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STATEMENT

BY

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DURING

THE

**PRESENTATION OF
KENYA'S COUNTRY POSITION PAPER
AT THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE
OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON AGEING (OEWG)**

Wednesday, July 30, 2014
United Nations, New York

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Chairperson,

We are honoured to participate in this Fifth Session of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG). Since independence, the Government of Kenya has taken bold steps to enact and implement various frameworks and programmes aimed at addressing the welfare of our older members of the society whose population has rapidly grown from a modest population of 270,000 during the first national census of 1949 to 1.9 million in 2009, against a population of 38.6 million.

Chairperson,

The Government and the people of Kenya uphold the rights, welfare and dignity of older persons as a special category of citizens with both human and constitutional rights. In order to ensure such safeguards to rights of older person, the Government and the people of Kenya have enshrined the rights of older persons in the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of Kenya 2010.

The Madrid Plan of Action and the Africa Union Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing have been our key reference documents as we address issues of older persons. Kenya has also actively engaged in the development of the protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa which was adopted during the Fourth Session of the AU Conference of Ministers of Social Development held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in May, 2014. The protocol would be a useful guide in our future engagements on advancing the rights of older persons.

Chairperson,

The Government through the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Services, has also developed a national policy on older persons and ageing (2009). The policy recognizes that older persons are an important segment of the National Population whose rights must be recognized, respected, protected and promoted.

The Government has also incorporated a broad flagship project for older persons under the Social Pillar of **Kenya Vision 2030 Development Framework**. The Vision establishes a consolidated Fund for Older Persons which has further established an Older Persons Cash Transfer Programme for poor and vulnerable older persons. We will be holding a Side Event on the Cash Transfer Programme in Kenya, today at 1:15p.m. in Conference Room 9. All are invited.

Chairperson,

Allow me to highlight other bold initiatives which the Government of Kenya has undertaken. They include:

- Launching a new **policy on population and national development**, to guide national planning for economic growth (2011). The policy, for which Kenya received the 2013 Resolve Award from the Global Leaders Council for Reproductive Health, embodies key considerations for older persons as one of its key programme plans.
- Setting up the **Social Protection Fund (SPF)** to address drought and food crises through access to credit and cash transfer on flexible terms for poor and vulnerable households with older citizens above 65 years of age.
- Enacting the **Kenya Health Sector Strategic Investment Plan (2013-2017)** which identifies a list of essential health services to which all persons shall be entitled. The plan specifically provides for the entitlements of older persons (those above 65 years) as a group that requires special attention by virtue of their unique health needs.
- Establishing a **Health & Ageing Unit** within the Ministry of Health that seeks to address the health concerns of older persons.
- Establishing **National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC)** which is a Constitutional Commission mandated to spearhead efforts to reduce gender inequalities and the discrimination against women, men, persons with disabilities, the youth, children, the elderly, minority and marginalized communities.

The Government has adopted a multi-sectoral approach to advance the rights and aspirations of older persons. The Government is working very closely with key sectors of Government, NGOs like HelpAge International, Development Partners and other local NGOs and CSOs. The focus has been on mainstreaming issues of older persons in sectoral policies and programmes, health, nutrition, provision of shelter, social support to avoid loneliness, awareness creation on needs and aspirations of older persons, age-friendly income generating projects, psycho social support, food donations, HIV/AIDS education and information and monitoring of the cash transfer programme that is run by the Government.

Chairperson,

This Session provides us with an opportunity to further share experiences on measures and actions that will improve the lives of older persons. In the last couple of years, Kenya has been involved in the ongoing discussions on **Post-2015 Development Agenda**. The inclusion of older persons in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a global milestone towards the inclusion of older persons in development. We look forward to a Post-2015 Development Agenda that provides for a universal development framework which takes into account the role of older persons in poverty eradication, environmental sustainability, addressing inequality, realization of human rights and global responsibility.

Kenya recognizes that older persons face unique legal, social, institutional and other barriers and challenges which impact negatively on the full enjoyment of their rights. Kenya therefore, supports the work of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing to spearhead the UN work in strengthening the protection of human rights of older persons by identifying gaps and how best to address them. We hope that the engagement within the Working Group will help to bring understanding on the role that an international legal instrument on older persons would play in strengthening the protection of the rights of older persons.

I thank you.