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STATEMENT

BY

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OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

AT

**THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE 65TH
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**ON THE AGENDA
ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN**

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Mr. Chairman,

I thank you for continuing to steer the deliberations of this Committee and reiterate our continued support to you and members of the bureau. We also thank the Secretary General for his illuminating reports under this agenda item.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement by the distinguished representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China as well as the statement by the distinguished representative of Malawi on behalf of the African Group.

Mr. Chairman,

Kenya welcomes the establishment of United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, UN Women, by the General Assembly in July, 2010 and congratulate Ms. Michelle Bachelet on her appointment, as the Under-Secretary General. We commend Ms. Bachelet for her very intuitive dialogue with the committee and affirm support to both the organization and the Under-Secretary General in the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Mr. Chairman,

Women are an important segment of the population and achieving gender equality and facilitating the enjoyment of their rights is key to unlocking their full potential to contribute to national development and consequently the eradication of poverty. Since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) and the Millennium Development Goals, Kenya has made remarkable progress in the advancement of women by incorporating the gender perspective in the development policies as well as putting in place legal frameworks and institutional structures. This includes mainstreaming of the gender perspective into the national development blue print - Vision 2030 Development, establishment of the National Commission of Gender and Development, the Women's Enterprise Fund and of the Social Protection Fund. Kenya has also developed a National Policy on Gender and Development and its Plan of Action which guides gender mainstreaming in all sectors including the appointment of Gender Officers in Government Ministries and State Corporations. All these efforts are in line with the Secretary General's call for stronger efforts in addressing the persistent gaps, challenges and obstacles to implementation of commitments on gender equality, women's human rights and the empowerment of women.

Mr. Chairman,

Our new Constitution is designed to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. For instance the chairperson and vice-chairperson of Constitutional Commissions shall not be of the same gender. Additionally, the State is required to take legislative and other measures to implement the principle that not more than two-thirds of the members of elective or appointive bodies are of the same gender. Kenyan women will therefore be allowed to effectively participate in decision-making with a view to progressively eliminate gender discrimination in law, customs and practices

Under the new Constitution, at least 15% of the national budget will be allocated to the Counties under the new devolution structure. In Kenya, women form the majority of the informal sector and small and medium businesses and are expected to immensely benefit from the devolved resources. The Constitution also guarantees equitable access to land and the security of land rights. Parliament is also required to enact legislation to regulate the recognition and protection

of matrimonial property and in particular the matrimonial home during and on termination of marriage.

Mr. Chairman,

Violence against women is a violation of their rights. Our Constitution provides for the National Human Rights and Equality Commission to receive and investigate complaints of violation of human rights and secure appropriate redress. Such cases will not be subject to court fees, making access to justice affordable by all, especially women. With regard to handling victims and cases of Gender Based Violence (GBV), the Government has developed a National Framework towards Response and Prevention of Gender-Based Violence. In this respect we note with appreciation that the Secretary General's Report on intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women has recognized specific efforts made by Kenya in combating violence against women.

Mr. Chairman,

The link between access to health facilities and infrastructural development cannot be overemphasized. In most countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, lack of access roads has hindered access to health facilities. In this regard my delegation welcomes the launch of the "Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health" by the Secretary General. This is an opportunity to improve the health of hundreds of millions of women and children around the world and expect that the strategy will reduce the infrastructural challenges.

Mr. Chairman,

Trafficking in girls and women remains a big challenge in conflict and post conflict situation especially in Africa. My delegation is grateful to the General Assembly for heeding to the call of the African Heads of State and Government and promptly adopting the Global Plan of Action adopted in August, 2010. In line with the Plan of Action, Kenya is seeking to domesticate the provisions of the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime particularly its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children through the Counter- Trafficking in Persons Bill, 2010, which is being debated in Parliament.

Mr. Chairman,

As pointed out in the Secretary General's report, the scaling up of good and promising practices geared towards empowering women and realizing a gender neutral society continues to be a challenge for stakeholders. This therefore calls for the concerted efforts of both men and women at the national, regional and international levels to ensure the full implementation of legal and policy provisions geared towards addressing these challenges.

In this regard we acknowledge the invaluable support of UNIFEM, UNDP, UNFPA and UNAIDS in providing assistance to developing countries in the realization of gender equality and women empowerment.

I thank you.