

## Statement by H.E. Mrs. Teneng Mba Jaiteh, Chair of the OACPS Committee of Ambassadors on the 26th Commemoration of the Genocide in Rwanda

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Brussels, 7 April 2020/ACP: I am humbled to make this Statement on behalf of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) on the commemoration of one of the most atrocious tragedies to have occurred on the African continent, and indeed in the world.

This solemn occasion is an annual reminder to pay homage to the women and men who lost their lives 26 years ago for no reason other than that of their ethnicity, when Rwandese extremists rose up against their compatriots.

It is also a moment to celebrate the resilience, courage and capacity for forgiveness and reconciliation of the Rwandese people, who have managed, out of the conflagration of the genocide, to fashion a unified and rapidly progressing nation in a region that had long been characterised by a precarious balance between peace and insecurity. On behalf of the OACPS, I wish to pay tribute to President Kagame and his Government, and indeed, all citizens of Rwanda, who have worked tirelessly to realise this remarkable transformation of their political, social and economic life.

At the international level, we are reminded today of a single occasion in 1994, when the solidarity of nations was tested. The silence as well as the non-application of international treaties and conventions that were meant to protect human dignity, meant that the international community failed the Rwandese people and all of us.

In recognition of this failure, the international community has taken critical steps, such as the establishment of the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect and the hosting of the World Summit in 2005. Only in this solidarity for humankind shall we truly honor the survivors of this atrocious tragedy, who displayed courage by defying those that advanced evil, those who flouted the Geneva Convention, by never giving up hope that they would see justice.

The OACPS has a solemn responsibility to learn from the international community and therefore pledges to renew its commitment to support Member States in their efforts to establish peaceful environments, the rule of law and good governance as enshrined in the Cotonou Agreement. It shares the ambition expressed in SDG 16 to "promote peaceful and inclusive societies", as one of the key developmental interventions that contributes to the prevention of such atrocities.

Today's commemoration under the theme – **Remember, Unite, Renew**, invites us to REMEMBER the victims and survivors, and support their cause for Justice. It beseeches us to strengthen alliances and UNITE as nations to ensure that genocide and hate would NEVER again, have the last word in our world. It calls on us to RENEW our commitment to never again allow hate and division to drive our societies.

Let us remember the power that lies in unity and vow to remain, **Stronger together**.

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