

11 April 2016

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,
President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly,
At the 22nd Commemoration of the Rwandan Genocide**

Mr Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon,
Mr. Eugene-Richard Gasana, Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations,
Ms. Nelly Mukazayire Deputy Director of Cabinet in the Office of the President of Rwanda,
Excellencies, ladies and gentleman, good afternoon to you all.

Twenty-two years ago the world witnessed the horrific slaughter of Rwandan citizens.

In just 100 days, more than one million women, men, and children were murdered and hundreds of thousands were displaced all throughout the African continent.

The Genocide severely wounded Rwanda while deeply shocking and leaving a lasting impact on people across the world.

Today, we honour the memories of those whose lives were taken or so dramatically impacted by 1994.

We also remember the international community's collective failure to recognize the warning signs of genocide and to react quickly and decisively.

We must learn from these failures, fight the ideology that gives rise to genocide, and improve our collective ability to prevent such crimes from ever happening again.

To do so, we must, **first**, have the tools in place to recognize the warning signs. The Secretary General's Human Rights Up Front initiative is one such tool.

Second, the UN must take quick, concrete and determined actions to protect civilians where such crimes appear imminent.

It is a significant step forward that a clear majority of Member States have committed themselves to – when members of the Security Council – never to vote against UN action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes.

It is my hope that this Code of Conduct at some point will be a general commitment for all UN member states – including the permanent five in the Security Council.

Third, we must educate populations and young generations in order to stop ethnic or religious differences being used to incite violence.

And fourth, we must promote dialogue, tolerance, culture of peace and reconciliation across countries and regions.

Excellencies, today, hundreds of thousands of survivors of the genocide have their testimonies to share so that we never will forget what happened.

And I am honoured to have one of those survivors with us today – Ms. Frida Umuhoza Gashumba who is living proof of bravery and heroism.

She is here to tell her story as a survivor.

We will hear from Ms. Nelly Mukazayire whose life story is also instructive and a microcosm of Rwanda's recent past.

For despite the trauma it suffered, Rwanda is an example of successful post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation.

Rwanda teaches the world that it is absolutely possible to rebuild a country torn by war and violence. To reunite after deep division. To reconcile after profound differences.

And above all, to build a dynamic society and embark on a major period of recovery and development.

Excellencies, this is the time for the international community to firmly reiterate its collective commitment to prevent genocide and any other crime contrary to human rights and international humanitarian law.

Many steps have been taken to improve the international community's and the UN's capacity in this area.

But, a number countries continue to experience significant tensions between different groups. It is our moral responsibility to react quickly and decisively where such tensions pose a real threat of mass atrocity crimes.

It is our responsibility to find ways to prevent the kind of horrors we saw in Rwanda 22 years ago. Kwibuka [Remember].

Thank you.