**Director-General’s remarks for the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust, 27 January 2015**

[Representative of the Government of Kenya]

[Representative of the Embassy of the State of Israel],

[H.E. Mr. Andreas Peschke, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany],

[President of the Nairobi Hebrew Congregation]

[Mr. Ezra Pakter, Holocaust survivor],

UN Colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you to the United Nations Office at Nairobi on this International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust. It is a great honour to be with you to mark this solemn occasion.

I wish to thank the Embassy of Israel for organizing this event, in collaboration with our UN Information Center, and for once again allowing UNON to serve as the venue for this annual remembrance.

As you know, 2015 marks the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, when the full horrors of the Holocaust were revealed to the world at large. The inhumanity and cruelty of the Holocaust prompted the world to take action. The United Nations was created as a result, partly to prevent any such horrors from happening again.

Yet today, our world is regularly confronted by horrible acts of hatred, polarization and violent extremism. So this Observance serves to remind us how much more needs to be done to create a more peaceful, loving world, free from the threat of genocide and other atrocities.

I now have the distinct honour of delivering the message of the Secretary-General on the occasion of the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust, which reads of follows:

“Seventy years ago today, allied forces liberated Auschwitz Birkenau, the German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp.

More than a million inmates, primarily Jews, were brutally and systematically killed in the place where the Nazis introduced the monstrous concept of “industrialized murder”. Among the other victims were non-Jewish Poles, political prisoners, Soviet prisoners of war, Sinti and Roma, homosexuals, disabled persons and Jehovah’s witnesses.

Unprecedented in human history, this mass killing was motivated by the perverse, race-based ideology of the Nazis, who sought to track down and kill every last Jew and any others they considered to be inferior.

Humankind united to overcome the Nazi menace. Today, we are being tested again. Minorities everywhere often face bigotry. Sectarian tensions and other forms of intolerance are on the rise. Anti-Semitic attacks continue, with Jews being killed solely because they are Jews. Vulnerable communities around the world continue to bury their dead while living in fear of further violence.

The mission of the United Nations was shaped by the tragedy of the Second World War and the Holocaust. We are committed to protect the vulnerable, promote fundamental human rights and uphold the freedom, dignity and worth of every person.

For the past decade, the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme has mobilized students and educators around the world to help us achieve these goals. We are grateful to our many partners – including Holocaust survivors -- who have contributed to this work, which spanned 42 countries in the past year alone.

The violence and bias we see every day are stark reminders of the distance still to travel in upholding human rights, preventing genocide and defending our common humanity. We must redouble our efforts to eradicate the deep roots of hatred and intolerance. People everywhere must unite to stop the cycles of discord and build a world of inclusion and mutual respect.”

End of quote.

Thank you for your kind attention.