

Prevention of genocide



Marienette Abadilla/NY/UNO
25/08/2008 10:35 AM

To SGCentral/NY/UNO@UNHQ
cc Ingrid Hayden/NY/UNO@UNHQ
bcc
Subject For logging please : Message for Mr. Vijay Nambiar from David Hamburg

Thank you!

----- Forwarded by Marienette Abadilla/NY/UNO on 25/08/2008 10:35 AM -----



"David A. Hamburg"
<dah2013@med.cornell.edu>

25/08/2008 10:31 AM

To abadilla@un.org
cc
Subject Fwd: Message for Mr. Vijay Nambiar from David Hamburg

Date: Thu, 21 Aug 2008 15:26:02 -0400
To: willingston@un.org
From: David Hamburg <dah2013@med.cornell.edu>
Subject: Message for Mr. Vijay Nambiar from David Hamburg

Dear Vijay,

I want to thank you once again for all of the help you have given to the enterprise on prevention of genocide. Your keen interest, thoughtful suggestions and solid support have done much to foster the progress that is underway. Having some idea of all your other responsibilities, I am all the more impressed with what you have done for this particular initiative.

I am sending with this message a letter to the Secretary-General about the duration and composition of the Advisory Committee to the Secretary-General on Prevention of Genocide. As you may recall I have always favored rotation of membership on this committee so long as it continues. The committee itself recommended a duration of several years but that is of course entirely up to the Secretary-General. So long as the committee is in existence, it should have practical value for the SG. In any event I have offered in this matter some suggestions about the composition of the committee, including my own role.

I would be very grateful indeed if you would see to it that the Secretary-General is able to see this letter in the reasonably near future. Knowing the enormous burdens that he carries, and the volume of mail that comes in, I think it is likely to make a big difference if you would get it to him directly. I'm sorry to trouble you but I know that you are also intrinsically interested in this matter and have been helpful at every point.

28-10009

With deepest respect and appreciation,
David

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President Emeritus
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E-mail: dah2013@med.cornell.edu Ki-moon, Ban 8.21.doc

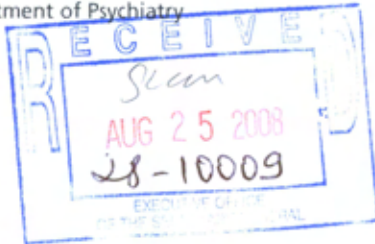


Weill Cornell Medical College

Prevention of Genocide

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August 21, 2008

His Excellency Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General, The United Nations
One United Nations Plaza, Room S-3800
New York, New York 10017

Dear Mr. Secretary-General:

This is a reminder that your advisory committee on prevention of genocide will be meeting in New York October 27, 2008. We very much hope that you will be able to spend at least a few minutes with us in order to give us your guidance. We realize the enormous demands on your time and if you cannot make it we trust that one or more of your close colleagues will be present. Last time, Vijay Nambiar, Kim Won-soo and Robert Orr were profoundly helpful.

One of the most striking features of the onset of your tenure was your commitment to addressing genocide, surely one of the most difficult problems the world faces, now as in the past. You made it clear that the UN with your leadership would have the courage and ingenuity to improve on past performance with respect to this ultimate human degradation.

The October meeting will primarily be devoted to the committee's response to Francis Deng's strategy report and also his report on accomplishments to date. Both of those were sent to the committee in May and June and we will send an updated version in early October. This will give us the basis for making useful suggestions to consolidate the program, move it into an operational phase, and help it evolve in ways that fulfill the priority you have given genocide in your public statements as well as your decision-making processes.

It has been a privilege for me to chair such a superb international committee and I believe we have made useful contributions in helping to build this very unusual activity. Still, I think it is time to consider how long you want the committee to

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→ cc: YVC
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copy: File "Genocide"

continue and what its composition should be. At the time you appointed Francis Deng, I raised the question whether you wanted the committee to continue in 2008 and you emphatically answered yes and asked me to continue as chairman. In that meeting, and in one awhile later with your closest colleagues of the Secretariat, I indicated that if indeed the committee were to continue beyond 2008, it would be wise to have some rotation of members, involving both continuity for the benefit of institutional memory and relevant experience, but also change to make it clear that the committee is open to fresh ideas and new possibilities, especially in regard to operational activities. I also said that the rotation of the chairmanship would be the best place to begin since it would have a certain legitimacy – i.e. no one person in charge for too long a time. That suggestion in no way reflected then nor does it now a dissatisfaction on my part. On the contrary, it has been a great privilege to serve in this role, to help the program get underway and most recently to help in its consolidation and move toward operational contributions.

I would be happy to continue as a member (not chairman) if you wish but I strongly advise that a new chairman of great distinction, relevant experience and earned respect would be in order. We have, in my judgment, the ideal person on the committee, namely Archbishop Desmond Tutu. His role in this as in other matters has been truly superb and exceedingly helpful in all respects. He is so wise, has so much relevant experience from his immense contribution to preventing genocide in South Africa and such moral stature that I could not think of anyone in the world better suited to this role than Desmond. I realize that South Africa is a long way from New York, but he and I have been in very frequent email communication. He is absolutely reliable and prompt in such communication. He also is a remarkably good traveler, turning up as you know at trouble spots around the world to be helpful and often getting to the UN. So, if the committee meets once a year, I see no problem whatsoever about his role as chairman, at the meeting itself and throughout the year. Certainly if I were to continue on the committee, I would help him in every possible way, responding promptly to his requests as they might arise.

In addition, I think it would be useful to replace one or two current members who have not been able to do very much. In particular, it would be useful to focus on those parts of the world where the dangers are especially intense and possibly add one or two new members for this purpose. Desmond Tutu could certainly suggest one or two Africans of the highest caliber and greatest suitability for this task.

By the same token, a Nobel economist and eminent citizen of India, Amartya Sen, is deeply familiar with the problems of Asia and has fundamentally changed our approach to development. I know of no one who has contributed more to the modernizing of equitable socioeconomic development than he has. So the committee could maintain or even improve its very high standards and at the same time enhance its diversity while keeping on experienced people who have shown their ability to contribute in a major way.

In any case these decisions are of course yours to make. My suggestions are highly tentative even though they do reflect serious thought. For the moment, I do not have any suggestions about the timing of your announcement of such changes. You and your colleagues are in a better position than I am to make that assessment. I

do hope that my suggestions are at least stimulating and constructive so that the committee would serve you well for as long as you wish it to continue. Clearly you could decide to terminate it whenever you feel that it has run its course. These comments are made in the spirit of the committee's prior suggestions about its longevity and your responses early in your term of office.

Once again, I express my personal thanks and also those of a great many other concerned people, for the extraordinary leadership you have provided in this matter and in so many others.

With deepest respect,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "David".

David A. Hamburg
President Emeritus
Carnegie Corporation of NY

DH:eb

CC: Mr. Vijay Nambiar, Chef de Cabinet