

Statement by Nigeria at 'Genocide: A Preventable Crime' on 15 January 2014

*Unofficial Transcript*

Mr Chairman,

It is delightful to speak on behalf of my Permanent Representative. I'm happy to hear live from General Romeo today and he has really shed further light onto so many things we've been reading in books. Thank you very much. The Permanent Representative has gone to receive a nephew of the President of Nigeria who has just arrived in New York so she asked me to deliver these very brief remarks on her behalf.

Mr Chairman,

In this moment of solemn remembrance of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide, we stand with the government and people of Rwanda and to honour the victims and express solidarity to the survivors of genocide. This appalling tragedy accompanied by sayings of difference should never be allowed to happen again. The commemoration today of the horrific events of 1994 is not only timely and appropriate but should also serve to instruct us on the need to respond robustly and act decisively with situations that threaten peace and security of peoples anywhere.

The successful transition of Rwanda to the path of democracy in the aftermath of the tragedy is indeed a remarkable achievement. The experience has reaffirmed that truth and reconciliation sets a solid foundation upon which the values of national development and democratic principles should be built. The path may not have been smooth, but the lesson should be applied to advance the principle of responsibility to protect.

Mr Chairman,

Nigeria has consistently expressed the determination to work in concert with other states in order to assure a more effective implementation of the R2P process. This is born out of a belief that cooperation of the member states of the UN is critical to the successful implementation of the process. To demonstrate our commitment to the process, Nigeria has initiated and supported peaceful resolution of conflicts in many African states. As a result of the lessons learned from our experiences and other motivating factors, Nigeria convened an open debate on the prevention of atrocity in the Security Council in July 2010. The prevention of mass atrocity crimes is a national priority in Nigeria as evidently demonstrated through the different instruments instituted to address this. Therefore we request member-states to continue to support the R2P process because we believe that greater development and adoption of the process will provide a framework to mobilise political will to prevent and protect populations from mass atrocity crimes like the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.

As we remember the victims of the genocide in Rwanda this morning, let us collectively resolve to seriously commit ourselves to uphold the Charter of the United Nations in all situations of threats to international peace and security without selectivity or prioritisation. If we had done so in 1994, the hundreds of thousands of innocent victims who needlessly lost their lives would not have perished as they did. Let us therefore declare "Never again" and really mean what we say.

I thank you.