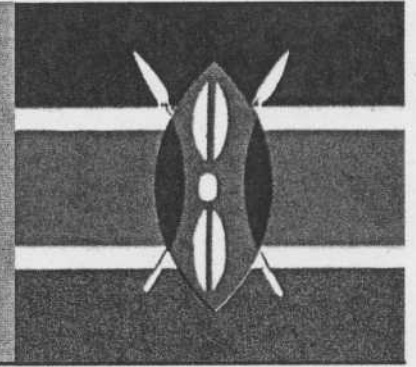




REPUBLIC
OF
KENYA



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STATEMENT

BY

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OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA*

DURING

THE GENERAL DEBATE

OF THE

**61ST SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

*TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2006
NEW YORK*

Please check against delivery

*Madam President,
Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Madam President,

Let me add my voice of congratulations to *Madam President*, on her assumption of this driving seat that has mainly been occupied by men in the history of the United Nations.

At this august Assembly last week, we welcomed the first African woman to become President - Her Excellency Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia. At last, the glass ceiling that has tended to frustrate the attempts of women to become Presidents is surely cracking, in several places.

Let me also congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Jan Eliasson of Sweden for a job well done.

Madam President,

Kenya is a UN country. We attach special significance to our being hosts of the biggest UN Centre outside the developed world - the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON) that also hosts the global headquarters of UNEP and UN-Habitat. We are a major contributor to UN peace missions around the globe. We subscribe to the principles and ideals of this Organization and have always upheld its Charter.

Madam President,

In my contribution to this General Debate, allow me to dwell on the crisis, that is Somalia. I do not think that I need to remind the world that there is a crisis in Somalia. But I believe that I must encourage the Community of Nations that the problem of Somalia is not going to go away unless we take deliberate steps to address the crisis. The comfort zone is to look at Somalia as being far away and hope that the problem will resolve itself somehow.

This afternoon, I bring you the bad news that the problem of Somalia is not going to get resolved somehow. All of us, the Community of Nations, must chip in. If, for a moment, we dwell on the comfort zone that Somali does not concern you, then it may be worth talking to South Korea and China that are 8,000 to 10,000 kilometers away from Somalia. A few months ago, pirates from Somalia hijacked merchant ships in international waters of the coast of Somalia. It is only after protracted negotiations that included use of Kenyan intelligence that the merchant seamen from South Korea and China were released safely to their families.

Madam President,

I recount this story of merchant seamen so that all of us as an international community, should appreciate that the Somali phenomenon with no Government in place, is a danger not just to neighbouring countries, but to the whole world. As criminal elements establish their safe enclaves in a country like Somalia, the neighbouring countries and the international community are soon forced to intervene, even militarily to free hostages, hunt terrorists or flush out rebels.

In the new global village, we are all neighbours of Somalia.

As a frontline state to this country in crisis, we have participated in negotiations to free hostages. We have co-operated in attempts to arrest criminal elements. We continue to host close to one million refugees. We provide life saving support in terms of medical facilities and supplies. We have above all, continued to work on efforts to create peace in Somalia. The Transitional Federal Government, the Transitional Charter and TFI were established all as a result of a process that took place in Nairobi when we hosted 2,000 representatives from a cross-section of Somalia over a period of two years.

Today, I appeal to the rest of the world to take deliberate steps to help Somalia. And the time to help is now. Tomorrow may be too late.

Madam President,

There are many communities around the world that attach great importance to funerals. In these communities, most of the people only spectate when their kin is ill. An occasional visit and some token of support is what obtains. As soon as the patient dies, an avalanche of support flows in.

The Community of Nations must not take sarcastic or undertakers approach. We are already too late and any intervention we implement now is of ambulatory and fire brigade variety. But it is better than simply standing-by like spectators.

Somalia is almost dying. We can see it. We have known that for the last 16 years. This is the time to send in life-saving support. It is really a tribute to the resilience of the Somali people that there are still living human beings in that country. One day or one month without government, police, hospitals or banks in modern society is unimaginable. The Somalis have endured for 16 years. How much longer are they expected to endure? Where is the international rescue plan with a billion dollars? Where is the Marshall Plan?

Even a much better but devastated Japan and Germany needed a Marshall Plan after the second world war.

Humanitarian intervention now will yield better and faster results than a military intervention and at or much cheaper price than sending troops to pursue criminal elements in a failed state.

I hear talk today about religious extremists in Somalia! What did we expect? Our own 7 year-old children become extremists in our households if they go without food for one day!

The Somali children, youth, women and men, have been going hungry for 16 years and living under very difficult circumstances. To be extremists is the normal human reaction in such circumstances and one does not have to have studied psychiatry at PhD level to recognize that. If similar circumstances in Somalia prevailed in other countries, that I know, moderation would be the deviance.

Madam President,

Yesterday, I had the opportunity to brief the Security Council on the IGAD position on Somalia. Our IGAD position is to support the TFG together with the legitimate Transitional Federal Institutions like the Parliament in Baidoa and the Transitional Charter that is the broadly negotiated roadmap for Somalia.

As IGAD, we have also opened a window of dialogue with the Islamic Courts Union (ICU). Some four weeks ago, I met representatives of the ICU in Nairobi. We believe that like in all situations of conflict, the final resolution is best achieved through dialogue. That is why in our communiqué in Nairobi, we welcomed the Khartoum talks that brought together the TFG and ICU. But we are also concerned that communiqués after these dialogue conferences must be genuine. Soon after the Khartoum meeting, the news from Somalia has not been encouraging. There was an assassination attempt on the life of President Yusuf. One more city was overtaken by the ICU. Needless to mention the cold-blooded murder of a long serving humanitarian worker, a dedicated Catholic nun.

The upbeat communiqué released from Khartoum begins to look like a sandwich without meat fed to a world that is starved of any encouraging news from Somalia.

Madam President,

There is a critical path that was set up by IGAD with the help of the international community that resulted in the formation of Somali Transitional Charter that is recognized by the African Union and the United Nations. We are encouraged by the UN's positive endorsement of the Transitional Charter that include the Transitional Federal Government and the Transitional Federal Parliament.

Indeed, the TFG is fully accredited to the UN, the AU and IGAD and the Presidency of the UN General Assembly has articulated this recognition through its various communications including the United Nations Security Council Statement of July 13th.

Madam President,

However, there is a major handicap of the TFG. Without substantive international support beyond the recognitions, accreditations and resolutions and statements I have alluded to, then the bottom line remains that the TFG is like people thrown into the deep-end, of turbulent waters, and are expected to swim with their hands tied on their back, while hungry crocodiles surround them!

It is not a very encouraging scenario. That is why we are appealing for more meaningful support for TFG even as we insist that it continues to dialogue with various groupings in Somalia.

Madam President,

The international community must work to help Somalian and not inadvertently compound the problem in that country. It is vital that the international community consolidate its efforts and

not send discordant messages from Stockholm, New York, Nairobi, Khartoum, Cairo, Addis Ababa or anywhere else.

Whatever our motives for the proliferation of initiatives from different capitals, we must recognize that discordant signals only act to give incentive to some of the actors on the ground to attempt to establish new facts on the ground that they may leverage in future negotiations.

I have discussed this matter with the Secretary-General of the Arab League. As Kenya, we have put forward the following proposal that I like to share with you. That an international Joint Committee on Somalia (JOCOSOM) is constituted with the following membership:-

- ***IGAD as frontline states***
- ***African Union***
- ***Arab League (also as frontline states)***
- ***European Union***
- ***United Nations Organization (at least one or two permanent members of the Security Council to be included).***

It is our submission that the International Joint Commission will help consolidate our efforts and bring about a speedier resolution of the problem. It is worth noting that the initiative that resulted in the formation of TFG was the 14th attempt on resolving the Somali conflict.

Its collapse will bring us back to square one in terms of coming up with an institutional framework that enjoys political legitimacy. The Secretary-General of the Arab League has expressed his support of this Kenyan proposal and we hope that we can proceed on this path by building on the foundations already established by IGAD rather than allowing another proliferation of vertical initiatives. We appeal to other partners to embrace this proposal.

Madam President,

On a more hopeful note, let me register our delight at the progress made by our neighbours - Tanzania, Uganda and South Africa, in brokering the Burundi Peace Agreement. We commend their collective effort. The news from the Democratic Republic of Congo is also encouraging.

As Kenya takes over the Chair of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region that will take place in December this year, let me assure you that we will do our best to contribute to the stabilization of our region which is really a very tough neighbourhood to live in.

Finally, let me congratulate Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his exemplary stewardship of this world body. As a brother from Africa, I can confidently say that he has done us proud.

I Thank you!