STATEMENT

BY

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DURING

THE

THEMATIC DEBATE
OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

NAIROBI SUMMIT 2004
ON A MINE-FREE WORLD

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Mr. Chairman,

I wish to take the floor to address an issue of great concern to my country, namely the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (The Ottawa Convention). At the outset, let me thank the delegation of Thailand for introducing the draft resolution L.40 on the Ottawa Convention and to assure it of our full support.

Mr. Chairman,

Anti-Personnel Landmines are amongst the most inhumane weapons devised by man. They maim and kill innocent civilians and render them destitute due to loss of their livelihoods in the affected regions. It is thus no wonder that 143 States Parties have now ratified the Ottawa Convention. This commitment has strengthened the international resolve to ban this horrendous weapon. Kenya’s commitment to the elimination of the use of landmines is demonstrated in the active role it has played in the implementation of the Convention in the sub-region, including mine clearance efforts in the Horn of Africa. These efforts compliment Kenya’s contribution to promote peace, conflict resolution and reconciliation in the sub-region. It is only through the total elimination of this weapon that this menace can be obliterated.

Despite the tremendous progress made in the achievement of the Convention’s humanitarian and development objectives, universalization of the Convention is yet to be achieved. Destruction of anti-personnel mines remains technically and financially challenging as does the demining of affected regions. The battle is yet to be won.

In this regard, Kenya is delighted to be hosting the First Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention to be held in Nairobi from November 29 - December 3, 2004. My delegation attaches great importance to this event also dubbed the “Nairobi Summit 2004 on a Mine-Free World”.

The Nairobi Summit will be a crucial milestone in the
operationalization of the Ottawa Convention. As the First Review Conference since the entry into force of the Convention in 1999, the Summit will be reviewing critical issues pertaining to the Convention in particular, the status and operation of the Convention, deadlines for demining and destruction of stockpiles of mines by States Parties, as well as assistance to victims of mines. It will take stock of the progress made since its entry into force in 1999 and set the agenda for action over the next five years to ensure the achievement of the humanitarian objectives of the Convention.

Substantive preparations for the Nairobi Summit are at an advanced stage. It is anticipated that world leaders and other dignitaries will attend this important event in recognition of the tremendous achievements made so far by Convention in advancing human development worldwide.

It is hoped that the Nairobi Summit will:

- Stress the determination by the international community to free the world of anti-personnel landmines thereby put an end to the suffering and casualties caused by these weapons.

- Assess the progress that has been made in ending the suffering caused by anti-personnel landmines since the Convention was established.

- Be attended by majority of parties and civil society as well as important world leaders.

It is expected that the Nairobi Summit will:

- Provide a major forum for the participants to discuss the global problem of landmine since the historic Convention was signed in Ottawa, Canada, in December 1977, and come up with viable solutions to this problem.

- Adopt a powerful declaration and action plan recommitting parties to overcome remaining challenges particularly stopping production of anti-personnel mines and mobilizing the
necessary resources to help badly affected countries to clear mined areas and well as assist landmine survivors.

- Serve as a platform to highlight the plight of Africa as the most mine-affected region. It is also expected that the Summit will provide Africa the forum to play leading role in resolving the anti-personnel landmine problem.

Kenya wishes to recognize and thank the people and organizations whose efforts have contributed to the successful holding of the Nairobi Summit, and in particular, Austria, the Friends of the Nairobi Summit and the organizers of the various Regional Workshops and Intercessional Meetings in Geneva. The stakes for the Nairobi Summit are high but so are stakes for those in daily danger from anti-personnel mines. The success of the Nairobi Summit will be the international community’s success.

On behalf of the People and the Government of Kenya, I wish to take this opportunity to invite you to participate at the highest possible level.

I thank you.