COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE 1ST PRE-GAAMAC III INTERNATIONAL CSO SYMPOSIUM, 22 May 2018

The first ever Pre-GAAMAC Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) International Symposium was conducted on 21st May, 2018 in Kampala, Uganda. The Symposium, organized to coincide with the GAAMAC III main conference, was meant to provide a platform for discourse among CSOs and other actors working in the sphere of mass atrocity prevention. Participants met to reflect on the theme ‘Making Prevention of Mass Atrocity Crimes a Reality’. The event brought together, among others, practitioners in peace and conflict, governance, human rights, and transitional justice, representatives from the Government, academia and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) from various regional, national, and international backgrounds to discuss prevention of mass atrocities. The symposium was structured around two thematic panel sessions namely:

- **Dealing with the Past as an Investment in Making Prevention a Reality**—which focused on sharing best practices from participants on tackling unresolved past mass crimes and atrocities, as well as sustainable peace building processes to counter recurrence.
- **Dealing with the Deficits of Governance and Democracy as an Investment in Making Prevention a Reality**—with the dialogue focusing on good governance, Rule of Law and democracy as vehicles of prevention of mass atrocity crimes. The notions surrounding ensuring the inclusion of women, youth, and other marginalized groups as effective participants in the prevention debate featured prominently.

Based on the deliberations by the participants at the Symposium, the following recommendations were made for consideration by GAAMAC III main conference:

**A. Embracing and Respecting History;**
- Establish national mechanisms, including fact-finding missions and commissions of inquiry that recognize, embrace, and allow for national discourse on past atrocities.

**B. Justice and Accountability;**
- Hold all parties to conflicts accountable, including States.
- Recognize and appreciate the fact that States cannot have transitional justice without transition as the first steps towards an honest, transparent, and inclusive process of healing.
• Promptly adopt and implement existing African Union and other complementary justice mechanisms to aid national processes of transitional justice.
• Ensure equal access to justice through, among other avenues, training of law enforcement officers.
• Extend accountability for violence and mass crimes from individuals to States.

C. Monitoring and Reporting:
• States, in partnership with CSOs, should create effective national platforms to report early warning trends and patterns of atrocity.
• Strengthen media and other actors' capacities to better monitor, document, and report on the evolution of potential triggers and escalators of mass atrocities.

D. Education, Training, and Awareness-raising:
• Reform education curricula to incorporate aspects of conflict prevention and mitigation.
• Establish training and awareness-raising programs on mass atrocity prevention for various actors, including security agencies, parliamentarians, the judiciary, and youth.

E. Policy-Makers:
• Recognize and incorporate dealing with past atrocities in legislative processes.
• Provide adequate funding for the establishment and maintenance of all-inclusive national transitional justice mechanisms.
• Establish and strengthen Government institutions with a focus on the expansion of democratic space as a means to increase social stability and inclusive governance.
• Incorporate local knowledge into the implementation of atrocity prevention measures.
• Protect and ensure the fair distribution of natural resources to prevent resource-based or resource-triggered mass atrocity crimes.

F. Solidarity:
• Strengthen cooperation and partnership among States, communities, and the private sector in dealing with past atrocities and preventing recurrence.
• Ensure the meaningful participation of women, youth, and marginalized groups in mass atrocity prevention and peace building processes.
• Create and establish mechanisms for the sharing of information and best practices among all actors for atrocity prevention.
• Expand the discourse on atrocity prevention to include a multiplicity of actors.