MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MEDIA AND DIPLOMATIC BRIEFING

STATEMENT BY THE CABINET SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AMB. RAYCHELLE OMAMO, SC, E.G.H.,

NAIROBI, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 17TH, 2021

Your Excellency Ambassador Beyene Russom, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps,
Excellencies Regional Deans
Excellencies, Ambassadors and High Commissioners,
Excellency, Head of the United Nations Office in Nairobi,
Heads of Missions and International Organizations,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. I am delighted to welcome you this morning at the Crowne Plaza Hotel for a diplomatic briefing. Thank you for honouring our invitation.

2. Indeed, this is not only an opportunity to apprise on Kenya's diplomatic engagements and interactions, but also an occasion to reflect and to ponder on matters of mutual interest – and concern – in the community of nations.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

3. Indeed, this time of the year is always a busy time as world leaders prepare to converge at the United General Assembly complex in New York to deliberate on various issues. Kenya is optimistic that the deliberations will chart a way forward for the future of diplomacy post-COVID 19.

4. As Kenya prepares to participate in the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly guided by the theme: **"Building resilience through hope - to recover from COVID-19, rebuild sustainability, respond to the needs of the planet, respect the rights of people, and revitalize the United Nations,"** the country will focus on these key issues, which dovetails with Kenya's Big 4 Agenda.

   a) **Energy Matters,**
   b) **Food Systems Agenda,**
   c) **Climate Change Issues,**
   d) **Global Governance and Oceans Agenda**
   e) **Progress made towards the Sustainable Development Goals**
   f) **Regional Peace and Security.**

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5. His Excellency President Hon. Uhuru KENYATTA will not be travelling to New York for this current session of the General Assembly. Nonetheless, I will be leading Kenya's delegation to the High Level Segment the General Assessment It is, therefore, our hope and expectations that the following key issues will be able to gain traction and galvanize immediate action.

   a) His Excellency the President, has, on several occasions, called for strengthened global governance that is cognizant of the global fragilities being witnessed, owing not just to the COVID-19 pandemic, but also due to the environmental issues being exacerbated by climate change.

   b) In regards to climate change, Kenya has been one of the countries taking a leadership role in addressing this challenge. The call for action on climate change requires States to make ambitious commitments. I am pleased to state that Kenya has increased her Nationally Determined Contributions from 30% to 32%. I am further convinced that global support in terms of climate financing is paramount for Kenya to achieve her targets by the year 2025.

   c) Kenya just concluded hosting the Africa Green Revolution Forum, a global Summit that brought together world leaders to chart a way forward towards a sustainable food systems. Kenya has been at the forefront of advocating transformative agriculture, which fits appropriately with the High Level Event on United Nations Food Systems Summit scheduled to take place during the 76th Session of the UN General Assembly. His Excellency the President, who will participate virtually at the event, will highlight the pivotal role and projects that Kenya has undertaken in transforming the food systems for a sustainable future.

   d) Additionally, Kenya has also been at the fore front in championing clean energy. Energy can and will continue to play a central role in countries' efforts to recover from the COVID-19 crisis in ways that make them better, stronger and more resilient. Kenya has played her role as a **Global Theme Champion on Energy Access,** with a specific focus on clean cooking.

e) The United Nations Secretary General will be hosting a High Level Dialogue on Energy on September 24th, 2021 on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly. This also offers Kenya, together with her Energy Global theme partners, China, the European Union (EU), Japan, Malawi, The Netherlands, the Russian Federation and Saudi Arabia an opportunity to host a thematic event on clean cooking. This is as we all endeavor to call for voluntary commitments on the energy compacts, while maximizing the positive impacts of an inclusive and just energy transitions on the achievement of the SDGs, including gender equality, job creation, youth empowerment, agriculture and food systems, health, education, water, and sustainable production and consumption.

f) His Excellency the President, together with other leaders, will also participate in a roundtable discussions to commemorate on the **20th Anniversary on the Durban Declarations on Racial Discrimination and Xenophobia.**

6. It is worth pointing out that Kenya's participation in the 76th Session of the UN General Assembly will not only highlight His Excellency the President's legacy as a champion of these crosscutting issues, but will showcase Kenya's progress towards achieving a sustainable development as in line with the 2030 Agenda.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

7. It will be recalled that for the past **9 months**, Kenya has dutifully and dependably continued to execute continental and regional mandates at the United Nations Security Council, following the African Union's resounding endorsement and Kenya's subsequent election to the Council. It is also worth pointing out that Kenya's membership to the UNSC is coinciding with the country's concurrent membership in the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) for the period of **2019-2022**.

8. Both the UN Security Council and the AU's Peace and Security Council are critical infrastructures for the maintenance and furtherance of International Peace and Security. In addition to Kenya's Presidency of the Organization of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), our membership in these

global security institutions only serves to illustrate Kenya's expanding influence on the international stage. This also aptly dovetails with our philosophy and belief as a country that global challenges are only surmountable if the world's rules-based multilateral system is deployed in a manner that attracts consensus. This is only just in the appreciation of the challenges, but also in the evolution of practical response strategies.

9. It is against this background that Kenya will be presiding over the affairs of the UN Security Council as the President for the month of October, 2021. Admittedly, our Presidency of the UN Security Council will be taking place at a critical juncture in the international arena. Unlike the 1997-1998 term when Kenya last served at the Council, the nature and character of diplomatic actors has changed considerably. An increasingly globalizing and interconnecting world, coupled with advancements in Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) and increased migration, among other factors, have birthed emerging security challenges such as terrorism and cybercrime.

10. In addition, the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic and its attendant disruptions, as well as increasingly divergent philosophical and political approaches to issues of global interests, particularly among the leading powers, call for skillful engagements to build bridges and galvanize consensus towards sustainable global peace.

11. I remain convinced though that Kenya's experiences, ethos and philosophy will stand the country in good stead in pursuing mutually beneficial outcomes during our Presidency of the Council in October and even throughout our term at the Security Council. In particular, Kenya will continue to advance good neighbourliness and Pan Africanist ideals on the basis of our four broad priority objectives: **Regional Peace and Security; Peace Support Operations; Counter Terrorism and Violent Extremism;** and **Climate and Security.**

12. This is actually reflected in the choice and range of the high-level signature events that Kenya will anchor our Presidency in the month of October, 2021 as follows;

13. On **October 12th, 2021**, His Excellency President Hon. Uhuru KENYATTA, C.G.H. will convene an **in-person** Heads of State and Government Level Open Debate on **Peacebuilding and Sustainable Peace,** with the theme of **"Identity, State Building and the Search for Peace"**.

14. In convening this High-Level Open Debate, Kenya will be inviting the Security Council to consider how the combination of information revolution, globalization, urbanization, inequality, environmental stress and demography have arguably made identity the core determinant of conflicts. These conflicts are underpinned by group-based grievances, which often fan deep-seated feelings of injustice and unfairness.

15. This implies that a core imperative for effective peace and state building is to successfully mediate important group dynamics and differences centred around such factors as **colour, ethnicity, religion, history, social status** among others, to reinforce the sense of broadly shared nationhood and belonging.

16. I need to underscore that this high-level debate will provide a unique opportunity for deeper consideration of state building and identity, and how they interact in the search for peace, with delegation encouraged to consider sharing their national experiences in the mediation of group grievance.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

17. The **second High Level Event** will also be a Heads of State and Government High Level debate, which will be convened **virtually** by His Excellency President Hon. Uhuru KENYATTA, C.G.H on October 28th, 2021. This will be on the Cooperation between the UN and the Regional and sub-regional Organizations, with specific reference to the African Union. The theme for this High-Level Debate, is **"Leveraging the African Union Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and sub-regional mechanisms for the continent's peace, security and prosperity"**, which speaks to seeking practical and innovative ways of strengthening partnership between the UN and the AU, while highlighting the important role of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Regional Mechanisms (RMs).

18. In convening this High-Level debate, Kenya remains persuaded that the maintenance of international peace and security is a collective responsibility based on strong partnerships and shared responsibility. Therefore, collaboration and productive burden sharing is the practical and pragmatic approach of sustainably addressing contemporary threats.

19. Indeed, central to Africa's relationship with the rest of the world is the pursuit of African solutions to the challenges of peace and security by prioritizing regional and sub-regional organizations' leadership, as well as meaningful engagements through strengthened partnership and shared responsibility.

20. In advocating for African peace promoted and maintained by Africans themselves, the High-Level Open Debate will seek to bring together H.E António Guterres, UN Secretary-General and H.E. Moussa Faki, the AU Commission Chairperson, as well as the sitting chairpersons of the AU and subregional organizations in Africa to participate and to share the perspectives of their respective sub-regions.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

21. The **third High Level event** will be an **in-person** Ministerial level which will be an Open briefing on the Great Lakes Region, convened under the theme, **"Supporting the renewed commitment of the Great Lakes countries in seeking sustainable solutions to the root causes and drivers of conflict"**. This is scheduled for October 20th, 2021 and I am looking forward to convening this meeting at the UN Security Council Chambers in New York.

22. It me be stressed that countries of the Great Lakes Region (GLR) continue to be afflicted by many security challenges. However, in recent years, countries in the GLR have made commendable progress in addressing the root causes and drivers of conflict.

23. The peaceful transfers of power in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Burundi, as well as the signing and implementation of peace agreements in the Central Africa Republic (CAR) and in South Sudan, illustrate the positive momentum. More recent developments include the normalising of

bilateral relations between the brotherly countries of DRC, Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi.

24. Meanwhile these countries, with the assistance of the international community, are keen on implementing the United Nations Strategy for Peace Consolidation, Conflict prevention and Conflict resolution in the Great Lakes Region, which the Special Envoy of the Secretary General to the region will report to the Security Council during the October briefing.

25. The High-Level Ministerial briefing of October 20th, 2021 under my leadership will, therefore, provide an opportunity for the Security Council to renew its commitment to the region, and to support the implementation of the priority projects aimed at *interalia:* **Promoting a shared vision of regional peace, security and socio-economic development** and **strengthening cooperation in addressing the drivers of conflict and instability with a specific focus on transforming the productive use of natural resources.**

26. Similarly, I will be chairing a **Ministerial level Open debate on Women and Peace and Security, under the theme of "Investing in women peacekeepers and women peacebuilders"**, on October 21st, 2021. This will be the **fourth High Level event** under Kenya's Presidency of the Council in October of this year.

27. It will be recalled that the 2020 Report on Women and Peace and Security, the Secretary-General proposed goals for the decade ahead, which include a call for "A radical shift in the meaningful participation of women in our peace-making, peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts, ensuring that women are fully involved as equal partners in peace and from the earliest stages in each and every peace and political process that the United Nations supports."

28. This Ministerial Open Debate, therefore, will be another opportunity to share insights on progress, trends and challenges, as well as best practices and lessons learnt with a view to make recommendations for investing in women peacekeepers, women peacebuilders, and their networks to accelerate the implementation of the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda and to

ensure sustainable peace outcomes during and post- peace operation and mission transition settings.

29. It will also serve to recognize and showcase local women's contribution and influence in all stages of peacekeeping, peace-making and peacebuilding. To this end, the debate will be preceded by the official launch in conjunction with the UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO) of the Photoville travelling exhibition to several African mission settings dubbed "*In Their Hands: Women Taking Ownership for Peace*". The literature for this exhibition – which will be made available after this briefing – is in recognition that women across the globe are actively preventing conflict, pushing for peaceful transitions from conflict and building peace as peacekeepers, peacebuilders, mediators, decision-makers, changemakers and activists.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

30. As noted earlier in my remarks, Kenya will be assuming the Presidency of the Council at a crucial juncture, not just for our region, but also for the larger international community. The scale and breath of our agenda for the Presidency of the Council in October of this year – and indeed during our tenure of the Council – is a testimony to this fact.

31. Even as we look forward to presiding over the Security Council affairs in October, the state of affairs in today's world brings to mind an observation made by the great son of Kenya, the late Professor Ali MAZRUI. The late Prof. Mazrui remarked that there exists a tension between the **need for global order** versus **the need to achieve justice in the world community.**

32. Indeed, the ongoing global pandemic of the corona virus has served to highlight the fragmentation within our societies, revealed and compounded existing inequalities, as well as unevenness of power in global governance. This has also been compounded by **skewed vaccine access and inequalities**, **climate change**, **challenges associated with unmitigated urbanization** and the **challenges associated with reluctance to offer debt relief to the most affected countries**. All these ultimately contribute and translates into social and economic inequality in the face of the current pandemic.

33. In addressing these issues, Kenya has and continues to proffer practical and solutions by working with our regional partner and with the larger international community in seeking to meet the challenges of our time.

34. Indeed, His Excellency the President has continued to demonstrate inspired leadership on these issues, not just is seeking order in our region – and in the rest of the world – but also in advocating for a just and equitable society.

35. As the Chairperson of the East Africa Community, President Uhuru Kenyatta President Uhuru Kenyatta has advocated and continues to urge the region not to relent in the quest for a sustainable and just peace in Africa. A peaceful and stable region will continue being an integral component to the stability and prosperity of the African continent. Likewise, the deployment of the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) in Somalia – with significant contribution in blood and treasure by the troop contributing countries – remains consistent with the inspirations of a stable and prosperous region. As an anchor State and also as a guarantor of regional peace and security, Kenya continues to play a central role in region peace initiatives, with the Somalia and Sudan Peace Processes – both of which were birthed and midwifed by Kenya – serving as illustrations.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

36. Further afield, I wish to apprise on the recently convened **first ever Africa-CARICOM Summit**, under the Chairmanship of President Kenyatta on September 7th, 2021. Certainly, the convening on the **Africa-CARICOM Summit** dovetails appropriately with His Excellency the President's Pan Africanist views and the need for shared prosperity, where among others pledges, the Summit committed to building on the bonds of ancestry and friendship between Africa and CARICOM and to lay foundations for lasting, robust socio-economic and political engagements. This is with a view to forge lasting partnerships between the two regions for a collective prosperous future.

37. These fraternal bonds with our brother and sister in the Caribbean will be reinforced when His Excellency the President visits Barbados from October 1st to 4th, 2021. It will be remembered that Her Excellency Hon. Mia Amor

MOTLEY, the Prime Minister of Barbados, made a state visit to Kenya in December of 2019. President Kenyatta will, therefore, be making a reciprocal visit at the invitation of the Prime Minister. Also, while in Barbados, President Kenyatta will participate at the **official opening ceremonies of the Fifteenth Session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD 15)** on **October 4th, 2021,** where His Excellency the President will hand over the chairmanship of UNCTAD to Prime Minster Motley. It should be pointed out that Kenya has been the chair of the **Fourteenth Session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD 14).**

38. Still on pursuit of a just and equitable society, it will also be recalled that President Kenyatta, together with the Right Honourable Prime Minister of the United Kingdom His Excellency Boris JOHNSON, successfully co-hosted the **Global Partnership for Education Financing Conference** from the July 28th and 29th of this year in London. The aim the Global Partnership for Education Financing Conference is to raise $5 Billion US Dollars to ensure continued equitable access to education for children and youth **across** the world.

39. The execution of our agenda during Kenya's Presidency in the month of October will be guided by the beliefs and ethos as espoused by His Excellency the President and will, similarly, seek out beneficial alliances that reaffirm a rule based multilateral system that addresses global challenges in a manner that attracts consensus. Kenya's four broad priority objectives at the Council, as epitomized by our scheduled High-Level Debates in the month of October, 2021 will serve to not only anchor our Presidency, but also reinforce our multilateral credentials in global arena.

40. In concluding my remarks, **Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,** allow me to express my sincere and profound gratitude to you, our partners, for the support that you have extend to Kenya – and to the region – over the years. This is especially the case during the last one year of the pandemic. The support that has been received in form of COVID-19 vaccines, Personal Protective Equipment and other medical supplies, significant medical outlay as reflected by the United Nations-The Nairobi Hospital (UN-TNH) Treatment Facility and other contributions have gone a long way in mitigating the impact of the corona virus disease in Kenya. I reiterate my gratitude to you on behalf

of the people of Kenya and we look forward to continued mutually beneficial relations and collaborations in this respect.

41. I thank you all for your kind attention.