed violence fueled by readily available small arms and light weapons have been disastrous. Innocent civilians are killed, maimed, abducted, and displaced from their homes. To address insecurity, governments are forced to spend considerable resources on arms acquisition and training of security apparatus. This diverts their budgetary allocation from other much needed public services like education and health care, thus having a negative impact on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

It is for this reason that Kenya was among the first signatories of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. In this regard my delegation welcomes progress in advancing the goals of the Declaration by the adoption of the Oslo Commitment in May 2010 and we pledge to continue advocating the goals of the Geneva Declaration.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, Kenya urges all delegations to seize the current positive momentum in disarmament to further the work of this important committee. My delegation will work diligently towards this end.

I thank you.