

Remarks by Alice Wairimu Nderitu, Under-Secretary-General and UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide

High-level event to mark the 2nd International Day for Countering Hate Speech: It Begins with Words and Each of Us: Effective Action to Counter Hate Speech

New York, Monday 19 June 2023

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank you for joining us today for this important commemoration. This high-level event marks the 2nd International Day for Countering Hate Speech a day that was established in 2021 by General Assembly resolution 75/309 on Promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue and tolerance in countering hate speech, spearheaded by the Kingdom of Morocco.

I am pleased to continue the practice we started last year, to co-organize this event with the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations and I thank the Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco, H.E. Mr. Omar Hilale for this continued cooperation.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to the President of the General Assembly for being with us today as well as the distinguished speakers in the panel we will have later today: the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilization Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos, the UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director for the Crisis Bureau, Asako Okai, the Assistant-Secretary-General for Africa in the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs - Department of Peace Operations, Ms. Martha Ama Akyaa Pobee, the Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia for the Department of Development Cooperation, Ms. Gwi Yeop Son, and the Chair of the Project Aladdin, Ms. Leah Pizar.

Today's event focuses on effective action to counter hate speech.

Four years since the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech was launched by the Secretary-General, an incredible amount of work has been carried out to strengthen the response by the UN system to the growing threat of hate speech. This work is done especially by colleagues working in Country Teams, in Peacekeeping and Special Political Context.

As the Focal Point for Hate Speech and Coordinating the implementation of the UN Strategy I have had to opportunity to see much of this important work, and my Office continues to support these initiatives through development of context specific action plans by UN Country Teams, training and capacity building, technical assistance and policy and guidance development.

To date some 30 UN field entities have such action plans in place. Throughout this week, my Office will be showcasing some of these good practices on social media and we will publish later this week a compilation of them.

This work is supported by other UN entities, such as the Representatives we have here on the panel today and the work they are doing to tackle hate speech, including its root cause, in line with the UN Strategy and in the context of their specific mandates.

But this work would not be possible without the close partnership that is there with States, with regional organization and with civil society. As the UN Strategy recognizes tackling hate speech is the role of all actors in society and as the UN, we support these efforts.

Addressing and countering hate speech is also a whole of society endeavour and it can only be successful when we work to tackle not only its impact but also the root causes and drivers. I am glad therefore that we will have the opportunity to hear interventions later today from Member States and I encourage you to highlight your own good practices in this regard. We will also hear from the work being done by actors in civil society such as the Aladin project represented here today.