

Statement by Republic of Korea at Security Council Meeting on: Threat to International Peace  
and Security: Prevention and Fight Against Genocide

16 April 2014  
(Unofficial Transcript)

First of all, the Republic of Korea joins Rwanda and the international community in commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the Rwandan genocide. The reverberation of what happened 20 years ago is still echoing in our thoughts and conscience. We thank you, Madam President, for providing this timely opportunity to remember and to build on the lessons of that tragic event. Our appreciation also goes to Deputy Secretary- General Jan Eliasson and Ambassador Colin Keating, whose briefings help us to renew our commitment to “never again”.

Based on the lessons of the Rwanda genocide, the United Nations and Member States have worked together to prevent another terrible humanitarian ordeal. We have made efforts to strengthen the institutional capacities of the international community to address grave crimes against humanity through international and national criminal justice systems. The establishment of the Human Rights Council is significant in that it can play an important early- warning role by maintaining vigilance over any grave violations of human rights and crimes of mass atrocity. Empowering various United Nations peacekeeping missions throughout the world with a clearer mandate to protect civilians is also an important step in the right direction. The Secretary-General’s calls, including the Rights Up Front initiative and the open-gate policy, have been playing a catalysing role to boost the moral authority and operational reach of the United Nations. However, there are still challenges to face before we can claim that past lessons have been fully acted upon.

For one thing, there is work to be done to narrow the gap between the desperation of people in dire situations and the aspiration of the international community to help them. Formulating an international contingency plan that can be promptly invoked in a serious humanitarian crisis may be one way to address these challenges. Promoting regional cooperation and partnerships with non-governmental organizations in this field, such as the recent Brussels International Conference on Genocide Prevention, is a path that should be explored further.

How to deal with the culture of impunity is another big challenge. In that regard, we appreciate the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). The international community needs to continue support to the ICTR in order that it can conclude its work in accordance with the completion strategy.

In a broader context, international cooperation to bring all fugitives to justice should be strengthened. We call for more support for the International Criminal Court, the only permanent international criminal justice mechanism.

The responsibility of States to protect their own people should be given more attention, and the discussions on the responsibility to protect should produce more tangible results.

As we learned the hard way, successful efforts to stop the most egregious humanitarian crimes require our collective wisdom and close cooperation. We should join forces and do everything we can so that our commitment to “never again” does not slip into another agonizing resignation of “again and again”.