



**International Convention
on the Elimination
of all Forms of
Racial Discrimination**

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**COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION
OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION**

Declaration on the prevention of genocide

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination,

Recalling that 133 States Members of the United Nations have adhered to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, assuming the obligation to prevent and punish genocide, including war crimes and crimes against humanity,

Condemning the genocides that have been perpetrated since the founding of the United Nations in which tens of millions men, women and children have been killed,

Noting that genocide is often facilitated and supported by discriminatory laws and practices or lack of effective enforcement of the principle of equality of persons irrespective of race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin,

Recalling that, for more than a decade, the Committee, acting under its prevention of discrimination early warning and urgent action procedures, has brought to the attention of the Security Council, through the Secretary-General, a number of country situations where systematic violations of human rights and persistent patterns of racial discrimination could escalate into violent conflict and genocide,

Noting that the first international conference on the prevention and punishment of genocide since the adoption of the Convention, held in Stockholm in January 2004, called for a strategy for genocide prevention that must include provisions for the worst case when prevention fails and atrocities occur, and for military action as an extreme measure to stop genocide in extreme cases,

Endorsing the Secretary-General's Action Plan to Prevent Genocide, including, inter alia, swift and military action in extreme cases, presented to the Commission on Human Rights on 7 April 2004 - the tenth anniversary of the Rwanda genocide - recalling that the international community had failed to prevent the genocides in Rwanda and Srebrenica because of lack of will,

Noting that the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change found that the international community has a further responsibility to act, *inter alia* with force if necessary as a last resort, in collective response to threats of genocide and other massive violations of human rights when a State fails to protect its citizens,

Having held a timely and constructive thematic discussion at its sixty-sixth session on the prevention of genocide, with the participation of States parties to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, other United Nations organizations and international non-governmental organizations,

Taking note that economic globalization frequently has negative effects on disadvantaged communities and in particular on indigenous communities,

Acting under its prevention of discrimination early warning and urgent procedures adopted at its 979th meeting in 1993,ⁱ whereby the Committee makes recommendations, through the Secretary-General, to the Security Council for action to prevent situations of persistent patterns of racial discrimination and other systematic violations of human rights that could lead to violent conflict and genocide,

Responding to the Secretary-General's exhortation at the Stockholm Conference that there can be no more important issue and no more binding obligation than the prevention of genocide,

Adopts this declaration on the prevention of genocide for the consideration of the States parties, the Special Adviser, the Secretary-General, as well as of the Security Council,

The Committee:

1. *Welcomes* the appointment of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide with the mandate to sound early warning and make appropriate recommendations for prevention to the Security Council through the Secretary-General, to enable the international community to take timely action to prevent genocide from occurring;

2. *Finds it imperative* to stimulate stronger ties and interaction between the local and global levels in, *inter alia*, developing national strategies for the prevention of genocide linked to national action plans for the elimination of racial discrimination developed in close collaboration with civil society, national human rights institutions and other non-State actors, as well as involving international bodies such as the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;

3. *Declares* its determination to provide the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide with timely and relevant information on laws, policies and practices that may indicate systematic or systemic discrimination based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which may potentially result in violent conflict and genocide. To facilitate and focus this exchange, the Committee intends to develop a

special set of indicators related to genocide, including the cultural and historic roots of genocide and the importance of recognizing the multicultural dimension of most societies, as suggested by the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

4. *Expresses its resolve* to strengthen and refine its anti-racial discrimination early warning and urgent action as well as follow-up procedures in all situations where indications of possible violent conflict and genocide prevail; in such cases, it will consider in-country visits to obtain first-hand information on the situation;

5. *Considers it of vital importance* that stronger interaction is established between United Nations human rights treaty bodies and the Security Council, and in this regard the Committee will explore how the former can work together in raising awareness about possible outbreaks of violent conflict and genocide and address the Secretary-General and the Special Adviser to pass on concerns and warning to the Security Council;

6. *Agrees* with the High-level Panel's finding that the developed countries have particular responsibility to do more to transform their armies into units suitable for deployment to peace operations, and that more States will have to place their contingents on standby for United Nations purposes and keep air transport and other strategic lift capacities available to assist peace operations. This will require resources commensurate with the scale of the challenges ahead;

7. *Notes* the Global Peace Operations Initiative proposal for Western States to train, equip and provide logistical support to the international military forces willing to participate in peacekeeping operations to be funded by members of the Group of Seven (G-7) States;

8. *Urges* increased resource allocation by States Members of the United Nations, more particularly by the developed countries, and that developed countries reinforce peacekeeping contingents from the developing countries by contributing their own contingents;

9. *Considers it essential* to build the capacity of peacekeeping contingents for more rapid deployment;

10. *Commends* the global cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in the field of peace and security;

11. *Considers it imperative* to dispel the climate of impunity that is conducive to war crimes and crimes against humanity by referring all perpetrators of these crimes to the International Criminal Court;

12. *Urges* the international community to look at the need for a comprehensive understanding of the dimensions of genocide, including in the context of situations of economic globalization adversely affecting disadvantaged communities, in particular indigenous peoples.

Note

ⁱ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 18 (A/48/18), para. 18 and annex III.*