

GAAMAC2 in Manila Draws to a Close

The GAAMAC2 drew close with the Chair of the GAAMAC Steering Group Ms. Mo Bleeker, reading the outcome document.

Next, Mr., Adama Dieng, UN Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide addressed the plenary once again. He congratulated all present for their hard work and a job well done. GAAMAC revealed how much unites each one of us and that each participant brought optimism to the process, never content when the stakes are high or to rest on past laurels. Pa

He challenged the participants to return to their countries ideas, message and projects, some of which may face criticism. He urged everyone to strive for continued success but not be afraid to fail, to not be disheartened by the challenge but to be emboldened by it.

In his opinion, GAAMAC should not just be a meeting, but a lively gathering through the year, working and sharing on a daily basis. This, he said, is what we owe to the displaced and the victims of mass atrocities. We need to respect human life, stop violations of international law return to our humanity.

He announced the winner of the challenge he presented the day before as the African group that had proposed the formulation of a manual on prevention of mass atrocity crimes for their region.

Ms. Mo Bleeker then proposed a brief vote of thanks to the Philippino hosts, Ms. Lorena Joy Badajos in particular for her immense efforts in making the event possible. She thanked Ms. Diana Fontannaz, Mr. Andreas Palazzi and Ms. Saskia Weidmann from EDA events. Finally she thanked the online media team led by Mr. Manas Chakrabarti and finally the facilitators Ms. Busi Ncube and Mr. Jeremy Condor for their enthusiasm and energy.

The final speaker of GAAMAC2 was Mr. Jesus R.S Domingo, the Assistant Secretary for the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs. He began the closing speech by quoting Dr. Jose Rizal: “It is a useless life that is not consecrated to a great ideal. It is like a stone wasted on the field without becoming a part of any edifice.” reminding all present of the great ideal that brought everyone together. Over the past three days, he continued, participants shared their experiences and visions for a world free from mass atrocity. GAAMAC2 began by looking back, building on the foundations of GAAMAC1, and moved ahead with the sharing of new perspectives.

He reminded everyone of how they were moved by the testimony of brothers and sisters who have themselves endured mass atrocities, motivated by activists for truth and justice, we have been challenged by pundits, inspired by the optimism of youth who teach peace.

Mr. Domingo likened the need for a national architecture to a grand mansion, that will need a solid blueprint, architects to design it, engineers to build it and artisans to decorate and furnish it. Similarly, GAAMAC and its envisioned architectures against atrocity will need to draw inclusive multi-stakeholder involvement – global and regional, national and local, government and civil society, the spectrum of humanity.

Action against atrocity must be holistic, he said, not only reactive; it is a continuum. He reminded us of the need to mitigate, build resilience, prepare, recover, reconstruct and restore. We must have mechanisms for early warning and transitional justice. Capacitating communities at the grass roots is key; it is the foundation of the edifice.

Mr. Domingo believes that we have further refined the GAAMAC blueprint here in Manila after Mr. Adama Dieng’s challenge to generate new, dynamic and practical ideas. GAAMAC

elegantly complements a broad and rich spectrum of inter-related frameworks the Responsibility to Protect, spearheaded by our big brother USG Adama; Human Rights, with no less than 3 UN Special Rapporteurs joining us; others represent Human Security, Peace building, Restorative Justice, Reconciliation, and others – from all corners of the planet.

He elaborated on some opportunities ahead for GAAMAC advocacy, for e.g. the upcoming World Humanitarian Summit this May. There are also regional opportunities, such as the Philippine Chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2017 and the appointment of our own Chairwoman Etta Rosales to the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights.

He asked the plenary to pay tribute to Mo Bleeker and her visionary and inspiring leadership that has guided the momentum and success of GAAMAC. He also thanked the GAAMAC Steering Group and their team of Facilitators and Support Group, the Secretariat coming from Berne, Switzerland and the Swiss Embassy in Manila, headed by Ambassador Andrea Reichlin, and to his colleagues from the Department of Foreign Affairs – Office of UN & International Organizations, and the Foreign Service Institute.

He also highlighted that GAAMAC2 would not have been possible without the contributions of the 200 plus delegates who have come to Manila, representing 54 states, 37 of whom came from their capitals, over 50 non-government organizations and 10 international organizations. He thanked them for sharing your national perspectives, personal experiences and best practices in human rights and atrocity prevention.

He also impressed on the plenary that they could count on the Philippines to further advocate GAAMAC nationally, regionally and globally, and to buckle down to developing their national architecture. He ended by saying that it was their great honor and privilege to as hosts. He invited everyone to explore the Philippines further and wished all present a safe journey home. With that, he declared GAAMAC2 closed.