



Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kenya to the United Nations

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STATEMENT

BY

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DURING

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*Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is my very great pleasure to address the General Assembly. I join other delegations in congratulating you, *Mr. President*, on your election to the Presidency of the General Assembly.

My delegation has every confidence in your ability to discharge this onerous challenge. I assure you of our support.

I commend your predecessor Madam Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa for ably steering the 61st Session of the General Assembly.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Secretary-General on his appointment. My delegation welcomes his commitment to strengthen the pillars of the UN - security, development and human rights.

Last year when I had the privilege of addressing this August Assembly, I dwelt on the issue of Somalia and how the dynamics in that country impacted in our capitals and cities around the world like Toronto, Stockholm, Rome, Nairobi and Mogadishu. Even countries who are thousands of miles away and whose interaction with Somalia has been minimal have been forced to be awake to the reality that we have become a global village when their nationals plying international waters have been hijacked or robbed by pirates in the Indian Ocean along the coast of Somalia.

Let me thank this Assembly and the Security Council for listening to our pleas from the region. I appeal for closer collaboration by the International Community in addressing the complex and difficult problem of Somalia. There are several windows of opportunity that we must take advantage of to prevent the extreme human suffering especially of women and Children in that sister country.

Mr. President,

My delegation commends the African Union for its support for the African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). We pay special tribute to the Ugandan troops for the important role they are playing in Somalia under very trying circumstances. We appeal for the deployment of the remaining peacekeeping troops to strengthen AMISOM. Kenya urges the United Nations to assume greater responsibility in Somalia in line with Security Council Resolution 1772 (2007). United Nations presence on the ground in Somalia would compliment regional and international efforts to promote peace, stability and reconciliation in Somalia.

Kenya unequivocally supports the National Reconciliation in Somalia. We see it as a process, not a single event. We urge all the political actors that hitherto boycotted the talks to embrace the process – because no matter how long it takes, the final resolution of the Somalia crisis will only happen when all Somalis agree to sit down and talk. The region and the international community can only provide support. Ultimately, it is the people of Somalia who can solve their difference through a spirit give-and-take. We appeal to the international community to honour their pledges to provide the necessary resources.

The problem with Somalia may be less visible today having been overshadowed by the conflict in Darfur but the Somalia crisis is far from over.

Mr. President,

According to the *Human Security Report*, the number of armed conflicts in the world have fallen by over 40%

during the past 13 years. The report's overall conclusion that conflict is becoming less common in the world in general and also in Africa, is very encouraging. Conflict is a major disincentive to investment and poses an intolerable burden in terms of human suffering. The end to wars in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Southern Sudan is a substantive step for peace in Africa.

While we may celebrate the end of these wars, it is imperative that the international community makes the urgent and essential investments that will contribute to prevention of recurrence of these conflicts. The local populations should experience the peace dividends so as to sustain peace.

Kenya urges a strengthening of partnerships between the African Union and the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations in the area of political and technical co-operation as well as with the continents sub-regional organizations. The African Union's peacekeeping capabilities and capacity must be strengthened through provision of financial, technical and logistical support. The recent deaths of ten African Union soldiers in Darfur underlines the urgency of the need of logistical support by the United Nations to African Union missions within the agreed upon frameworks.

In this regard, my delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's initiative to provide assistance to the African Union to enhance its military capabilities and mediations role in conflict resolution.

Mr. President,

I recently had occasion to address a group of my fellow Foreign Ministers from our closer neighbour Europe on a couple of subjects that increasingly define our relationship with the rest of the world. It is one of the ironies of our history that there was a time when my brothers and sisters who were unlucky and could not run fast enough were caught as slaves and shipped in inhuman conditions. A large number died during the journey as they were destined to different parts of the world to provide slave labour.

Today, many of my brothers and sisters are often voluntarily offering themselves and paying their life long savings to be shipped in almost similar inhuman conditions. Many of them have lost their lives during the journey. They play cat and mouse avoiding border patrols with tracer dogs, and electronic monitoring so as to get a chance to slave most of their lives in the minimum wage bracket.

The clock has ticked full circle. A lot has changed as well. And I come back to my assertion that distances between us have shrunk and we must now recognize that in this global village, a phenomenon such as economic refugees is going to cause trauma in our communities. You can build great walls, introduce and increase more menacing border patrols and make your immigration meaner, but the respite can only be temporary. You can whip up xenophobic sentiment especially around national election times. But that amounts to ineffectual band aid and do not address the fundamentals of the crisis we are in today.

Mr. President,

Even in the most developed countries, unless a society addresses the problems and stress in the poor neighbourhoods and inner cities, any solutions like migration into the suburbs and construction of gated communities may only provide some temporary relief. Crime will continue unabated. Muggings, car-jackings, kidnappings, violent crime will continue to prevail.

We have to address the fundamental problems in our poor neighbourhoods not just for the sake of those living in those neighbourhoods but also for the sake of those who live in relatively affluent areas.

Mr. President,

What I am talking about is not really rocket science or some very complex Social Engineering concept. It should be clear to us that in the global village that we have come to be, it is in the interest of all of us to work together to address the conspiracy of factors that create so much stress and tension within and between our

countries. We must be level headed enough to recognize that angry unemployed young men will spill over sooner or later into other capitals and create problems.

Mr. President,

If nothing else, the phenomenon of global climate change should teach us the lesson that our destiny as human beings is inextricably intertwined. Vehicular emissions in New York does the same thing to our village earth as our cutting of equatorial forests in Africa to make charcoal. Both actions may introduce incidents of floods due climate change all the way to China.

As a neighbour in the global village, it is certainly a good thing if we both get to recognize that if your policies and actions confine us to abject poverty, then it is only a matter of time before the stress in my country will spill to your neighbourhood. May be in the form of illegal immigrants, terrorists or whatever. However, sooner or later we all have to pay for the consequences of selfish and short sighted policies at the WTO, IMF or at the World Bank.

Mr. President,

It is therefore important that as we talk about reform and paradigm shifts in any of these international institutions we should adopt the right attitude that nobody is doing the other a favor. We are in this small boat called earth together. When the powerful think that they are playing their advantage in the global scene and winning the battles, such victory can only be temporary. The only real victory is when it is a win-win outcome. The other outcome when a large part of the world emerges as losers is unsustainable. It breeds anger and vengeance.

Most of the resources and capacity to change our world for the better is domiciled in the developed world. The resources needed are more than enough in the more endowed countries. The knowledge of what we must do to make the positive difference is evident. Yet as world leaders we must bear the collective guilt of failing to focus on providing the solutions.

I come from a country in a region for example where factors like poverty and lack of education conspire to stress and destabilize our communities and countries. There is an autocatalytic relationship between poverty and low education. Those who have low education tend to become poorer. And those who are poorer tend to have low education. There is also co-relation between poverty and low formal education on one side and inter-ethnic, clan, religious tension and even racial tension on the other side. This invariably leads to unstable societies.

When people are poor and less educated, their reference point tends to become only their ethnicity, clan, religion or racial identity. The educated and affluent are at least able to operate at a higher level with a few exceptions. A doctor, a lawyer, a teacher, an engineer is usually less xenophobic.

Mr. President,

In Kenya we understand the importance of education. We have invested up to 30% of our annual budget to provide free primary education. Next year we will have free secondary education. This is the type of social and economic investment we all must make now if we expect to have a better, prosperous and stable world ten years from now.

We may make fine speeches and express commitment of creating a safer, friendlier and prosperous world. But for as long as we fail to make the right investment in education and poverty alleviation, we are only engaged in empty talk.

The MDGs are important medium and long term goals – ten years in scope. However our democracies operate on a shorter calendar of four or five years. Both in the developed and less developed countries many of the

leaderships tend to do what they must to survive and succeed in the next elections. Even with best of intentions, the nature and scope of the challenges of development that we must address can not be adequately solved with ODA programs that are implemented and completed within the political calendar of changing regimes. We need more paradigm shifts and longer term visions in this regard.

Mr. President,

We should therefore not be too surprised that we keep flip flopping from one crisis to another in the whole world. We are not making investments on the things that will change the world for the better in a sustainable way. Virtually all the things we do are the ambulatory and the fire brigade variety.

Mr. President,

The leaders of world, who at this time of our human history are entrusted with the biggest share of world resources must invest for a better future of the whole world. They must have a longer term vision of our world for our sake and the sake of stability of our children in the communities of the future. The world can actually become better. We can actually end abject poverty – if, the world leaders direct more resource towards the right courses.

As a leader from a developing country Kenya, I am awake to the fact that for us to register progress, the leadership must subscribe to greater accountability.

In the same breadth, may I appeal to leaders from the developed countries that whatever little they have designated as Official Development Aid to developed countries, they should also subscribe to greater accountability. It is outrageous and the scandal of our time that so much ODA money is spent on management of those funds.

In the meantime as Kenya, we continue to pay back our heavy debts to some of the developed countries. Some of these debts were genuinely incurred by past leaderships who ran our countries. But as a new Minister some four and a half years ago, I discovered that some of these loans were actually shady schemes, unnecessary pseudo projects whose only objective was to steal that money. In the case of some of the legitimate projects, some of the procurements were terribly flawed and they cost double, triple or many times more than they should have cost.

Mr. President,

Many of our countries are now crashing under the weight of these debts. Those who have actually crashed are the ones who have been extended the parachute after they have crashed. I am amazed by this undertaker mentality.

I do not wish to blame the current generation of leaders in the developed countries for the status quo. I know there is some financial and economic principle here. Most of the current leadership in these countries are innocent. These deals were done before they came into office.

But I feel I must tell you that the load and burden of our international debt is heavy and debilitating. A lot of it should not have been taken in the first place and there is some complicity in the dishonesty on both sides that prevailed before you and me came to scene.

It is important that today we secure the future of all our children who must share this increasingly intertwined world. We must put behind us those negative things like unjustified debts of the past that can only breed anger and bitterness and affect future generations. We must make the sacrifices and the investment today for the future of humanity. It is a favour to all of us – and not just one group.

I thank you!