



For immediate release

Statement of the Special Advisers of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide and on the Responsibility to Protect on the launch of an inter-agency Atrocities Prevention Board by the United States, as presented by President Obama on 23 April 2012

(New York, 24 April 2012) The Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide, Francis Deng, and on the Responsibility to Protect, Edward Luck, welcome the launch of the inter-agency Atrocities Prevention Board by the United States. In their view, the strengthening of national capacities constitutes an essential step towards increasing regional and global capacity to prevent genocide and other mass atrocity crimes. It will be recalled that the Secretary-General welcomed this initiative when it was initially proposed in August 2011. He stated then that innovative and sustained measures at the national level are essential for the full operationalization of the Responsibility to Protect.

The Special Advisers recognize the critical role such initiatives can play in meeting our individual and collective responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, as well as their incitement. In this regard, they call on Member States to share their best practices and lessons learned, so that the collective effort can be more than the sum of its parts. They commend the growing series of partnerships established by Member States under a Responsibility to Protect framework. These include the network of focal points proposed by Costa Rica, Denmark, Ghana and Australia; the regional conferences on genocide prevention organized by Argentina, Switzerland and Tanzania; the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region's Regional Committee on the Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities, the Latin American Network for Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention; and other regional and sub-regional arrangements for the prevention of atrocity crimes. These and other forums provide opportunities for regional and cross-regional dialogue that should be maximized.

The Special Advisers will continue to serve as liaisons between the United Nations and such initiatives, reflecting the Secretary-General's abiding commitment to work with Member States, regional and sub-regional organizations and civil society in a common effort to end the threat of genocide and other atrocity crimes. Through such partnerships, human protection can become a cardinal achievement of the twenty-first century.

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