



STATEMENT BY H.E. DR. CLEOPA MAILU, EGH, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF KENYA TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE IN GENEVA DURING THE SECOND PART OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT, 23RD JUNE, 2020, ROOM XIX

Thank you, Mr. President,

1. Kenya aligns itself with the statement delivered by Egypt on behalf of the G21.
2. At the outset, my delegation extends its sincere congratulations to you, **Mr. President**, on your assumption as President of the CD, during its Second Part. I assure you of Kenya's full support and cooperation during your Presidency.
3. Allow me also, **Mr. President**, to commend the distinguished Ambassador of Australia for her exemplary stewardship of the CD, despite the difficult circumstances, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which did not permit this distinguished Assembly, to complete its work during the First Part, under their Presidency. Nevertheless, the delegation of Kenya appreciates the steadfast engagement that the Australian Presidency maintained with delegations as well as the opportunity for virtual briefings with the regional groups. Their efforts in championing the technical updates on the gender dimensions to the Rules of Procedure were commendable. We are convinced that these efforts should be carried forward.
4. **Mr. President**, our meeting is taking place against the backdrop of immense challenges facing the community of nations. The COVID-19 pandemic, the worst pandemic in over 100 years, has affected our daily

lives and the manner in which, we, diplomats must from now on carry on with our work. Governments across the globe are working tirelessly to combat the spread of this deadly virus. This invisible virus has posed an existential threat to humanity and has demonstrated that all states, big and small, nuclear powers and non-nuclear weapon states are all vulnerable in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. Like every other aspect of life that has been affected by this virus, the United Nations, the bedrock of multilateralism, which marks seventy-five years of its existence this year, has not been spared. The rule-based international system has had to adopt to the new normal in order to ensure that global discourse on a whole range of issues is sustained. Closer home, the Conference on Disarmament had to abruptly end its First Part in March and delayed the start of the Second Session. Our presence in the room testifies to the measures that we must now be accustomed to going forward.
6. **Mr. President**, we have all witnessed the disturbing developments in the arms control, disarmament and international security sphere. The findings in the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Yearbook 2020 released about one week ago, on 15th June, paint a grim picture of the state of disarmament and international security. According to the Yearbook, despite an overall decrease in the number of nuclear warheads in 2019, all nuclear weapon-possessing states continue to modernize their nuclear arsenals. Adding to this situation is the continued rise in military spending and the heightened uncertainty of the international arms control regime. Nevertheless, a glimmer of hope presented itself in negotiations that took place in Austria last week. We hope, that the coming together of minds will herald the beginning of better days for the arms control architecture. We remain cautiously optimistic.
7. **Mr. President**, Kenya welcomes your focus on multilateralism during your Presidency. In this regard, Kenya reaffirms the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral negotiating forum for

disarmament. Since its recognition in 1979, at the First Special Session on Disarmament (SSOD1), the CD's unique mandate on multilateral arms control and disarmament issues, makes it an integral forum for the maintenance of global peace and security. Despite the challenges that this Conference has faced in the past two decades, we remain hopeful that, with more concerted efforts and a willingness to compromise and demonstrate flexibility, it is not too late to achieve progress.

8. **Mr. President**, this Conference has in the past demonstrated its ability to deliver on its mandate. There has never been a greater imperative for the CD to deliver on its mandate, than now, when new invisible threats to the stability of mankind have the potential to wipe away, in a flash, the progress that has taken humanity decades to achieve. This, together with a turbulent international security landscape requires this important body to rise up and do much more, so that it may achieve its mandate, not just for ourselves, but for the generations to come.
9. **Mr. President**, Kenya remains steadfast in its commitment to the Conference on Disarmament. We are hopeful that with the requisite political will, this important body can rise above its challenges and make its crucial contribution to international peace and security as it did in the past.
10. In conclusion, **Mr. President**, while the Conference on Disarmament remains the preserve of Member States, Kenya commends your efforts at engagement with the civil society. The views of the civil society may be valuable in providing insightful perspectives on disarmament and security in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, Kenya looks forward to the event taking place on Friday, 3rd July, under the title, ***“The Conference on Disarmament meets Civil Society: Lessons of the Pandemic – Rethinking the nexus between disarmament and security.”***

I thank you for your attention.

