



**Remarks
by**

**H.E. Ms Simona Miculescu
Vice-President**

on behalf of

**H.E. Mr. John W. Ashe
President of the 68th Session of the United Nations
General Assembly**

**20th Commemoration of the Rwanda Genocide
Memorial Ceremony**

**New York
16 April 2014**

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Ambassador Eugène-Richard Gasana, Minister in Charge of Cooperation, and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Rwanda to the United Nations,
Ambassador Samantha Power, Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations,
Ambassador Tété António, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations,
Secretary-General,
Mr. Kizito Kalima (TBC),
Mr. Maher Nasser,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour to join you this evening to deliver a message on behalf of the President of the General Assembly, who unfortunately cannot be with us today. On this somber occasion, I send you his expressions of solidarity and the promise to never forget.

Twenty years ago, Rwanda descended into a spiral of unspeakable violence, 100 days of slaughter, rape and bloodshed, which offered a glimpse into the darkest folds of the human soul. As we commemorate the 20th anniversary of the genocide in Rwanda, we honour the memory of those who perished and we stand by the survivors who today still bear the psychological and physical scars of this tragedy.

As a community of nations, we have a duty to remember. We remember to pay tribute to the victims and stand in unity with them; we also remember to reflect on our collective failure to prevent these horrific crimes; we remember to draw the lessons from history and reaffirm our unwavering resolve that such gross violations of human dignity will never happen again.

As we reopen this dark chapter of history, we are reminded that behind this national and global tragedy are the tales of countless personal tragedies such as the one of Mr. Kizito Kalima. These stories of ghastly violence, terror, loss and grief break our hearts wide

open, and yet we also draw hope from other stories: testimonies of courage and personal heroism, tales of those who risked their lives to save others, and touching reminders of the power of the human spirit. As the years pass by, we also discover new stories of forgiveness and reconciliation as Rwandans come together to write a new chapter of their history.

Indeed, Rwanda has made great strides to rebuild itself and forge a new future for its people. The country has accomplished significant progress toward the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, while implementing reforms in the justice sector. The International Tribunal for Rwanda and the United Nations System have worked alongside the people of Rwanda to support national efforts to bring justice and reconciliation and promote social development.

Excellencies,

We light our candles in memory of the countless lives painfully and needlessly lost too soon. May this light also be a guide for all of us who walk the path of peace and reconciliation, who stand united in the quest to save present and future generations from the horrors of war and genocide.

Thank you.
