GLOBAL ACTION AGAINST MASS ATROCITY CRIMES

GAAMAC

Platform for Prevention

Plenary Session of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance

Zagreb, Croatia
27-30 November

CHAIR SPEECH

Ambassador Gras,
Ms. Lustig,
Dr Meyer,
Dr. Williams,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very honored to attend IHRA's Plenary Session that formalizes IHRA's invitation to GAAMAC to become a Permanent International Partner. We warmly accept the invitation following GAAMAC's Steering Group decision.

I would like to thank you all for this renewed collaboration which testifies to the long-lasting and strong collaboration between IHRA and GAAMAC. I would like to reiterate our gratitude and recognition to Professor Bauer, and former IHRA's Special Adviser, Dr Ten Have whose commitment and support to GAAMAC have never failed.

I am very pleased to observe that we have among us members of our Steering Group and partners who know us well. However, please allow me to provide some background on who we are for others.

GAAMAC is a global network of states, civil society and academic institutions that seek to promote the establishment of national architectures and policies for the prevention of atrocity crimes.

GAAMAC is a led by a Steering Group composed of 13 members. There are 6 States, Costa Rica as the Chair, Argentina, Denmark, Ghana, Switzerland and Tanzania, and 7 civil society organizations[1]. GAAMAC counts on 29 partners, with States such as Armenia, the Netherlands, Chile and Slovenia, as well as many civil society organizations and academic institutions. The Office of the UN SG's Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide participates in the Steering Group meetings and is an active supporter of GAAMAC

In addition to its Steering Group members and partners, GAAMAC is proud of its informal alliances, as you may know the first informal alliance was with you - IHRA. UNESCO and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights are the other two Informal Alliances.

[1] Genocide Prevention Advisory Network; the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect; the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect; the Liberation War Museum; the François-Xavier Bagnoud Center for Health and Human Rights at the Harvard School of Public Health and the Sant´Egidio Foundation for Peace and Dialogue.

Ambassador Gras,
Ms. Lustig,

We all know that preventing genocide and other atrocities is far preferable to reacting to events as or after they take place. It is also very clear that the state of the world today requires us all to do far more in this regard. GAAMAC's conviction is that the prevention of atrocities needs a holistic approach bringing together as many diverse stakeholders as possible and encompassing multiple and interdisciplinary efforts in many areas. Prevention requires knowledge of underlying causes of violence as well as learning to recognize key drivers of violence and signals of potential mass atrocities before they occur. Indeed, it is now well known that genocides and mass atrocity crimes do not happen overnight but are often a result of a long process.

GAAMAC sees many areas to deepen collaboration with the IHRA, particularly in the fields of remembrance and education. Both are key components of prevention. Current prevention efforts have for instance much to learn from Holocaust research on how exploiting prejudices and instituting discrimination can fuel hatred and lead to atrocities. For its part, GAAMAC and its partners have researched hate speech in Asia and elsewhere and have worked on atrocity prevention education and on establishing national prevention mechanisms in Africa and other regions In short, there is much work to do together, and under our strengthened collaboration we must continue our joint efforts to bring us a step closer to a world free of atrocities.

We look forward to learning more about the work of IHRA and its different working groups in the years to come and stand ready to explore together with you how we can continue to collaborate going forward.

I thank you for your attention.