



*For immediate release*

**Statement of the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide to commemorate the anniversary of the Genocide Convention**

(New York, 6 December 2012) – On the anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (the Genocide Convention), the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, Mr. Adama Dieng, urges Member States and regional organizations to renew their commitment to its implementation.

“At the heart of the Convention is the protection of groups defined by their identity,” stated Mr. Dieng. “Thousands of lives continue to be lost as a result of conflicts rooted in tensions between and discrimination against different national, religious, ethnic and racial groups; these are lives that could have been saved if action had been taken earlier to address these tensions, prevent discrimination, promote human rights protection for all and respect for the rule of law.”

“The Secretary-General called for 2012 to be the ‘Year of Prevention’. The suffering of civilians in today’s conflicts – including in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, the Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic – serves as a reminder of the vital importance of early, preventive action,” said Mr. Dieng.

At the 2005 World Summit, all Heads of State and of Government committed to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, as well as their incitement. “Inaction cannot be an option for our community of nations. We cannot stand by while populations fall victim to these grave crimes and violations,” stated the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, in his opening remarks at the fourth informal, interactive dialogue on the responsibility to protect in the General Assembly on 5 September 2012.

Special Adviser Dieng urged the international community to work collectively to strengthen the implementation of the Genocide Convention and of the responsibility to protect.

“The ultimate responsibility for preventing genocide and related crimes remains with States,” said Mr. Dieng, “and the international community has committed to assist States in this regard. I urge Member States, regional and sub-regional organizations and civil society to work collectively to fulfill their responsibilities to protect populations and to meet their obligation to take all possible measures to prevent and punish the crime of genocide.”

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