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STATEMENT

BY

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NEW YORK

DURING THE

**HIGH LEVEL THEMATIC DEBATE OF THE GENERAL
ASSEMBLY ON:**

***'Promoting Tolerance and Reconciliation: Fostering
Peaceful, Inclusive Societies and Countering Violent
Extremism'***

21-22 APRIL, 2015 CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

HIGH-LEVEL THEMATIC DEBATE OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY: PROMOTING TOLERANCE AND RECONCILIATION: FOSTERING PEACEFUL, INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Mr President,

On behalf of my delegation, I wish to take this opportunity to thank you for convening today's important and timely debate on modalities of promoting tolerance and reconciliation to counter violent extremism, particularly the pivotal role of religious faiths in achieving tolerance and reconciliation. I also wish to thank H.E Ban Ki Moon, the UN Secretary General for his comprehensive briefing and remarks on this important subject. I also thank H.E Nassir Abdulaziz Al Nasser, the High Representative of the Alliance of Civilizations for his statement.

Mr President,

My President, H.E Uhuru Kenyatta has just returned to Kenya from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan where he and his colleagues were attending a co-ordination meeting for the Horn of Africa focusing on the fight against terrorism and radicalization. In this meeting, measures to counter violent extremism and radicalization especially of the youth were discussed.

Mr President,

Globally, we are witnessing the upsurge of intolerance and xenophobia on the basis of racial, ethnic and religious differences. This is paradoxical because the upsurge has increased in relative proportion to the rise in globalization, in its width and depth, as propelled by rapid advances in and decreasing cost of communication and transportation technologies.

It is in the midst of this rapid but positive change in the world that we are witnessing the intensification and multiplication of conflicts between transnational groups and nation states including civil wars based primarily on politicization of religion. As a result, and if unchecked, the world could be drifting away from current consensus on accommodation of Faith to a

new age that threatens choice of Faith through intolerance and violent extremism.

Currently, intolerance and violent extremism directly feeds into terrorism, the foremost threat to international peace and security.

Mr President,

My delegation has noted with concern that the current wave of radicalization, intolerance and extremism worldwide is fundamentally an ideological crisis that needs to be addressed more openly and effectively by the international community, particularly within the UN and among the Major Faiths of the world.

Central to addressing this phenomenon is the need to unravel the global Jihadist Movement's aspirations to create Islamic caliphates driven mainly by extremist violence and religious intolerance. From ISIL/Daesh in Syria and Iraq, Al Qaeda and its global franchises, Boko Haram in West Africa, Al Shabaab in East/Horn of Africa and extremist groups in the Sahel among others, we are witnessing attempts to overthrow the consensus on diversity/accommodation of Faiths and freedom of worship.

The violent pursuit of Islamic caliphates is threatening stability of secular States and undermining universal values such as democracy and rule of law and cherished freedoms and human rights.

Mr President,

Kenya's national experience with religious intolerance and violent extremism is rooted in the prolonged crisis and conflict situation in Somalia resulting from the collapse of the state of Somalia in 1991. The crisis has since mutated into various forms and sizes of threats the most potent being the ideology of violent extremism first meted out on the Somalia population itself, then to neighboring states, the region and international community.

The current threat of radicalization, intolerance and violent extremism, as attested by the atrocious slaughter of 142 young students, 6 security officers and seriously injuring of 79 students, mainly Christians, at Garissa University college on the eve of Easter, is largely tied to the desire by the

Al Shabaab, an Al Qaeda affiliate based in Somalia to create a significant pool of radicalized Kenyan youth who could be easily deployed for terrorism missions in perpetuation of Al Qaeda's ultimate goal of creating an East African Islamic caliphate. The Al Shabaab has taken advantage of prevailing socio-economic conditions including poverty, hopelessness and perceived injustices and marginalization to recruit and radicalize vulnerable youth to their cause.

The indoctrination of youth into violent extremism is taking place in educational institutions, mosques, the social media and prisons. This has been amplified by access to technology, particularly the internet where most of the recruitment is taking place today.

Mr President,

The ambition of Al Shabaab to create an Islamic caliphate in East Africa is a threat not only to regional peace and security but also to the stability and prosperity of Kenya as a modern democratic, open and secular state. Clearly, the last three attacks in northern Kenya where terrorists separated Muslims from Christians and summarily executed the Christians was meant to ignite inter-Faith conflict between Christians and Muslims, negating our historical reality of peaceful co-existence and tolerance.

My delegation affirms the determination of the government and people of Kenya to remain steadfastly committed to the national values enshrined in the country's Constitution including diversity, freedom of association and religion, inclusivity, rule of law and democracy.

Mr President

My delegation wishes to assure this high level panel that the government of Kenya is committed to fully implementing all the four pillars of the United Nations Global Counterterrorism Strategy, particularly its 1st pillar on addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism and terrorism. The government is implementing a national counter radicalization strategy that aims to build communities' resilience to reject radicalization and violent extremist messages through civil society engagement, interfaith and intra-faith dialogue, capacity building and

various educational and political strategies to raise awareness and resilience through counter narratives.

Through a constitutionally guaranteed devolution policy, the government aims to address historical grievances of marginalization through the deliberate transfer of budgetary resources to 47 devolved units where local assemblies prioritize local development needs in an inclusive manner. The government has created a national youth Fund to spearhead financial assistance to youth owned enterprises and requires, through legislation, that 30% of all public procurement be reserved for youth and women owned enterprises to enhance financial inclusion. All these in effort to effectively counter, in a sustainable basis, the attractiveness of the violent extremist narrative.

Mr President,

My delegation has come to the realization that pragmatic national policies alone will not be enough to counter the ever changing and adaptable threat of intolerance and violent extremism worldwide, now conveniently clothed as Islamic jihadism. We urge deeper international cooperation particularly by the major Faiths of the world to condemn extremism in whatever form and manifestation in one clear, unambiguous voice. Faith leaders at all levels may need to reaffirm the principles of diversity of Faith and freedom of worship.

Allow me to conclude by quoting the popular American Idiom: '***Freedom is not free***'. Leaders of our Major Faiths must do more to defend freedom of worship and diversity of religion worldwide through more robust cooperation locally, nationally and internationally. We also strongly encourage Muslim scholars and researchers worldwide to put necessary efforts towards a global Muslim consensus that can guide the Muslim nation towards global coexistence and peace through reasonable argument to counter the extremist ideology and politicization of faith.

I thank you for your kind attention.

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