

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I'd like to thank Mrs Safari and Ambassador Nduhungirehe for inviting me to Kwibuka in the Netherlands. I'm grateful for the chance to take part in this ceremony. And I am honoured to have had the opportunity to lay a wreath at the memorial that we have inaugurated together. I would also like to commend Deputy Major Mr. Dantzig for his great speech.

Today we stand united in commemoration of the International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda, as designated in the United Nations General Assembly Resolution of the 26th of January 2018. The genocide destroyed the lives of countless Rwandans, including those of moderate Hutu and others who opposed the killings. Today, we honour those who lost their lives, and those who survived but whose lives were changed irreversibly. It can be painful to reflect on past events. But it is also essential. Reflection is the only way to learn from the past, and to help us take action to prevent extreme violence occurring again.

That is why the memorial which we inaugurated today is so important. It provides a tangible and permanent reminder

of what happened in Rwanda in 1994. A reminder not only to those of us who are old enough to remember the tragic year in which the genocide took place, but also to our children and all future generations. But let us not only linger on the sorrow and pain that the genocide caused. After the genocide, the Rwandan people chose to rebuild their country together. They showed tremendous strength and solidarity. The memorial is also a testimony to their willpower.

It is highly appropriate that the Netherlands now hosts a memorial to the genocide in Rwanda. After all, our countries have been working towards ever stronger bilateral ties since 1994 and even before then.

Immediately after the genocide, Rwanda and the Netherlands became development partners. Guided by the belief that there can be no peace without justice, the Netherlands became one of the major donors supporting the rebuilding of the justice sector in Rwanda. And guided by that same belief we work together on judicial matters. I can assure you today that we remain dedicated to holding the perpetrators of the genocide accountable for their crimes.

In 2022, our bilateral development cooperation came to an end. This year a new chapter has opened as we both work hard to enhance mutual trade and investment. This transformation illustrates that ours is a partnership of equals. Looking forward, cooperation on issues such as gender equality, climate and trade will continue to benefit both our countries. As equal partners, frank and constructive discussions will continue to characterise our relations, including discussions about justice and human rights. In fact, respect for such universal values is the only foundation on which to build a future that is peaceful and prosperous for both our nations. Our common values are what bind us together.

I will end by recalling the motto of Kwibuka. Remember, unite, renew. To me, this means that we should be aware of the evils that happened in the past. But also have faith in a better tomorrow.

May it carry a message of hope for everyone who is working towards a just and peaceful future.

Thank you.