



*Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kenya to the United Nations*

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STATEMENT

BY

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TO THE

**THIRD COMMITTEE**

ON

**AGENDA ITEM 66: "PROMOTION AND  
PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN"**

- (a) Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children**
- (b) Follow-up to the Special Session on Children**

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2007  
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*Mr. Chairman,*

Since it is the first time that I make this statement in the Third Committee under your leadership, may I take this opportunity to express my personal pleasure and congratulate you for the continued excellent stewardship of the affairs of the Committee and assure you of our unreserved support throughout your tenure. At the outset, I thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and informative reports on this Agenda Item. We believe that they would go a long way to defining and charting out the way forward on this important issue and debate.

Confronted by the deplorable and distressful conditions affecting millions of children, world leaders gathered for deliberations in a special session of the General Assembly five years ago and concluded by adopting a declaration and plan of action entitled "A World Fit For Children". Kenya has been faithful in its commitment to alleviation of the plight of its children in accordance with the set of 10 principles and objectives of the declaration and plan of action.

We acknowledge that investing in children and respecting their rights lays the foundation for sustainable and equitable socio-economic transformation necessary for the eradication of poverty and injustice and the attainment of peace and security in our society.

*Mr. Chairman,*

We in Kenya recognize that the goals and ideals set forth in the Millennium Declaration and "World Fit For Children" will remain mere platitudes until they are transformed into actionable domestic legislation and integrated into the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of national development plans, strategies, policies and programmes.

Kenya was in the front ranks of member states to have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the two optional protocols on involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and the one on Child Prostitution and Pornography. This was followed-up with the enactment of the Children Act 2001 which domesticated the Convention and continues to provide a legal framework for the realization of children's rights in Kenya and codifies the rights of the child into justiceable rights under our national laws.

Kenya ratified the African Charter on the Rights and welfare of Children which, amongst other responsibilities, obligates the state to protect and support the family. The charter also provides for gender equality with respect to the rights and responsibilities in matters of up bringing and maintenance of children by their natural parents irrespective of their marital status.

The Sexual Offences Act 2006 provides for the Protection of Children from Sexual abuse, specifically from incest, defilement, child prostitution, child pornography, child sex tourism and trafficking for sexual exploitation.

*Mr. Chairman,*

Kenya realizes that the existence in our society of certain customary practices which relegate children to secondary status in decision-making even in matters which affect them is an impediment to the full realization of the rights of children. The government has made deliberate efforts to raise awareness of children's rights and to enhance public consciousness of the need to respect them in appreciation of the fundamental role of children in shaping our destiny as a nation. We recognize and appreciate the sterling role played by international bodies and civil society organizations in conjunction with the Government in articulating the rights of the child and in raising the profile of children in the affairs of our country.

*Mr. Chairman,*

Kenya is convinced that the health of its citizens, particularly maternal and child health is the elixir that will further transform our country into a working and productive nation. The government is determined to provide to all its citizens qualitative, affordable and accessible health care. The National Reproductive Health Delivery Strategy 1997-2010 continues to provide a framework for the promotion of safe motherhood and child survival and has been underpinned by the provision of free health services at public health institutions for all children under the age of five years.

Kenya also adopted the National Health Strategic Plan 2005-2010 which integrated millennium development goals and a world fit for children goals and targets which are key components towards an operational comprehensive health care system.

We have recorded credible immunization coverage under the Kenya Expanded Programme on Immunization (KEPI) against immunisable diseases. Widespread provision of treated mosquito nets, public health initiatives, expanded medical facilities and deployment of more medical personnel has resulted in a significant decline in the rate of child and maternal mortality due to malaria infections.

*Mr. Chairman,*

It is in the field of education that Kenya has achieved the most dramatic success in terms of progress towards achieving both the millennium development goals and the objectives of a world fit for children. The introduction of the universal free primary education in 2003 saw enrollment in primary schools go up by about 2 million children. Although over one million children of school-going age mainly from the pastoralist communities inhabiting the arid and semi-arid areas and from the informal urban settlements remain out of school, the government is seeking solutions to ensure that they are facilitated to enroll.

Among the measures in place include the establishment of boarding and mobile primary schools among the pastoralist communities and the integration of informal schools into the educational system particularly those already in existence in urban informal settlements. The introduction of the school-feeding programme in food-deficient areas has reinforced the free education programme in enhancing enrollment. In the education sector, we would like to thank UNICEF, WFP, UNDP and other partners for their valuable and continued assistance. The foregoing notwithstanding resources are still far from adequate and we appeal for an expanded partnership in this regard.

The government has also adopted a policy on early childhood education with a view to improving enrollment at that level. From next year the government will scrap tuition fees in secondary schools which is expected to enhance the rates of transition from primary to secondary schools. The government has rehabilitated, equipped and staffed 750 youth polytechnics and plans to establish 1,250 others over the next five years with a view to facilitating the training of children who do not manage the transition from primary to secondary schools in craft, technical and information communication technology skills which will give them access to employment opportunities.

*Mr. Chairman,*

The ravages of poverty and of HIV/AIDS have resulted in high numbers of orphaned and other vulnerable children. The government has adopted a national policy and plan of action on orphans and vulnerable children which provides a framework for improving the plight of disadvantaged children. Kenya believes that children of the world share a common destiny as members of the human race and that global collaboration is essential to success in securing and advancing the well-being of all the world's children without which the ideals of universal peace and security, the ultimate challenge of the world community cannot be achieved.

*I Thank You!*