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STATEMENT

BY

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ON

AGENDA ITEM 28 (a) - (c)
ON
"SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT"

DURING THE

70TH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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**Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election to Chair our Committee. I similarly congratulate the other members of the Bureau and assure you of my delegation's support and look forward to successful deliberations during this session.

My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Representative of Sierra Leone on behalf of the African Group. Additionally, we thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive reports on this agenda item.

Mr. Chairman,

This delegation is honoured to be present at this historical moment in which all Member States have agreed on a transformative development agenda which aims to advance prosperity, secure the planet's sustainability for future generations, unlock resources for investments in education, health and in equitable growth and sustainable use of resources. The promises of the Sustainable Development Goals raise our hopes that we can achieve a more just and equitable world in our time.

Mr. Chairman,

The reality of the world social situation is that despite remarkable gains, in the implementation of the MDGs inequalities persist and progress has been slow and uneven. Developing countries continue to face challenges in their efforts to reduce vulnerabilities and inequalities. Access to affordable quality healthcare and improved standards of living for the extremely poor and marginalized in developing countries remains a challenge.

Mr. Chairman,

Twenty years after the adoption of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action which set out commitments to guide achievement of social development, there has been steady progress towards eradication of poverty with the target to have the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1.25 a day being met but it is clear that more needs to be done.

To achieve inclusive development, the government has implemented national programmes that enhance participation of women, youth, persons with disabilities and older persons. Significant progress towards realizing the MDGs has been achieved and in particular Kenya has achieved universal primary education; promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women has been prioritized and special programmes to benefit disadvantaged groups are being implemented. Kenya has also achieved great strides in reduction of child mortality,

combating HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases and has set the pace in Africa on open data and exploitation of information communication technologies.

However progress towards realizing a number of other key MDGs such as eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving environmental sustainability and improving maternal health has been slow. These complex challenges can only be addressed with the realization of a revitalized global partnership. We are confident that social inclusion will be enhanced by the realization of SDGs and their targets but acknowledge that it will require multi-stakeholder partnerships, voluntary contributions and domestic mobilization of resources for developing countries such as Kenya to prioritize the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable so as to leave no one behind.

Mr. Chairman,

The government of Kenya is playing its role and in order to tackle inequality and unemployment, it has allocated resources to implement social programmes that target the most vulnerable sectors of the population. The Government has initiated credit access initiatives, the Youth Enterprise Development Fund, Micro and Small Enterprises Fund that target youth, women and persons with disabilities. These schemes ensure access to affordable credit facilities for entrepreneurship at zero interest to spur enterprise, encourage job creation and spur growth.

In addition, the Government has since 2013 been setting aside 30% of all its tenders including works, goods and services every year, for women, youth and persons with disabilities in a scheme dubbed "Access to Government Opportunities" which currently amounts to \$2.2 billion dollars a year.

Mr. Chairman,

The rights of persons with disabilities have been given constitutional safeguards which are intended to minimize barriers to equalization of opportunities in all aspects of social-cultural, economic and political life. The government has introduced an indicator on disability mainstreaming in annual performance contracting in the public service. The government has also prioritized increasing accessibility to built environments and to information and the realization of 5% representation of persons with disabilities in employment. The government has established a fund and a scheme that provide PWDs with funds and equipment to set up their own business. These efforts are augmented by a cash transfer programme to provide the appropriate social security to PWDs who are not able to support themselves and their dependants. Free health insurance is also provided.

Mr. Chairman,

The government of Kenya upholds the rights, welfare and dignity of older persons and has established a consolidated fund for older persons and an Older Persons' cash transfer programme for the poor and vulnerable older persons. It has also set up the Social Protection

Fund to provide access to credit and cash transfer on flexible terms to poor and vulnerable households with older citizens above 65 years of age. Older persons are entitled to essential health services and the government has established a Health and Ageing Unit within the Ministry of health that seeks to address the health concerns of older persons.

Mr. Chairman,

On Youth development and empowerment, Kenya's National Youth Council serves as a voice for the Youth, and provides a resourced and functional youth engagement framework. The Government over and above the resources earlier mentioned, has transformed the National Youth Service as an institution that guarantees the youth relevant vocational training and skills for the job market. Kenya's new constitution provides for youth involvement and participation in socio-economic and political development including elective and appointive positions.

The Government of Kenya in partnership with UN agencies has also set up various youth empowerment programmes in the areas of governance, political participation and entrepreneurship. Kenya also hosts the largest number of UN volunteers in the world particularly in development.

We acknowledge that full employment and decent work for all continues to be our biggest challenge. Unemployment and under-employment continue to be major obstacles to the full utilization of human resources. The government has made policy interventions to promote access to quality basic education for the youth for better labour market outcomes.

Mr. Chairman,

Kenya faces challenges as a result of the continued grave security situation in Eastern Africa. Global terrorism and violent extremism remain a major threat not only to the Republic of Kenya but also to the entire world. In the recent past, Al-Shabaab terrorists have been targeting the civilian population in Kenya which has had a great impact on Kenya's national security and economy at large.

The government continues to invest billions of shillings in the maintenance of regional peace and security, while many Kenyan lives have been lost in our quest for peace. These much needed resources are unfortunately diverted from fulfilling our development goals in order to address these conflicts. Realization of sustainable peace is urgent and essential if we are to realize the sustainable development goals.

In conclusion, we plead for strong and enforceable action in tackling Al-Shabaab and other terrorist groups that have prevented most developing countries from achieving their development goals. At the same time, we must collectively address the radicalization of the youth as the pipeline for global terrorism and its financing at the grassroots.

I thank you!