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STATEMENT

BY

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TO THE

2007 SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

(GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS)

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Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to congratulate you for your assumption of the Chairmanship of the 2007 Substantive Session of the Disarmament Commission. We have no doubt that the Commission will benefit from your wide diplomatic experience and skills and that you will steer the work of the Session to a fruitful outcome.

We associate ourselves fully with the statements made by Indonesia on behalf of the NAM and Nigeria on behalf of the African Group. We wish to expound on a few salient issues on behalf of the Kenya delegation.

Mr. Chairman,

We express our profound disappointment at the general malaise and lack of progress that has characterized the disarmament machinery for many years. It was particularly disappointing that after the Disarmament Commission agreed on an agenda after many years of inactivity, the conclusion of the 2006 Session turned out to be a catastrophe. The Conference on Disarmament is yet to agree on a Programme of Work, despite almost two years of focused discussions. The outcome of the 2006 Review Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons was equally disappointing. This is a situation which must not be allowed to continue.

In his keynote address to the opening session of this Conference, the Secretary-General aptly described this situation - in which setbacks have become the norm, not the exception - as unacceptable.

We welcome the Secretary-General's commitment to revitalize the disarmament agenda by among others, appointing a High Representative to Head the new Office for Disarmament Affairs. However, it goes without saying that tangible progress in disarmament and non-proliferation can only be achieved through commitment and goodwill by Member States.

Mr. Chairman,

The former Secretary-General Kofi Annan articulated a vision for the United Nations in the Twenty-First Century in which we tackle security, development, and human rights simultaneously. Both **In Larger Freedom** and in the **2006 Report on the Work of the Organization**, he underscored the inextricable linkage of these issues. This vision cannot be achieved without tangible progress on the field of disarmament. Development targets set forth by this organization, especially in the framework of the Millennium Development Goals, cannot be achieved without progress on disarmament and non-proliferation.

How can we eradicate poverty when over US\$ 1 trillion is still spent on military expenditure? How can we hope to achieve the Millennium Development Goals when over 70% of the United Nations' meager US\$ 10 billion budget goes towards peacekeeping and other field operations, compared to 50% of the budget less than half that 10 years ago? Is it not one of the greatest ironies of our time that the peace dividend which was expected at the end of the cold war has never materialized? Instead, we have recently witnessed an escalation in military expenditure, including on non-conventional weapons. Concerted efforts are being directed towards modernization of nuclear arsenals and their systems of delivery as well as

re-affirmation of military doctrines based on these weapons.

It must be emphasized that the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is through their total elimination. The status quo is certainly not an option. Similarly, a selective approach designed to address only one aspect - non-proliferation - will not work. Disarmament and non-proliferation are two sides of the same coin and must be tackled simultaneously. As a matter of priority, the Nuclear Weapon States should make an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In this regard, negotiations on a legally-binding treaty should begin without delay.

Mr. Chairman,

It is for this reason that we hope that the forthcoming Non-Proliferation Treaty in Vienna will agree on a Programme of Work that will constructively tackle its three components: disarmament, non-proliferation, and peaceful uses of energy.

The tendency by nuclear weapons states to denigrate this third component of the Treaty - the right to peaceful uses of nuclear technology - must be resisted. In this regard, we reiterate the Plan of Action adopted by the African Union in which they have underscored the inalienable right of African countries to the free access to nuclear energy and technology for peaceful purposes.

With regard to Agenda Item 2: "Practical Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) in the Field of Conventional Arms", we reiterate the salient points articulated by Indonesia on behalf of the NAM yesterday.

We only wish to add that as part of these confidence-building measures, the international community must agree on practical measures to control the proliferation of small arms and light weapons which continue to cause havoc to thousands of civilians, especially in Africa.

Mr. Chairman,

It is for this reason that Kenya joined six countries from across the continents of the world to co-author the Resolution on Arms Trade Treaty at the last Session of the General Assembly. It is important that the international community puts in place a mechanism for responsible trade in these weapons through a legally-binding instrument establishing international standards on the import, export and transfer of conventional arms. Pursuant to this resolution, the Secretary-General has sought the views of Member States on the feasibility, scope, and draft parameters for a comprehensive and legally-binding instrument. Kenya is convinced that an Arms Trade Treaty is feasible and timely. We hope that all Member States will make constructive proposals to the Secretary-General within the timeframe set up for the exercise.

Mr. Chairman,

We look forward to constructive and fruitful deliberations and assure you of our co-operation in your efforts.

I Thank You!