

**STATEMENT BY MS. LILIT TOUTKHALIAN  
MINISTER COUNSELLOR, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF  
ARMENIA AT THE UNITED NATIONS**

July 28, 2009

Mr. President,

Armenia welcomes the opportunity to exchange views on concrete steps and means to further strengthen the early warning mechanisms, which will enable the international community to react more efficiently to the situations that could lead to genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. The principles of Prevention of Genocide and Responsibility to Protect are the key principles which constitute the very essence of this joint endeavor and the UN system is provided with a great opportunity to demonstrate its ability to act timely to prevent tragedies and destructions.

We welcome the report of the Secretary General on "Implementing the Responsibility to Protect." The Report undertakes to chart a course for the United Nations to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing through bolstering the capacities of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and combining his activities with those of the Special Adviser to the Secretary General who also has responsibilities to protect. We appreciate significant work that has already been done in fortifying the capacities of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide. In particular, we believe that by developing the Eight Point Framework of Analysis, which will help detect situations that are infused with a dangerous probability of resulting in genocide, the Office of the Special Adviser has made an important step forward in identifying these universally accepted guiding principles.

The Human Rights Council Resolution 7/25 is aimed at consolidating the functions of the existing UN human rights protection mechanisms of prevention, bridging the mandate of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide with the UN human rights system as a whole. It is very important to find a right balance and synergies among these functions to allow the UN system to respond promptly and efficiently to the alarming situations.

As it is rightly stated in the Secretary General's Report, genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity do not just happen. Prior to undertaking such action, the instigators propagate intolerance and hatred, setting grounds for violence; some groups of the population become labeled as terrorists, secessionists, or criminals. Hate speech, vilification of a certain group in the media, as well as denials of past genocides and atrocities, constitute the ideological part of exclusionary policies. This is inevitably accompanied by the violation of fundamental rights of the targeted group, such as denial of the freedom of speech, press, assembly and ultimately political marginalization. In order to justify their actions, the perpetrators alienate the group by devaluing or demonizing its members.

In this respect we would like to underline, in particular, the importance and necessity of training, learning, and education programs, which in our view can contribute significantly to strengthening state's capacity to protect. We strongly believe that educational process, which would employ text books materials as well as open dialogue between different groups, can help overcome intolerance, bigotry, and exclusion thus developing self-correcting mechanism to thwart potential tensions.

The international community must be vigilant over the development of the situations and events, where actual legitimization and institutionalization of genocide and crimes against humanity in a given society are starting to take place.

In this regard, as emphasized by many genocide scholars, the position of bystanders is very important. Passive stance of internal and external lenient observers, most often prompted by political expediency in the case of the latter, encourages the perpetrators. Passivity towards the policies of denial, revision of history that tends to demonize the victims, is also a contributive factor in the development of genocidal behavior.

Early strong reaction of the international community to the systematic and egregious violations of human rights, especially of collective rights, alarm raised by the treaty bodies on the reluctance to implement human rights commitments by the member states, could become a deterrent and inhibit the escalation of a potentially dangerous situation toward a genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, I would like to stress that we strongly believe that responsibility to protect people is one of the cornerstones of the overall human security system. The time has come to take decisive steps in order to eliminate, once and for all, the very possibility of crimes against humanity.

Thank you.