

2017 UN General Assembly Dialogue on the Responsibility to Protect
“Implementing the Responsibility to Protect: Accountability for Prevention”

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Mr. President,

Thank you for convening this important dialogue on R2P. The Canadian Centre for the Responsibility to Protect fully endorses the Secretary-General’s report on improving accountability mechanisms for prevention. We would also like to extend our warmest welcome to Dr. Ivan Simonovic.

Mr. President, the need for timely and decisive action to protect people in peril is greater than ever before. We continue to witness the greatest humanitarian challenge of our times in Syria, with over 400,000 civilian casualties and some 6.1 million internally displaced people and 4.8 million refugees. In North Korea, millions are dying from starvation and crimes against humanity committed by the dictatorship. Since this spring, there have been over 500,000 cholera cases in Yemen, with 41% of cases covering children under the age of 15. Even as we speak, a child dies in Yemen every five minutes. In too many parts of the world, too many innocent children are killed every day while we look the other way.

But there is another truth—equally clear and compelling. We are here today because, right now, we realize that we are facing a crisis of epic proportions. We are here because we realize that we can no longer afford to tolerate violence with impunity. We are here because we believe that Responsibility to Protect principle provides us with tools to tackle the test of our common humanity. Instead of giving into cynicism and despair, we are choosing hope and courage.

The Canadian Centre for the Responsibility to Protect respectfully offers three points as we look ahead:

First, we urge member states to **build domestic institutional mechanisms** to end the culture of impunity. These measures include ratifying and implementing core instruments of international human rights and humanitarian law, appointing a national focal point on R2P, and working closely with national parliaments to improve political accountability at home.

Second, we urge member states to **invest in education and empower the youth**. We need systematic and holistic approach to teach the values of pluralism and diversity from young age, and also set the bar high by holding perpetrators accountable.

Lastly, we urge member states to look for **new partners and new resources** to address the gap between our intent and capacity. We have made enormous progress in our conceptual understanding of R2P. The central challenge we face concerns our capacity to coordinate our efforts and respond effectively. Building real capacity will require political leadership and inputs from the private sector, the academia, the civil society, and regional and sub-regional organizations. We must be innovative in using technology to tackle the root causes of conflicts.

Exercising our collective responsibility to protect will never be an easy task, and countering violent extremism and sectarianism will require new strategies, partnerships and deployable resources.

At the Canadian Centre for R2P, we're determined to do our part. We will continue to speak up for justice and equality, and insist that the universal human rights of every person are upheld, everywhere.

Thank you.