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**Esame di interpretazione consecutiva inglese-italiano - sessione autunnale
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Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary General,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It's a great privilege for me to address this Millennium Assembly on behalf of Kenya. I congratulate you Secretary General on the meticulous way in which you have prepared for this historic meeting. The regional meetings in which all our countries participated have put forward an impressive list of ideas, suggestions and objectives, particularly on the role of the United Nations in the XXI century.

For our own region, Africa, the issues of peace and security and the challenges of development have tended to predominate. We are confident, Secretary General, that the process you initiated will allow Africa's voice to be heard with greater clarity and, I hope, with greater urgency.

The first few months of the new millennium have not been kind to Africa: we have suffered from severe and extreme weather conditions; in my own country, Kenya, we have had to face the worst drought since independence. This has set back the process of economic growth and recovery. We in Africa work hard to advance the sometimes slow pace of development: the total failure of the rains this year makes our task harder and our targets all the more difficult to achieve. Even more important there has been a high human cost to pay.

Southern Africa, conversely, had to cope with torrential rainfall and widespread flooding: again the cost in terms of human misery has been great. These of course are natural disasters, they occur from time to time in the history of our continent: we cannot physically prevent such disasters, they are natural phenomena; we must rely on international assistance to mitigate the worst effects. But I have to say that increasingly the international response, which has been so generous in the past, has tended to slow down in more recent times. As crisis follows crisis, we are all aware of the huge demands now being made on the international community and the dangers of donor fatigue.

Our continent is faced by other disasters but these tend to be man-made: I refer to the civil wars and endless conflicts that destroy at a stroke years of painstaking development. In certain cases these wars have lasted literally for generations. They spill across our borders bringing weapons of war, instability and increasing crime into peaceful countries; they bring thousands of refugees that we cannot afford to look after. These conflicts also make a mockery of all attempts to reduce poverty, the greatest challenge faced by our continent. There is a further reaction to these disasters, whether caused by nature excesses or by human greed and ambition: the overall international reaction is inevitably an eroding of confidence in Africa. And this in turn leads to a cutback in foreign investment which is already at pitifully low levels. A lack of foreign investment, as we know, means fewer jobs across the continent and the weakening in the battle to combat poverty. We need urgently to address this growing and dangerous pessimism, we need to challenge the voices of despair, we need to counter those so-called commentators who so often ignore the sheer size of our continent, and conveniently forget that we are divided up into 54 sovereign states each with its own culture, customs and systems of government.