

1 July 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,  
President of the 69<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
at the High-Level Commemorative Event “Srebrenica: Remembering  
and Honouring the Victims of the Genocide”**

**Excellencies,  
His Excellency, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

We meet today to remember and pay tribute to the victims of a horrific crime that shook the world's collective conscious.

Today, we honour the memory of more than 7,000 innocent people who lost their lives in the terrible act of genocide in Srebrenica in July 1995. This commemoration is a solemn reminder, not only of the shocking events that took place in Srebrenica 20 years ago, but also of our collective responsibility to ensure that such horrific crimes never take place again.

The international community, including the United Nations, has acknowledged its responsibility for failing to protect the communities that sought shelter in Srebrenica. Through this tragedy, we have learned the importance of protecting populations and the need to live up to our promise of ‘never again’.

**Excellencies,**

As we mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, as well as the end of the Second World War, it is incumbent on us all to consider how we can further international cooperation to facilitate the prevention and timely punishment of the crime of genocide and other atrocities.

In this regard, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide is an important international instrument, and I call upon Member States that had not yet ratified or acceded to the Convention to do so.

Since the tragic events at Srebrenica, there has been a great deal of effort made to put into place structures to improve the capacity of the United Nations to prevent genocide and related crimes.

This year, we mark the 10th anniversary of the World Summit Outcome Document, through which we collectively endorsed the responsibility to protect innocent people from mass atrocities and gross and systematic violations of human rights.

To successfully uphold these responsibilities, we must reaffirm our determination to prevent genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

It is of critical importance that the international community, particularly the United Nations, is equipped to recognize early warning signs, in order to detect and deter situations that could result in genocide and other gross violations of human rights.

The Secretary-General's Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect has an important role to play. We must ensure that efforts by the international community, including by this Office, support national and regional mechanisms

Another vital component of our efforts must be to ensure those responsible for mass killings or genocide are held accountable, and that victims are afforded justice. We must make every effort to ensure justice, while also rebuilding trust and fostering reconciliation following such terrible crimes.

### **Excellencies,**

We gather today in recognition of the lives that were lost and the untold suffering of those victimized by the Srebrenica genocide. We are here to speak in a unified voice to let them know; they will not be forgotten.

While crimes of genocide have been reduced, the world continues to witness the commission of war crimes and crimes against humanity. We must, and can do better to stop them.

It is our obligation to work towards a peaceful world in which crimes such as the ones that were committed in Srebrenica 20 years ago no longer happen. A world that has learned the lessons of the past, and where all populations can live in peace and dignity.

This would be our greatest homage to the victims of Srebrenica.

I extend my heartfelt sympathies to the relatives of the victims and express my solidarity with their families and friends, and with the people and Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I thank you.