



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

6 April 2015

Dear Colleagues,

In November 2013, I sent a message to all United Nations staff members through which I recommitted the Organization to uphold the responsibilities assigned to us by the Charter, the Security Council and the General Assembly whenever there is a threat of serious and large-scale violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. The message marked the launch of the Human Rights up Front initiative.

Through this initiative, we have a unique opportunity to strengthen our ability to act early and prevent conflict by: (i) *changing United Nations culture* so that all staff view human rights and protection of civilians as a core responsibility, take principled positions, act with moral courage, and are backed by Headquarters when doing so; (ii) *changing the operational practice of the United Nations*, in the field and at Headquarters, to ensure better United Nations preparedness, analysis, early warning and coordination, and to ensure shared strategies for the United Nations system to prevent or respond to situations of concern; and (iii) *changing the way the United Nations system engages politically* to ensure we are more proactive and true to our mandated responsibilities in informing Member States of the risk of large-scale violations, so as to generate their political support for early and preventive action.

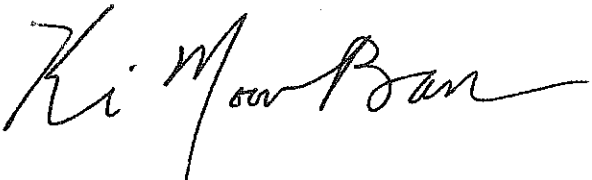
A little over a year into the roll-out of the initiative, we are seeing encouraging signs that Human Rights up Front is on the way to establishing a new standard for how the United Nations identifies and responds to early warning. To ensure that these changes are anchored and sustained in the United Nations, a strong push will be needed by leadership and staff in the coming months.

The success of Human Rights up Front will depend on all staff members making its objectives their own. They should apply the initiative in a spirit that goes beyond the interests of their individual units and departments, to embrace the interests of the United Nations as a whole. In this regard, I ask you to re-issue my commitment statement of November 2013 (attached) to all staff members of your respective departments, agencies, funds and programmes, preferably together with a note from you on what the initiative means for the work of your entity. I also ask that you undertake additional steps that you consider appropriate for your entity to internalize Human Rights up Front and to support its implementation. Please inform the Deputy Secretary-General of the actions planned and implemented. The Human Rights up Front team in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General can provide suggestions where helpful.

Heads of United Nations Departments  
Agencies, Funds and Programmes

I truly believe that Human Rights up Front offers us a once-in-a-generation opportunity to help ensure that the United Nations meets the aspirations of the Charter. Thank you all for your commitment. I rely on your full support to make this initiative the success it needs to be.

Yours sincerely,



BAN Ki-moon