

**Secretary-General's message to Seminar on "A Framework for Genocide Prevention"
[delivered by Mr. B. Lynn Pascoe, Under Secretary-General for Political Affairs]**

9 December 2010

The statement read as follow:

It is a pleasure to send greetings to this seminar. I am pleased to note the participation of colleagues from both the United Nations and the non-governmental community.

The prevention of genocide is a global responsibility. We all know the principle: each state has the primary responsibility to protect its own people. However, when states require assistance, the international community must be ready to help. And when states manifestly fail to protect their populations, the international community must be ready to take action.

In order to prevent genocide, we first need to understand its causes and dynamics. We need to understand what kinds of environments may encourage genocide, and which structural and operational factors can leave a population vulnerable or, alternatively, help to protect it. We also need to understand the different kinds of measures that can be taken to prevent tensions between groups from escalating into genocidal conflicts.

Promoting such understanding is one of the main roles of the Office of my Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide. The Office was established in 2004 in recognition of the international community's collective failure to prevent or stop past genocides. It was given a threefold mandate from the Security Council: to collect and assess information on situations that might lead to genocide; to advise the Secretary-General and, through him, the Security Council and make recommendations to prevent or halt genocide; and to liaise with the UN system on preventive measures and enhance the UN's capacity to analyze and manage information on genocide or related crimes.

Today's seminar is another in a series the office has been organizing on building capacity to prevent genocide. Initially aimed at UN staff in the field, the seminars now reaches out to key partners such as government officials, regional and sub-regional organizations and civil society, focusing on individuals who can help states establish structures for prevention, early warning and response. I am confident that your discussions today on approaches to understanding and responding to mass violence will generate insights and ideas that will help each of you, within your respective roles and mandates, to advance this effort. I wish you well for a productive discussion and I look forward to learning of the results. Thank you for your engagement and support.

See here for [full speech](#) .