

**ICTR and MICT 20th Commemoration of the Genocide In
Rwanda**

Arusha

10 April 2014

**Remarks of Mr. Bongani Majola
Assistant Secretary-General
Registrar**

**Mr. President Vagn Joensen,
Mr. Prosecutor Jallow,
The Honourable Minister of Justice of the Republic of Rwanda,
Mr. Kayijuka, Representative of the Rwanda High Commission,
Distinguished guests,
Dear colleagues,**

Today we join Rwandans and colleagues around the world to commemorate one of the darkest chapters in human history. Twenty years ago, almost a million people in Rwanda were systematically slaughtered in one of the senseless killings that completely defy human imagination. The regrets expressed now or earlier, however sincere they might be, and from whatever level they might come, will not bring back to life the hundreds of thousands of victims, nor will they even alleviate the pain of the genocide survivors. It does, however, bring hope that the international community has learnt its lessons and will do its utmost to ensure that such a tragedy shall “never again” happen in this world.

As we commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Rwanda Genocide, which targeted the Tutsi and killed moderate Hutus, our hearts reach out to the souls of those who perished and to the survivors who lost all that it meant to be human; survivors whose tales of resilience and perseverance in the face of adversity are a true inspiration for all of us as they struggle to rebuild their shattered lives and lift their nation from the ashes of Genocide. This is a nation whose people were sadly abandoned by all in their hour of utmost need.

No memory evokes as much horror and revulsion as does the memory of the tremendous systematic and widespread mass killings of about one million people who were killed in those fateful 100 days in 1994. We pay our deepest respect to them. We pay tribute to the countless survivors who daily carry the heavy burden of pain and

suffering of their experience with them; survivors who despite this burden have in many ways greatly contributed to the process of accountability and reconciliation in Rwanda.

In the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide, the new Rwandan authorities requested the international community, through the United Nations Security Council, to set up an international Tribunal, in order to prosecute the perpetrators of the genocide and other gross violations of international humanitarian law. The request was made at a time when most of the Rwandan judicial infrastructure was destroyed, its staff assassinated or having fled the country. The ICTR was the response of the international community to this request.

This anniversary coincides with the anniversary of the establishment of the ICTR which, as we all know, is engaged in preparations to wind up its work after two decades of efforts to deal with the leaders of the genocide. The ICTR never had the ambition to try all the persons who might possibly be involved in the Rwandan genocide. In any case, the number of potential targets would have rendered this ambition unrealistic and impossible to achieve. The primary objective, therefore, was to hold to account those who bear the greatest responsibility for the crimes committed as part of the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. As we prepare to close down the Tribunal, we should all be proud of what we have achieved in the past twenty years despite numerous complex challenges we have had to overcome. I therefore wish to pay tribute to all current and former ICTR staff members for their dedication and professionalism to this noble cause of international justice. I also wish to thank our host, the Government of Tanzania, and indeed other Member States whose support and cooperation has been key to the success of the ICTR in implementing its mandate.

It is true that the creation and work of the Tribunal can never justify the failure of the international community to prevent the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 or alleviate the pain of disconsolate survivors. However, the legacy of the ICTR will be a consolation that most of the leaders of those who committed the genocide did not go unpunished.

Today, the ICTR is pleased to officially launch a new website commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the Genocide. The website highlights some of the important milestones reached in the ICTR's quest to deliver justice to the countless victims of the genocide. You are all invited to explore the website following these proceedings on the monitors set up in the lobby.

I thank you for your attention.