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STATEMENT

BY

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TO THE

SIXTH COMMITTEE

ON

**AGENDA ITEM 108:
"MEASURES TO ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM"**

DURING THE

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Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, let me join others who have spoken before me in congratulating you and the members of the Bureau on your deserving election. You can be rest assured of our support throughout the work of the Committee. Kenya associates itself with the statements delivered by the distinguished representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Republic of the South Africa on behalf of the Non Aligned Movement and the African Group respectively. We also would like to thank the Secretary General for his informative report on measures to eliminate international terrorism.

Today, we are witnessing a unique period in the history of the United Nations. The UN Charter largely envisioned an international security system where the UN intervenes in conflicts between Member States, never within the Member States.

What was impossible to imagine a mere generation ago, has now come to pass; that nearly all the deadliest international conflicts the UN is grappling with today, has violent extremist movements such as Daesh/ISIS, Boko Haram, Al Shabaab, Al Qaeda/affiliates and other non-state actor as protagonists and have made them difficult to end.

Throughout the world, violent extremists are on the march. Their fanatical ideologies and savage violence threatens democracy, constitutional rule, and economic development. They reject a social and political fabric anchored in the principles of pluralism, equality, respect for the rights of women, and freedom of religion. They have exploited the conflicts, the attendant state collapse and geopolitical disorder to thrive. They have exploited old grievances using new technologies such as the internet and "social media" not only to recruit but also to spread and gain new footholds particularly in Africa and Europe.

In their quest to change the course of humanity, they have committed unspeakable atrocities, murdering tens of thousands of innocent people on every continent, imposing a state of terror on populations within their control, and even re-instituting the evil practice of enslavement in the twenty-first century.

Thus, the obvious question is: *Why are they thriving and spreading yet the international community, through the UN, has a four pillar Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and a collection of Security Council resolutions to address the challenge?* It has been pointed out that many terrorist movements are successfully exploiting religion through selective reading of some religious texts and histories to justify terrorist violence and to achieve political ends even as the international

community continues to react to the challenge with traditional law and order tool and admittedly inferior counter narratives.

Mr. Chairman,

The world's security agencies, multilateral institutions, and the overwhelming bulk of civil society stand against them. In every continent, armies and police forces are fighting them. Yet, as important as the conventional means of security are in protecting citizens and states, they are insufficient to fight a war not only against the wanton destruction of innocent lives and property, but also against the insidious spread of an ideology of evil.

Kenya believes that countering the narrative and ideologies of terrorist groups is an important preventive measure to complement other measures at the disposal of national authorities and international community to counter and/or prevent the spread of violent extremism that leads to terrorism. However, such counter narratives must be real, inclusive, non-rhetorical and adaptable to various local contexts.

The Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism has correctly advised that law and order measures alone will not win the war against violent extremism. It has recommended that we collectively adopt "Whole of Society", "Whole of UN" inclusive approach to address among others, the socio-economic circumstance that feed the violent extremist narrative and ideology. We believe that the Plan of Action holds the basis for a unified international action particularly if Member States adopt the various recommendations to develop their own national Plans of Action Against Violent Extremism.

Mr. Chairman,

Kenya's strategy to counter narratives and ideologies of violent extremism and in turn terrorism, is anchored on the need to inspire, rally and facilitate an all-inclusive and global rejection of extremist ideologies hostile to the Kenya's Nationhood and Way of Life as articulated in its Constitution and the Bill of Rights and also to promote narratives that minimize sympathy for terrorism as a means to change society or politics. The strategy and its priority action plans is aligned to the UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism and the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy.

In response to this growing threat Kenya has launched an unprecedented multi-agency security operation. Investments have been made in technology, skills, and

innovating new approaches to countering terrorism. This has resulted in a sharp increase in operational tempo, coordination and equipment aimed at detecting, deterring and disrupting the activities of terrorists.

We are adding prevention and counter radicalization to those more traditional security approaches. The recently launched National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism is an articulation of our country's prevention efforts against terrorism and violent extremism that will rally all parts of government, communities, civil society, the private sector and international partners.

One of the crucial tasks being built on this strategy is the disengagement and rehabilitation of returning foreign terrorist fighters who completely disavow the use of violence and any adherence to the ideology and aims of terrorist groups.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to share some of the lessons learnt from our experiences that we believe to be crucial for success of any strategy, either local, national or international in countering the extremist ideology and the terrorism that it drives.

First, the need to prevent conflicts and to expeditiously resolve the existing ones. No narrative to counter any ideology can succeed if communities are still engaged in open hostilities. Prevention and resolution of conflict through peaceful means including through dialogue and mediation must always remain the preferred course of action. At the regional and international level, the primacy of politics in sustaining peace must always take precedence over militarized approaches.

Second, the need to improve coordination nationally, regionally and internationally through timely sharing of information and best practices. Countering the extremist/terrorist narratives should be nationally owned and led by the Government as the main legitimate authority in each country and as focal point to mobilize resources, coordinate the various public and private actors and coordinating with other regional Governments in developing the strategic communication plan for executing the regional counter narratives. Coordination of public and private partnerships, particularly the civil society is crucial for success of counter-messaging.

Third, investments in de-radicalization, rehabilitation and re-integration are key in winning the war of ideas with violent extremist groups. All major faiths espouse the invaluable importance of the concept of forgiveness in fostering healing in any society. Forgiving and rehabilitating violent extremists is perhaps the most

powerful and sustainable counter-narrative particularly to the pre-teen and teenage youth who embrace radicalization out of peer pressure and hormone-fueled adventurism of youth. The future strength of any society is shaped by the values and hope instilled in its youth. Engaging all faith-based communities is very crucial just as providing support and encouragement to families and society to accept back reformed extremists.

Fourth, Governments should formulate inclusive policies to address the various socio-economic and political drivers that drive violent extremist narratives. Proper and timely communication on the formulation and implementation of such policies is crucial for promoting national ownership and support and eliciting feedback on gaps in execution at each stage.

Fifth, all efforts whether local, regional or international, must be properly resourced at each stage. The mandate and capabilities given to any entity in the value chain must be properly matched and resourced, financially and otherwise. Investments in educational programs, early warning systems, especially online and rehabilitation, all require enormous resources and effort to execute. However, as the brutality and sheer barbarism of Daesh, Boko Haram, Al Shabaab and Al Qaeda affiliates has shown, it is a necessary and worth investment to defend the values that we all believe in.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I wish to reiterate the importance of preventing conflicts; fostering national ownership; separation of religion from politics; proper coordination and sharing of information; and the role of forgiveness; rehabilitation and re-integration in fostering counter-narratives against the ideologies of violent extremism. Together, in coordinated fashion, we, united as one, must drain the swamp of violent extremism and deny it room to radicalize our peoples as an urgent measure to eliminate international terrorism.

I thank you.