



STATEMENT

BY

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DURING THE

MINISTERIAL UN SECURITY COUNCIL VIRTUAL OPEN DEBATE

ON

CLIMATE AND SECURITY

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As Delivered

Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

- I. Let me begin by expressing my gratitude to your Excellency Heiko Maas, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany for your kind intervention, and also for convening this important meeting. We also express our gratitude to the briefers, and to all the countries that have co-sponsored this important event.
- II. The topic under discussion is very dear to my country Kenya. As you may be aware, Kenya hosts the only United Nations Headquarters in the Global South, housing the United Nations Environment Programme, and UN Habitat. And that's why we continue to call for the allocation of more resources, and the progressive consolidation of the functions of the Nairobi office to efficiently deliver on its mandate, which includes tackling the pressing challenge of climate change.
- III. Climate change, as we know, and as we have generally agreed, is an existential threat for most of our States. It is already having an impact on peace and security, not only as a risk in itself, but as a risk multiplier of conflict, insecurity and State fragility. We know that that climate change, makes things worse. It interferes with water scarcity and exacerbates it and worsens food insecurity. It increases disease prevalence and causes intercommunal conflict over resources and more than this, it brings about the forced migration of communities, and the haphazard urbanization of many areas in Africa.
- IV. This is quite evident in the Horn of Africa, where many states are confronting extreme climate events, as well as COVID-19, as well as terrorism, as well as the worst infestation of locusts in the last 70 years. So climate change also pushes State capabilities to the limit.
- V. We know the impact of climate change, but even though there is mounting evidence of global warming, our response as a community of nations has been plagued by doubts and reversals, making it difficult to progressively move into a low carbon pathway, which is critical in saving our planet. But it is not enough to continually narrate the problem. It is not enough to emphasize what is wrong. We must move away from the arena of rhetoric towards one of real concrete action. And in this regard ,we would suggest the following:
 - a) They must be a broad acceptance that there is a nexus between climate change, and peace and security. This is something that is not always easy to agree on within our community of nations.
 - b) Secondly, there must be a commitment to the climate change responses that are exemplified by key relevant international instruments, which we all must endeavor to ratify. These include the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement. Hence, we must walk the talk.
 - c) Thirdly, as I mentioned initially, we need to strengthen those institutions that have a huge mandate in the area of climate change. And here we wish to emphasize the UNEP and UN Habitat in Nairobi.

- d) Furthermore, it is important that countries themselves show commitment at the national level. In this regard, I'm proud to say that in Kenya, we have put into place, policies, and legal climate change frameworks, as well as the National Climate Change Action Plan to mainstream climate actions into our development planning processes.
- e) It is absolutely essential that we find the nexus between the battle against climate change, and the advancement of development. In Kenya, we are trying to recalibrate our development agenda by progressing the idea of green energy and green economy, Kenya is a leading producer of green energy, and more than this we have committed ourselves to planting 2 billion tree seedlings by 2020 in order to restore 1.5 million hectares of land that has been degraded and deforested.

There is still more that can be done to move this question towards more active participation by the UN Security Council. And in this regard, we call for:

- a) An improvement in our early warning and predictive systems that will enable us to identify and to map climate change hotspots, in order to procure critical and verifiable data to enable decision making and conflict prevention at the level of the UN Security Council.
- b) We are clear that if we wish the UN Security Council to act effectively, it must have facts, it must have data. And therefore, this calls for the better utilization of Earth observation technologies and scientific research. And here we wish to commend the Federal Republic of Germany for producing an excellent climate risk and foresight assessment report that we believe is driven by science.
- c) But even as we call for more collaboration in this area between Member States, international organization agencies like UNEP, the private sector research institutions and communities themselves, we must remember that there is a huge digital divide, that leaves the developing world behind. Consequently, they must be a provision of financing and training to bolster scientific engagement by the developing world. More than this, there must be a democratization of access to critical data, and a movement towards more data sharing in this area.
- d) In addition, we need to strengthen those linkages that already exists between the UN Security Council, and regional and continental agencies, such as the AU, and other regional agencies have early warning mechanisms that can provide timely information and analysis to the UN Security Council to bring about the transformation that we need.
- e) We must not forget that the impact of climate change is local; it is often community based; it is often individual, and therefore as we tackle climate change, we must think locally, and also act globally.
- f) We also wish to encourage the UN Security Council to mainstream the subject of climate change into its resolutions, and we're beginning to see progress in this regard. And here we allude to the resolution, made in 2017 by the UN Security

Council, resolution 2349 on the Lake Chad Basin that recognized the nexus between ecological changes and conflict.

- g) It is only when we were able to see the UN act pro-actively in restructuring the value systems that underpin peacekeeping operations and peace support missions that we'll be able to see real action on the ground and real collaboration towards dealing with this nexus that exists between climate change and peace and security.
- h) Further we need to think about peace support missions afresh. We need to look at humanitarian action afresh. We may need to re-train our peacekeepers to address climate change issues squarely in collaboration with national stakeholders to improve capacities in environmental restoration, build resilience within our communities, collect data and to monitor environmental changes, and more than this, to integrate the green economy, clean energy into State stabilization and State reconstruction. If we want to build back better, perhaps we need to build back weak states on the platform of the green economy.
- i) Furthermore, let us not forget the role of women and women and youth as key change-drivers in dealing with climate change. For those of us who live in Africa, who understand the power of women, and who also understand the great impact climate change has had on women, it is essential that the issue of women peace, security, and climate change are brought to the center of the thinking of the United Nations Security Council. It is essential that our women peacekeepers for example, begin to collect gender disaggregated data in order for us to really assess the impact of climate change and conflict, on women.
- j) Finally, we wish to emphasize that the United Nations Security Council, as a guarantor of international peace and security can provide that political will, that leadership, that courage that will enable us to tackle climate change risks squarely.

Our country Kenya will be joining the United Nations Security Council, as and Elected Member from 2021-2022. A key portion of our efforts will be dedicated to moving the environmental and climate change agenda forward, and we look forward to working with all of you. **I thank you very much Mr. President.**