

Human Rights Council 25th Session
Integrative Dialogue with SASG on the prevention of Genocide
7 March 2014
Statement by Ireland

Mr President,

On this, the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the office of the Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide, we note our appreciation for the work of Mr. Adama Dieng and his predecessors.

The prevention of Genocide is central to all three pillars of the Responsibility to Protect. Genocide poses an enormous moral challenge to the international community. And yet, as indicated by the work of the office of the Special Advisor, the measures to prevent it are relatively simple – early warning systems, arresting the escalation of violence, preventing incitement and so on. Implementation of preventative policies must be our focus if we are to succeed in meeting the challenge set down by the UN Charter “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”, “to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights” and “to establish conditions under which justice and respect for international law can be maintained”.

Mr. Dieng, we draw attention to your important recent work on policy options for the prevention of incitement to Genocide. As the July 2013 UNSG report on R2P noted, “The Holocaust did not originate in the gas chambers and the genocide in Rwanda did not start with massacres in churches. Those genocides started with hate speech, discrimination and marginalization.” One of the many historic features of the Convention whose anniversary we celebrated earlier today was its inclusion of incitement to commit genocide as one of five punishable acts. We welcome your efforts on policy options in this regard.

Mr. President

Ireland attaches great importance to the role that civil society plays in human rights infrastructure, domestically and internationally. But against a backdrop of deeply concerning legal and administrative restrictions on the work of civil society around the world, the shrinking space in which it operates, what are the Special Adviser’s views on the possible implications which restrictions on NGOs may have for the resilience of states to prevent atrocity crimes? What role do you see for a safe and enabling environment for civil society in the prevention of Genocide?

Thank you Mr. President.