29th Commemoration of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsis in Rwanda (Kwibuka29):
Renewing our commitment to fight against genocide, hate speech and other crimes against humanity

Addis Ababa, 9 April 2023: The Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security of the African Union Commission (AUC), in collaboration with the Embassy of the Republic of Rwanda in Ethiopia and Permanent Mission to the African Union, commemorated the 29th anniversary of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsis in Rwanda, on Friday, 7 April 2023, at the AU Headquarters.

Themed: “Remember-Unite-Renew”, the commemoration is a call to all AU Member States, relevant continental organizations and civil society organizations to recommit to preventing and fighting against genocide, especially hate speech and other related crimes that can lead to genocide and to ensure it never happens again – in Rwanda or elsewhere in Africa and beyond. Most importantly, this year’s commemoration provided an opportunity to pay tribute to the victims of the Genocide against the Tutsis, show solidarity with the survivors and to condemn the current manifestations of hate speech, genocidal ideology, genocide denial and other crimes against humanity.

The day was marked by a series of activities, which included a “Walk to Remember”, in memory of the victims and in solidarity with survivors of the Genocide against the Tutsis; observance of a minute of silence to pay tribute to all those who contributed in putting an end to the genocide; candle-lighting ceremony as a sign of hope; a documentary movie on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsis in Rwanda, and a video-recorded testimony of Ms. Frida Umuhoza, a Genocide Survivor, narrating her experience about ‘survivors invisible wounds and scars’ as stated in her own words.

Presiding over the opening ceremony, H.E Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the AU Commission, reiterated the solidarity of Africans with the people of Rwanda and appreciated the level of courage, resilience and tolerance they displayed throughout the rebuilding of their country and for the psychological and moral rehabilitation of their people. “Words will never be strong enough to describe this appalling tragedy we are marking today. We remember to never forget and never again,” said the Chairperson.

In his welcoming remarks, Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), re-emphasized a zero tolerance to crime against humanity, hate speech and the ideology of hate. The Commissioner stressed the need for strict adherence to Continental and international laws to safeguard the protection of civilians. “The Commemoration inspires us to promote ethnic and religious tolerance, strengthen national social cohesion and renew our commitment to address the structural drivers of conflict in our Member States. The AU’s ultimate goal is for all African people to live in a peaceful and secured continent in line with our aspirations set in Agenda 2063- the Africa We Want,” he stated.
On her part, Ms. Hope TUMUKUNDE GASATURA, Ambassador of the Republic of Rwanda to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the AU, called on all AU Member States and the international community to continue fighting Genocide denial in all its manifestations, as well as to enact legislation against hate speeches and ideologies of extremism and marginalization and discrimination against any kind of group. “This commemoration is therefore, a communal plea to redouble our efforts to stop similar horrors from ever occurring again. The continued troubling trends of growing expressions of racism, and intolerance that result in the dissemination of hate speech and calls for violence cannot be left unchallenged,” the Ambassador stated.

In her remarks, Ms. Alice Wairimu Nderitu, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, expressed the need for commemorating this day as, “not only to remember the horrifying instances of past genocides, but to draw lessons for the present, past and future and to continuously express commitment to prevent them from happening again”.

Ambassador Birtukan Ayano, State Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, addressed the need for collective commitment to prevent the crime of genocide, hate speech, ethnic and religious division, intolerance and violent extremism in Africa and elsewhere. “This occasion therefore should remain an important event to reflect on the effectiveness of the tools, processes and institutional arrangements that we put in place to combat genocide and the spread of hatred and genocidal ideology against ethnic, political and social groups,” said the Ambassador.

The event was attended by representatives of the AU Member States, members of the Diplomatic Corps, UN Agencies, officials of AU Commission and other Organs, religious institutions, human rights institutions, civil society organisations, think tanks, International Organisations, students and teachers of Academic Institutions in Ethiopia.

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