

## **GAAMAC Handover Event**

### **Concluding Remarks by Jürg Lauber**

Excellencies, dear colleagues,

It is my honour to offer some concluding remarks for this high-level event on the occasion of the hand-over of the chairwomanship of GAAMAC.

It's also a particular pleasure to be here with our keynote speaker, the High Commissioner, and of course with my long time colleagues and friends, Mò and Silvia, both of whom we are honoring today.

Dear friends

Prevention is a central issue here in Geneva, and it is very dear to Switzerland.

Advancing the respect, promotion and protection of human rights is at the core of upstream prevention work and we are continuously working at strengthening the contribution of the Geneva-based human rights institutions in this regard.

The Human Rights Council recently passed a resolution on this topic, which we hope will enhance the contribution of the Human Rights Council to the prevention of human rights violations.

Just like human rights, the atrocity prevention agenda is universal.

No society is immune – efforts are required everywhere and anytime to ensure that any risk and any seed of violence is addressed swiftly, and effectively.

Every State has the responsibility to protect their population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. But unfortunately, too often, States act too late, and the UN-System and its Member States fail in early warning and adequate action.

GAAMAC offers a unique addition in helping States to take up their responsibility for prevention:

It is a platform that is not a space for the dialogue amongst the like-minded, but an open and trusted space for difficult conversations about difficult issues.

It adds the unique perspective of hands-on, practical and up-stream prevention efforts from the national perspectives from a wide variety of actors.

Linking up these experiences and expertise horizontally is valuable, and it enriches our multilateral efforts substantially when effective channels for sharing relevant information are found.

Today's discussion is an excellent example of this mutually beneficial interaction.

- Thank you **High Commissioner** for putting so much emphasis – in her keynote speech, but also in her work – on accountability and its importance for successful prevention
- I appreciate the reference made by Amb Federico Villegas to accountability being a vaccine to atrocity crimes [I regret that we don't apply the vaccine more systematically]
- Thank you M<sup>ô</sup> for recalling the history of GAAMAC, which illustrated the variety of actors involved, and in particular the need to act with great respect for specific contexts
- Thank you Silvia for your reflections about much work still lies ahead of us, and certainly for taking over the GAAMAC presidency

Argentina has been a steadfast partner of Switzerland in Geneva.

We have worked closely together for more than a decade, in particular on issues of Transitional Justice.

Today, Switzerland hands over the chairwomanship of GAAMAC, but we will remain a strong and dedicated partner. We look forward to pursue working with you, and the entire GAAMAC community.

Let me once more congratulate Silvia, and wish you success.

On behalf of Switzerland, let me thank all those who have offered remarks today, and in particular our key note speaker, H.E. Michelle Bachelet.

And thank you also to all participants who have joined us today from near and far.

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