**Director-General’s remarks for the International Day of Non-Violence, 2 October 2013**

[H.E. Sibabrata Tripathi, High Commissioner of India]; [H.E. Ratubatsi Super Moloi, High Commissioner of South Africa]; [Hon. Lady Justice Kalpana Rawal, Deputy Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Kenya]; [Mr. Sharad Rao, Chairman, Judges and Magistrates Vetting Board of Kenya]; Excellencies, UN Colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the United Nations Office at Nairobi on this important International Day of Non-Violence.

Each year, we mark this Day on the anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi, in tribute to his enduring legacy of peace, tolerance and understanding.

These are values that are very much needed today. As all of us were so brutally reminded just a few days ago, we live in an era of intolerance, extremism and senseless violence.

The recent terrorist attack at Westgate Mall has shocked us all. I express my heartfelt condolences to the families, friends and colleagues of the deceased and the injured. At this difficult period, the United Nations stands in solidarity with the Government and people of Kenya, and with the loved ones of the victims of all nationalities. This despicable attack will not deter our efforts to uphold our commitment to

the United Nations’ mission, including by advancing the ideals of peace and tolerance so ably espoused, and so courageously lived, by Mahatma Gandhi. I now have the honour to deliver the message of the Secretary-General on the occasion of the International Day of Non-Violence, which reads of follows:

“Today we celebrate the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi and his resonant legacy of non-violence. Gandhi showed the power of peacefully opposing oppression, injustice and hatred. His example has inspired many other history-makers such as Martin Luther King Jr., Václav Havel, Rigoberta Menchú Tum and Nelson Mandela.

Their message to each of us is to champion human dignity, reject intolerance and work for a world where people of all cultures and beliefs live together on the basis of respect and equality. Non-violence is neither inert nor passive. It takes courage to stand up to those who use violence to enforce their will or beliefs. It requires resolve to stand against injustice, discrimination and brutality and to demand respect for diversity and fundamental human rights. It also requires courage to move from conflict and embrace peaceful negotiation. Non-violence needs leaders – across nations and in communities and homes – backed by an army of brave people prepared to demand peace, freedom and fairness.

The United Nations stands for the peaceful resolution of disputes and the end to all forms of violence, whether state-sponsored or imbedded in culture and practice, such as the violence and intimidation women and girls endure in all regions. Ending such violence can start with each of us – in homes, schools and workplaces. Violence can be contagious, but so can peaceful dialogue. The United Nations is also focused on ending poverty in a generation.

Poverty is a fertile ground for violence and crime; it is inherently violent to the needs and aspirations of the world’s most vulnerable people. That is why we place such emphasis in fulfilling the promise of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, and setting a new development agenda with poverty at its core and sustainable development as its guide. As populations grow and pressures on the planet increase, we need also to be aware of the violence we inflict on the natural world. As we set sights on a sustainable future we must be guided by the imperative to “do no harm” to people or the planet.

On this International Day of Non-Violence, I call on global citizens everywhere to be inspired by the courage of people like Mahatma Gandhi. Turn your back to division and hatred; stand up for what is right and just. Work with your fellow women and men for a world of lasting justice, peace and prosperity for all.” End of quote. Thank you for your attention.