



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

10 February 2017

Excellency,

In my letter dated 23 January 2017, I informed you of the High-level meeting that I am convening to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, on Friday, 17 February 2017, from 10.00 am to 5.00 pm, in the Trusteeship Council Chamber.

The program and concept note of the meeting is attached. There will be a list of speakers for the high-level segment in advance and Member States and other stakeholders are encouraged to engage in an interactive discussion with the panelists in the afternoon. Interventions from the floor should not exceed 5 minutes for groups and 3 minutes for Member States.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Thomson'.

Peter Thomson

To All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING
TO COMMEMORATE THE 10th ANNIVERSARY OF THE
INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL PERSONS
FROM ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE**

17 February 2017

10am to 5pm

United Nations Headquarters, NY, Trusteeship Council Chamber

Concept note

1. Background

In its resolution 70/160, paragraph 12, on the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED), adopted on 17 December 2015, the General Assembly *“decided to devote one high-level plenary meeting, within existing resources, at its seventy-first session to the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention”*.

The ICPPED was adopted by the UN General assembly on December 20th, 2006. It entered into force on December 23rd, 2010, after 20 States joined the convention. Today 56 States are parties to the Convention. On December 19th, 2016, the Conference of State Parties to ICPPED decided that the Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED) continue to monitor the ICPPED.

The ICPPED is a landmark instrument in the fight against impunity. It considers enforced disappearance to be “the arrest, detention, abduction or any other form of deprivation of liberty by agents of the State or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorization, support or acquiescence of the State, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or by concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, which place such a person outside the protection of the law” (Article 2). It raises awareness of the extreme seriousness of enforced disappearance, which constitute a crime and, in certain circumstances defined in international law, a crime against humanity.

The ICPPED foresees measures to prevent enforced disappearances and acknowledges the rights of victims and their families to truth and redress.

2. Working Methods

In fulfilling the mandate entrusted to the PGA in resolution 70/160, the Office of the PGA consulted with Member States including the main sponsors of the resolution. The Office of the PGA was also supported by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in the preparing for the high-level meeting. On 23 January 2017, the President of the General Assembly sent a letter to UN Member States informing them of the convening of a high-level meeting to commemorate the Tenth Anniversary of the adoption of the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance, and highlighting this event as an opportunity to review the positive impact of

the Convention and to discuss, among UN membership and UN entities as well as other stakeholders, ways and best practises to prevent enforced disappearances.

3. Objectives of the high-level meeting

The high-level meeting should stimulate reflection and raise awareness on the Convention aimed at encouraging ratifications by States Members of the United Nations. More specifically, it is hoped that the event will contribute to:

- a) Take stock of the achievements of the Convention in the past ten years, and discuss ways to ensure its effective implementation;
- b) Discuss priorities and strategies to expand the level/degree of ratification of the Convention;
- c) Offer a platform for the dissemination of information on the Convention and its procedures for the facilitation of the exchange of experiences, knowledge, and lessons learned.

The underlying challenge in commemorative events is to go beyond the mere stock-taking of the past achievements in order to offer a more forward-looking perspective of the challenges and opportunities ahead. Thus, the event should provide an occasion to encourage Member States to step up their efforts and increase the number of ratifications in the upcoming years.

4. Event

The high-level meeting convened by the President of the GA will take place in the Trusteeship Council Chamber, United Nations Headquarters, New York, on Friday 17 February 2017 from 10:00am to 5:00pm.

The high-level meeting will be divided in a formal segment in the morning and a panel discussion in the afternoon.

a) High-level segment (10am-1pm)

In the morning, a high-level segment will take place with the following schedule:

10:00 Opening Remarks by the President of the General Assembly

Minute of silence in remembrance of the victims of enforced disappearances

10:10 Statement by the Secretary-General or Deputy Secretary-General (TBC)

10:20 Statement by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (video address)

10:30 Statement by the Chair of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances

10:40 Conclusion of the opening segment and start of the plenary segment

Statements by Member States

b) Panel discussion (3-5pm)

The panel of experts will examine the possible obstacles encountered by States in the ratification and the best way to address them. Panellists will discuss strategies to overcome these challenges and, in particular, synergies needed between States, human rights mechanisms, inter-governmental organisations, national human rights institutions, and civil

society, including families of disappeared persons, to increase the level of ratification of the Convention. The panellists will be:

Mr. Santiago Corcuera Cabezut, Chair of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances

Ms. Houria Es-Slami, Chair of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances

Mr. Luís Raúl González Pérez, President of the National Commission of Human Rights of Mexico (CNDH), in representation of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI)

Ms. Stéphanie David, Head of the New York Bureau of the Fédération Internationale des Droits de l'Homme (FIDH)

Mr. Horacio Ravenna, member of Asamblea Permanente por los Derechos Humanos (Permanent Assembly for Human Rights - APDH), a member of the International Coalition against Enforced Disappearance (ICAED)

Video from Mr. Louis Joinet, discussing "what the Convention changed and why it matters to reach universal ratification"

The panel will be moderated by Mr. Emmanuel Decaux, Professor emeritus at University Paris II, President of the International Issues pole of the National Consultative Commission on Human Rights, former Chair of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances.

Those delegations that will not be able to deliver their remarks in the morning segment, due to time constraints, would be given priority to speak following the presentations of the panel of experts.

There will be no formal outcome from the meeting.

5. Participants

The meeting is open to Member States and Observers, UN agencies, programmes and funds, regional human rights mechanisms, national human rights institutions, members of civil society organizations, including families of disappeared persons.

6. Information material

A brochure on the 10th anniversary of the Convention, highlighting the main features of the Convention and the practical tools available to the people, will be distributed in English, French and Spanish.

With a view to increasing engagement on the issue of enforced disappearance, the high-level meeting will be webcasted on the UN WebTV at: <http://webtv.un.org/meetings-events/>