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WELCOME REMARKS

BY

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6TH INTERNATIONAL EXPERT MEETING ON GENOCIDE, WAR CRIMES, AND CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

14 APRIL 2014

KIGALI, RWANDA

The Right Honourable Prime Minister and the guest of honour,
Honourable Ministers,
Honourable Members of Parliament,
The INTERPOL President, Mrs Mireille Ballestrazzi
The INTERPOL Secretary General, Mr Ronald K. Noble
The Chief of Defence Force
The SG NISS, CG-RCS
Deputy Inspector General of Police,
Members of Diplomatic Corps and Heads of International Organizations,
Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am greatly honoured to welcome you to the 6th INTERPOL International Expert conference on Genocide, War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity which is hosted by the government of Rwanda.

I thank our guest of honour for taking time off his very busy schedule to join us and preside over the opening ceremony of this very important international conference. Special thanks to the INTERPOL President and the INTERPOL Secretary General to have personally come to attend this conference. This conference takes place exactly 20 years after the genocide against Tutsis in Rwanda. Since then, Rwandans live to *remember, unite and renew* but more importantly determined to never again see such atrocities.

The Guest of Honor Sir, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, the theme for this conference is **“Closing the Impunity Gap”**. As we all know, the majority of the perpetrators still move freely in some countries in the world with impunity.

It has always been a huge challenge for law enforcers to identify, locate and bring to justice the perpetrators of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Simply because some criminals change identity, others seek asylum in sympathetic or uncooperative countries. For most cases, the perpetrators are unknown and are comfortably living inside or outside their countries because they killed and left no witnesses to tell the story.

The task of bringing the perpetrators to justice requires resources and a lot of work, but most importantly full cooperation and collaborative arrangement among member countries.

In this regard, we want to thank INTERPOL for the support extended to the Rwanda National Police (RNP) in terms of support to fugitive tracking, training and equipment. Our I-24/7 system has now been extended to all Rwandan border entries, thanks to INTERPOL. In the same arrangement, the RNP has hosted many INTERPOL courses and seminars geared at enhancing capacities for law enforcers across the world.

The guest of honour, distinguished guests,

INTERPOL, through its Fugitive Investigative Support unit and law enforcement tools, has been a key partner to the Rwanda National Police in bringing some of the fugitives to justice. To this effect, INTERPOL in conjunction with the Rwanda National Police, the Prosecution Authority and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) created the *“Rwandan Fugitives Project”* in 2004, with the objective of arresting genocide fugitives and bringing them to justice.

This initiative and others that followed, have led to the arrest and trial of several Genocide fugitives in Rwanda, Europe, Canada and in other countries, and we appreciate these efforts. To this end, we encourage other INTERPOL member countries to follow suit and contribute in closing the impunity gap.

Honorable guest of honour, distinguished delegates

While we celebrate major achievements made both at international and national levels, a lot remains to be done to bring the perpetrators of genocide to justice and to restore dignity to the survivors. We still have many genocide fugitives wanted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and more than 200 Red Notices issued at the request of NCB Kigali still pending.

“Closing the Impunity Gap,” means bringing to justice those responsible for such crimes. This will effectively contribute to prevention of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. We are also conscious and aware of other war crimes and crimes against humanity that our societies have faced. Torture, gender-based violence, and even terrorists come in this form during war time. We pledge our partnership to combating such crimes.

I further wish to inform the conference that Rwanda remains committed to the INTERPOL mission of connecting police for a safer world. That is why Rwanda has offered to host the INTERPOL General Assembly in the year 2015, the fourth conference to happen in Africa, 100 years since the idea of INTERPOL was born.

Right Honourable Prime Minister and our dear guest, distinguished delegates,

As I conclude, I am hopeful that the discussions and recommendations from this conference will go a long way in reducing the impunity gap and restoring hope to the survivors of genocide.

I also wish our distinguished guests a very comfortable stay in our country and fruitful deliberations. Thank you!