

SPEECH BY CHAIRPERSON OF IBUKA NETHERLANDS, MS. CHRISTINE SAFARI

Translation

- **Mr. Reinier van Dantzig**, *Deputy Mayor of Amsterdam*
- **Your Excellency, Olivier Jean Patrick NDUHUNGIREHE**, Ambassador of Rwanda in the Kingdom of the Netherlands,
- **Mr. Marcel de Vink**, *Director General for Political Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;*
- *Excellencies Ambassadors, Heads of Mission and International Organizations, members of the diplomatic corps;*
- *Dear survivors of the 1994 Genocide perpetrated against the Tutsi,*

Dear compatriots and friends of Rwanda; ladies and gentlemen

Let me begin by thanking you all for allowing me to address this gathering on this special occasion where we inaugurate the very first Memorial in the Netherlands, for the Victims of the 1994 Genocide perpetrated against Tutsis in Rwanda.

It is not easy to find words to describe this very painful period. As survivors of the Genocide against Tutsis we reflect back on the atrocities we endured and the very inhuman circumstances in which our relatives were killed because they were Tutsi, all this was happening under the indifference of the International Community.

Meeting today to inaugurate the memorial is a step closer towards the healing and mending of our hearts as this monument provides us with a place to remember and honor those we lost. This memorial will also serve as a reminder of what happened in Rwanda and will help educate others, especially the younger generations.

Having a memorial is very important in this moment as it will help us preserve the memory of the victims and help us fight the genocide ideologues and deniers, who spare no effort in spreading falsehoods including outright denial of the genocide's occurrence. This memorial for us is a symbol that the genocide will never occur again.

I wish to sincerely thank the City of Amsterdam for listening to us and allowing us to have our memorial in this beautiful city, this is a dream we have had for a long time. Thank you once more for playing a part in raising awareness on our history; this is a gift to our descendants as it is crucial in educating the future generations so that they may live in a world free of genocide.

I cannot forget to thank the Government of National Unity and the “RPF Inkotanyi” who stopped the Genocide and brought us back to life, now we are proud to have a safe and secure country that everyone can visit and enjoy.

I wish to also thank the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands for the support they provided to Rwanda and to survivors in particular in the last 29 years. We thank you for giving us a second home; many of us came here when the wounds were still fresh but you welcomed and integrated us, we were able to study, to work and now we are well functioning members of the society.

We still need your support in ensuring the Genocide suspects still roaming free in the Netherlands are brought to justice and we call upon your support as well to help us hold accountable those who deny the Genocide. As history shows us that lack of accountability and impunity is the breeding ground for evil acts.

Before I conclude, please allow me to inform your Excellencies that IBUKA and other partner associations are concerned by the ongoing killings of Congolese Tutsis in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Reports from the United Nations and other International Organizations reaching us indicate that there are serious indications and early signs of Genocide similar to those observed in Rwanda during the early stage of the Genocide against the Tutsis in Rwanda.

To avoid repeating the same mistake made in Rwanda, we call upon the International Community to take action now and engage the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo to take its responsibilities to protect them against the killings and hate speech.

To my fellow survivors! *“Remember, Unite and Renew”* is our all times motto. We have to remember but in the same time remain resilient.

Thank you very much for your attention and may God bless you all