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STATEMENT

BY

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TO THE

**THIRD COMMITTEE**

ON

**AGENDA ITEM 68:**  
**"PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF**  
**THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN"**

DURING THE

70<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Thursday, October 15, 2015  
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**Mr. Chairman,**

Thank you for giving me the floor. I thank the Secretary-General for the comprehensive and insightful reports submitted under this agenda item.

We stand with the world to celebrate the forward looking Sustainable Development Goals that promise to reduce inequality, end violence against children and combat child poverty. We take this opportunity to call on the world to negotiate another common goal of lasting sustainable peace in all areas that are experiencing conflict. We believe that all the plans that we put in for the implementation of the SDGs will be informed by achievement of peace in all the regions of the world where we can truly say that no one has been left behind.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The Convention on the Rights of the Child has now gained almost universal acceptance having been ratified or acceded to by 195 States. We reiterate that investment in the survival, protection and development of children is not just public policy but an obligation.

Kenya takes this obligation seriously and has made significant strides in addressing obstacles that stand in the way of full realization of rights of the child. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child have been incorporated as part of Kenyan law through the Constitution and the Children Act of 2001.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Gender inequality is one of the critical drivers of deprivations affecting children in Kenya. This is due to women in Kenya having lower economic status, lower access to formal employment and the fact that female-headed households are more likely to belong to the poorest sector of the population. The government has been incrementally addressing gender inequality by

**Mr. Chairman,**

Education is an essential right that allows children to receive learning and to blossom socially. Goal 4 of the SDGs on education calls on Member States to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

We reaffirm that education is a public good, a fundamental human right and a basis for guaranteeing the realization of other rights. We commit to increasing resources that will ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality universal primary and secondary education. The Constitution of Kenya recognizes the

right to education as a fundamental right of every child and guarantees all children the right to free and compulsory basic education to ensure relevant human and social capital for sustainable development. The legal and policy frameworks accord with the CRC and other international norms.

The Government has made remarkable stride in increasing access to basic schooling since the introduction of the Free Primary Education Programme (FPE). It has also made advances in increasing educational enrolment, gender parity in enrolments, particularly in primary education enrolment which has significantly risen from 5.93 million children in 2000 to over 10 million children with a Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) currently standing at 117.3%.

It is our firm belief that improving access to education especially for girls is also an effective way to eliminate cultural harmful practices such as FGM and child marriages.

**Mr. Chairman,**

On the harmful practice of child marriage, Kenya recognizes child marriage as a harmful practice and a violation of all the four pillars of child rights which are survival, development, protection and participation. The Constitution of Kenya under Article 53(1) protects children from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation and harmful cultural practices as well as inhumane treatment and punishment. Enabling legislation such as the Marriage Act which prohibits marriage of persons below 18 years of age and the Children Act which rightly outlaws child marriage have been enacted to provide safeguards for children. The Government is committed to ensuring that these legal provisions are enforced and perpetrators prosecuted.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Child Poverty and Deprivation as it affects children is a human rights issue we know that childhood poverty has carry-over effects that affects children as they grow and develop into adulthood and throughout their lives.

Kenya has implemented a wide range of social protection initiatives to benefit children which include the Orphans and Vulnerable Children's Cash Transfer, the Urban Food Subsidy, Hunger Safety Net programme, General Food Distribution, Blanket Supplementary Feeding, Scholarships and Bursary Schemes and school feeding. These programmes have been effective in contributing to protection and realization of many children's rights including nutrition and food, education, birth registration, sexual and reproductive health. Child Nutrition Malnutrition, including micronutrient deficiencies remains a significant public health problem

and we shall continue to fund and enhance these programmes to eliminate nutrition malnutrition in children

**Mr. Chairman,**

To ensure equitable results for children, we appreciate that our common future is dependent on our success in caring for and protecting our children. Data is important to enable us to address the problems of children more efficiently and effectively and Kenya has made progress in putting in place registrations drive to ensure total collection of vital statistics to serve the citizens from cradle to grave. The government is harnessing the transformative power of ICTs and the data revolution to deliver results for children and adolescents through several initiatives that respond to the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Mr. Chairman,**

We appreciate that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development under Goal 3 promises to ensure healthy lives and to promote the well-being for all at all ages and specifically to end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under 5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births by 2030. We firmly believe in this promise, that we can end preventable deaths of women and children if we all play our part and commit to this goal.

The Kenya Constitution recognizes the right to health of every individual, including reproductive health care. This implies that services should be available to meet the distinct needs of women and men, girls and boys and calls for ensuring that adolescent reproductive health and rights are included in national agendas and translated into policies and actions. The Government has abolished pre and post maternal care fees in public health facilities which has increased access to maternal healthcare and consequently reduced child and maternal mortality rates.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The abuse of children remains a problem that affects the most modern of cities as well as the most traditional of rural communities. Children with disabilities are 3 to 4 times more likely to be victims of violence. Girls with disabilities are at an even greater risk of violence. The Government has developed and is executing a comprehensive plan to effectively respond to violence. The plan combines both a long-term investment in prevention and a commitment to improving the functioning of State institutions. Some of the include: help lines, Shelters and

Rescue homes, Gender Based Violence Recovery one stop centres, legal aid clinics, psychosocial support services, rehabilitation and resettlement services as well as police gender desks

**Mr. Chairman,**

The most vulnerable and disadvantaged children are those living in areas experiencing armed conflict or fleeing from conflict. Who can forget the heart-rending images of three year old Aylan Kurdi whose lifeless body washed ashore or the horror of a mother who had been forced to watch as two of her children drowned? It has been stated that almost 1 billion children under the age of 18 live in areas in conflict or emerging from war. We reiterate Graca Machel's statement that "our collective failure to protect children must be transformed into an opportunity to confront the problems that cause their suffering."

The success of the SDG will to a great extent hinge on sustainable solutions that can end conflict. We reiterate that the impact of conflict on children is everyone's concern and we therefore must continue to put the plight of children affected by war high on the agendas of both the Security Council and the General Assembly.

If we can dream of eradicating extreme poverty by 2030, we can envision a world where children are not exposed to armed conflict and a world where men and women are ready to beat swords into ploughshares.

**I thank you.**