

OPENING STATEMENT BY AMB. LAZARUS O. AMAYO, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA TO THE UNITED NATIONS DURING THE OPEN DEBATE ON THE AFRICAN CANDIDATE FOR THE POST OF THE NON-PERMANENT MEMBER OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL 2021-2022

I would like to begin by thanking Mr. Golmohammadi, Mr. Angulo-Troconis and WFUNA for convening this debate. This platform is an important mechanism for reinforcing transparency and accountability of the work of the Council even during these difficult and unprecedented circumstances caused by the COVID19 pandemic. It also gives us an opportunity to engage with the wider constituency and on our candidature and agenda at the Security Council if elected. I thank you all for tuning in from far and near.

I extend warm greetings to my Brother and Dear Colleague Amb. Mohamed Doualeh, the Permanent Representative of Djibouti.

Excellencies and Dear Colleagues, Why Kenya?

Our vision is anchored on “Building Bridges Towards a Sustainable and Peaceful World”. This vision aligns itself with a multilateral and rules-based international order; and is anchored on the UN Charter and the three UN funding and interrelated pillars of international peace and security, human rights and development.

Kenya uses its diversity to build bridges within our region and globally. We believe in the equality of States regardless of size; and have partnered with member states to address critical and contemporary global challenges.

Our priorities are also framed within the comprehensive African Union agenda. We are honoured to be the African Union endorsed candidate for the UNSC seat for 2021-2022 after a democratic and transparent process. We take this as a solemn responsibility to articulate issues pertaining to Africa alongside Tunisia and Niger if elected to replace South Africa after a sterling service.

Kenya, therefore, has a comprehensive agenda which we believe with support of the Council members can positively contribute towards addressing contemporary peace and security challenges that confront us and enhance delivery by the Council on its mandate. I, therefore, have the honour to highlight a few:

Support for Peace Keeping Operations/Missions which are indeed an important tool in the hands of the Security Council for maintenance of International Peace and

Security. Making Peace Keeping Operation (PKO) fit for purpose would be one of our priorities.

Peacekeeping and Support Operations is an important priority for us. We have contributed over 40,000 peacekeepers including mission leadership in over 40 countries in Africa, the Middle East, the Balkans, and Asia. We believe inclusive triangular consultations between the Council, the UN Secretariat and Troop and Police contributing countries are essential in making peace operations fit for purpose.

Regional Peace and Security frameworks or arrangements have a significant role in maintenance of International Peace and Security. Kenya has been an anchor and indeed an active player in our subregion and in Africa where we had the opportunity to host, Partner with neighbours and provide leadership in the regional peace processes, among them the Somalia Peace negotiations which were concluded in Nairobi in 2004 and led to the formation of the Transitional Federation Government of Somalia and the comprehensive Peace Agreement again in Nairobi in 2005 to end the protracted war in the Sudan.

We have all witnessed the peace dividends this investment has made to the region to date.

If elected, Kenya will continue to champion the cooperation between the Security Council and regional organizations for conflict prevention, peaceful settlement of disputes and regional integration.

In the recent past, Kenya was Chair and then Vice-Chair and is a current member of the UN Peacebuilding Commission. We will share the lessons learnt in our work in the Council and also support the Secretary-General's reform of the peace and security pillar to include **peacebuilding in peace operations** mandates as part of the preventive diplomacy agenda.

Kenya is also a frontline State in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism. As part of our commitment to **counter-terrorism** efforts, Kenya co-hosted alongside the AU and the UN the first ever African regional high-level conference on counterterrorism in July 2019. The outcomes from this conference will, among others, form our deliverables if elected to the Council.

Lasting peace and security cannot be realized without the engagement and empowerment of women. Therefore, the role of **women in conflict prevention**, mediation and peace agreement processes needs to be prioritized. Kenya is in the second phase of the implementation of the National Action Plan on 1325 which was

launched earlier today. If elected, we will continue to support efforts of ensuring that women are represented at every level of decision-making.

On **youth, peace and security**, we cannot ignore the value the youth bring as meaningful builders of peace. In 2018 our President was nominated as the UN Global Champion of the Young Peoples' Agenda during the launch of the Youth Strategy 2030. Kenya will seek synergies between the recommendations contained in resolution 2250 and other regional frameworks including the AU silencing the guns initiative.

Excellencies, all efforts to attain International Peace and Security need to be anchored in justice, non-violation of **human rights** and support for democratic governance. We recognize that human rights violations contribute to instability and conflict. **Under the human rights pillar**, we will continue to partner with civil society organizations, and other independent mechanisms as defined in the mandates of the various institutions.

On the humanitarian front Ladies and Gentlemen, Kenya hosts hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing insecurity within the region. We are alive to the challenges experienced by **refugees and displaced persons**. If elected, we will continue to support efforts by the Council to work with other bodies to address the root causes of conflicts and mitigate against forced human displacement.

Kenya is also cognizant that underdevelopment and climate challenges can be a threat to peace and security. Under **the development pillar** my predecessor Amb. Macharia Kamau continued to exemplify Kenya's leadership in the 2030 Development Agenda, SDGs and climate action. Kenya and Hungary co-Chaired the Open Working Group on the global Sustainable Goals and co-facilitated with Ireland the post-2015 Development Agenda process leading to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. .

According to the 2019 UNDP Multidimensional Poverty index, half of 1.3 billion people living in poverty are in fragile and conflict affected environments. Indeed, Sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security. If elected, we will continue engaging in dialogue to identify mandated entry points for the Council to advocate for inclusivity and sustainable development.

The adverse effects of climate change can be a threat to peace. This is evidenced in fragile and conflict-affected countries in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa particularly in the transhumance context. Rising sea-levels induced by climate change continue to disproportionately impact Small Island and Developing States posing an existential

threat. It is a security situation that touches on statehood and territory. Kenya holds the view that there is room for constructive discussions on this nexus.

I thank you.

CLOSING ARGUMENT

Dear Colleagues, I thank you for what has been a very engaging debate. I am honoured to have had an opportunity to share with you Kenya's vision for international peace and security, but more importantly to have benefitted from insights I have derived from your questions.

In the last two hours I have endeavoured to communicate **Who** we are, **What** our priorities are and **How** we will implement them. I hope Kenya has convinced you that we are a dependable partner to all. We have a clear track record of delivering on our commitments, and if elected we will engage with all members to build consensus on matters pertaining to international peace and security.

We come to you both as a candidate with a visible and tested track record on delivery on matters of peace and security and the related pillars. We also come to you as Africa's endorsed candidate and entreat you to believe in Africa's choice. An endorsement is the quintessential expression of multilateralism. It is an affirmation from those who know you best, a democratic mandate from the region you represent. Endorsements are a tradition we must jealously guard, for if we fail to defend multilateralism within our regions, how are we to succeed in defending multilateralism globally.

Excellencies let there be no confusion. There is an African Union endorsed candidate. The African Union endorsed Kenya as the candidate for the UN Security Council seat for 2021-2022 on 21 August 2019 in Addis Ababa. We, Kenya, and Djibouti subjected ourselves to the open, transparent and democratic due process. Kenya and Djibouti participated in the voting as per the AU procedures in the session presided over by Egypt, the then Chair of the AU. Kenya was declared the winner after getting two-thirds of the vote.

This decision of Kenya's endorsement was communicated from the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, through the AU Permanent Observer Mission in New York for onward transmission to the African Group and all Permanent and Observer Missions and the United Nations Headquarters. This transmission was done under the leadership of the Permanent Representative of The Sudan as Chair of the African Group for the month of August 2019, and again, by the Permanent Representative of Zambia as Chair of the month of October 2019.

The circulation in October 2019 included the legal opinion from the AU Legal Counsel, which stated that the AU Permanent Representative Committee's endorsement under delegated authority of the Executive Council, did not require re-submission by the Council to the AU Assembly for further endorsement, and that the AU PRC was exercising the powers of the Executive Council, hence the decision was final. This information is also available on all official public platforms online.

So, colleagues, how can one allude to being democratic when after going through two rounds of votes, and conceding, and congratulating the opponent, then change their mind a few days later? To reiterate, Kenya is the AU endorsed candidate.

The opportunity to be a non- permanent member of the Security Council is a responsibility we embrace with a deep sense of purpose; and it is a task for which we have been preparing for through our deliverables in the three pillars of peace and security, human rights and development.

Kenya commits to deliver, Kenya commits to be a champion of all sectors of the community, including women and youth. Kenya commits to invest in ensuring the Security Council remains a forum for collective engagement, transparency, accountability, preventive diplomacy, and implementation of mandates.

We commend the efforts the A3 have put in articulating issues on matters pertaining to Africa. We hope to build on this work as we take the baton from South Africa.

Kenya has been knocking on your doors seeking your support sharing our ten-point agenda and we look forward to your support.

Kenya is ready to serve. Support Africa and Vote Kenya