



KENYA

**STATEMENT BY ASSISTANT MINISTER OF STATE FOR PLANNING,
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND VISION 2030, HON. PETER KENNETH,
MGH, M.P., OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA, DURING THE HIGH-LEVEL
SEGMENT OF THE 2009 SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF ECOSOC HELD
FROM 6TH -9TH JULY, 2009 IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND**

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Madam President;

Distinguished Delegates;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I take this opportunity to express appreciation to the President of the ECOSOC for the able manner you have facilitated preparations and proceedings of this segment of the ECOSOC. The keynote speakers and national presentations that preceded this general debate have been enlightening.

My delegation underscores the importance and timeliness of the theme of this high level segment, namely *"Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to good public health"*. This is particularly relevant at this moment in time when the world economy is experiencing unprecedented multiple challenges that have severe consequences on the commitments and funding of key programmes including in the health sector.

Madam President,

The global financial and economic crisis has affected many countries in different magnitudes. For developing countries, especially those in Africa where the crisis did not originate, the effects are devastating as most of the economies have little or no mechanisms to mitigate and cushion their people. It is clear that, there has been a marked reduction in international trade, investment flows, diaspora remittances, tourist revenues, capital flows, and adverse impacts on stock and money markets. All these factors combined, have contributed to declining economic growth. For instance, Kenya's economy that steadily grew from 2.3% in 2003 to 7.1% in 2007 suddenly dropped down to 1.7% in 2008. The economic prospects for 2009 and the foreseen future are not encouraging.

In view of the foregoing, many of the developing countries particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, are experiencing difficulties funding health, education, poverty initiatives, infrastructure and nutrition programmes. This has had a negative effect on the achievement of the internationally agreed goals, including Millennium Development Goals. It is therefore imperative that the international community, especially developed countries, take urgent measures to support developing countries in addressing these challenges. In this respect, my delegation calls upon developed countries to extend the implementation of the stimulus packages and other measures specifically to developing countries. These should as much as possible be without conditionalities.

Madam President,

The recent unprecedented rise in food and non-food commodity prices have led to widespread hunger, malnutrition and declining productivity in many developing countries. Climate change, use of cereals for production of bio-fuels and volatile oil prices has contributed to the food crisis. This state of affairs has led governments to divert budgetary resources from development priorities to provision of humanitarian assistance. Though these measures are not sustainable, governments have found them necessary. We therefore need more innovative and sustainable ways of addressing the food and health challenges.

Madam President,

The application of science, appropriate technology and innovation in agriculture could increase food production and enhance food security. It is therefore necessary that developing countries are provided with the much needed support in this regard. In Kenya, we are striving to make adequate budgetary provisions to increase agricultural productivity, availability and access to affordable food. These measures are best coupled with value addition of our agricultural products for effective production and storage.

It is therefore necessary that national, regional and international policies affecting production, storage and distribution of food are re-examined in view of the close link between food, nutrition and health.

Madam President

Most developing countries have shown strong commitment in meeting the Millennium Development Goals. However, the attainment of these goals is now seriously threatened by the economic and financial crisis. In Kenya, results in implementing commitments on HIV/AIDS, maternal child mortality and prevention of malaria and other infectious diseases have not been uniform.

With regard to HIV/AIDS, extensive and targeted prevention programmes in most countries have resulted to either stabilization or decline in the HIV/AIDS prevalence rates. For instance, in Kenya, the national HIV/AIDS prevalence has declined from 13% in 2000 to 7.4 % in 2007. Substantial resources are being directed towards HIV/AIDS programmes, making overall health expenditures for both medical care and social support to increase.

One of the main challenges facing the country in the fight against HIV/AIDS, is addressing the emerging trends of HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis co-infection leading to multi-drug resistance to TB drugs. It is important, therefore, that countries increase budgetary resources towards HIV/AIDS especially in the areas of research, treatment and prevention programmes. International support is a necessity in our endeavour to address HIV/AIDS.

Madam President,

Progress towards reduction of maternal mortality, has been slow and negligible in Sub-Saharan Africa. Indeed, with access to essential maternity and basic health-care services, about 80 per cent of maternal deaths are preventable. Efforts to expand the coverage of essential services and strengthen health systems should be combined with deliberate actions to educate and empower women.

Similarly, achievements in addressing child mortality are minimal despite the availability of low cost interventions. To address this challenge, there is need to step up efforts towards increased prenatal care, ratio of deliveries handled by skilled personnel and increased immunization.

In sub-Saharan Africa, tuberculosis and malaria continue to account for significant proportion of the total outpatient cases. Malaria is particularly a notable killer in Africa and a great contributor to child mortality. In an effort to cushion households and reduce the disease burden, the Government of Kenya, with support of development partners including through the Global Fund, continues to provide mosquito nets and free drugs for malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS in both public and faith-based health facilities. In view of the financial gap in addressing these challenges, it is important that the international community continues to support national efforts.

Madam President,

As we deliberate issues of public health, let me point out that Kenya is concerned with the speed and rate of spread of new public health challenges. These include the Evian flu, the Sars and lately the H1N1 virus. As we focus on addressing the traditional public health issues, the international community needs to keenly enhance its ability to identify, prevent and control these new and emerging public health conditions. In doing so, there is need for international cooperation in research, surveillance, preparedness and treatment. The spread of these diseases has demonstrated that we are truly living in a global village.

Finally, **Madam President**, we are confident that the outcome of this high level segment will help create the much needed awareness and build momentum towards addressing the challenges posed by the current financial and economic crisis and its link to public health in the context of internationally agreed development goals, including MDGs.

Thank you for your attention.