

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**MESSAGE ON THE 13TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE RWANDA GENOCIDE****9 April 2007**

Last year, before being appointed Secretary-General, I visited Rwanda to pay my respects to victims and survivors of the genocide there. I had an opportunity to sit down and talk with those who had endured one of humankind's darkest chapters. The experience had a profound and personal impact on me. I carry it with me every day I serve as the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

On this 13th anniversary of the genocide in Rwanda, two messages should be paramount.

First, never forget.

Second, never stop working to prevent another genocide.

Today, our thoughts go to the victims -- the more than 800,000 innocent people who lost their lives, with terrifying speed. May they continue to rest in peace.

Our thoughts go to the survivors. Their resilience continues to inspire us.

And our thoughts also go to fallen colleagues of the UN family: peacekeepers and civilians who lost their lives in the line of duty as the genocide unfolded. They saved as many lives as they could, and should be remembered for their courage and commitment.

Since those horrendous weeks 13 years ago, the UN has learnt profound lessons. We have appointed a Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide. We have established an Advisory Committee on Genocide Prevention, which has submitted an ambitious and important report. But we must do more -- much more. In the coming weeks, I intend to strengthen both these mechanisms, including by upgrading the post of Special Adviser to a full-time position.

Africa, too, has taken action. The historic Pact on Security, Stability and Development for the Great Lakes Region contains a protocol on prevention and punishment genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. It is encouraging that the countries of the Great Lakes have come together to reflect on the terrible conflicts that have afflicted the region, and are striving to ensure that future generations can live

together not only within their own countries, but also with their neighbours. I profoundly hope the protocol will be ratified soon.

All the world's Governments have agreed in principle to the responsibility to protect. Our challenge now is to give real meaning to the concept, by taking steps to make it operational. Only then will it truly give hope to those facing genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing.

Preventing genocide is a collective and individual responsibility. Everyone has a role to play: Governments, the media, civil society organizations, religious groups, and each and every one of us. Let us build a global partnership against genocide. Let us protect populations from genocide when their own Government cannot or will not.