

Statement delivered by Haiti – Informal Interactive Dialogue on R2P, 6 September 2016 [TRANSLATION]

Excellencies, Ladies, Gentlemen,

Let me salute this initiative by the President of the United Nations General Assembly to organize today the 6th of September 2017 this interactive informal dialogue on the theme “Implementing the Responsibility to Protect: Accountability for Prevention”. It makes no doubt that this session provides us with an exceptional opportunity to not only reaffirm our commitment on R2P, but also and most importantly to reflect together on the most efficient means to implement the three judicial, political and moral pillars on which it rests.

I would like to congratulate, respectively, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Antonio Guterres, the President of the United Nations General Assembly, Mr. Peter Thomson, the deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, as well as the chief of the Department of Political Affairs, and the Special Advisors, for their exhaustive declarations on this crucially important subject for the future of our planet.

Mr. Moderator,

The question of human rights is hardly a new one. If, on the religious level, it is rooted in biblical scriptures, in the messages based on liberty, justice, love and respect for human dignity, on the institutional level, already in 1215, the Magna Carta instituted a body of rules aimed at protecting human rights and individual freedoms. It posited, among other things, that no one could be detained or prosecuted if not through the judgement of his peers and with due process of the law.

In recent centuries, numerous expressions have been used to protect human societies, translating into the judicial order, the natural principals of justice that constitute the very foundation of human dignity. Since the Saint James Declaration in 1942, the inter-allied Conference unanimously adopted a declaration aimed at punishing perpetrators of mass atrocity crimes and at ensuring that they are held accountable without regard to their nationalities.

Yet, we couldn't stop Auschwitz, the Shoah, the genocide in Biafra from 1966-1970, the genocide against the Kurds in Iraq in 1988, the crimes in Ex-Yugoslavia in the 1990's, the genocide against Tutsis in Rwanda in 1994. We haven't been able to prevent massacres in Cambodia, Burundi and Bosnia. We cannot forget the hundreds of thousands of deaths in armed conflicts in Latin America. We would not or could not prevent them. And, still today, we hear the cries of our defenseless brothers and sisters who are victims of deadly wars on a daily basis.

Mr. Moderator,

The Secretary-General has rung the alarm when he declared, in his report (A/71/2016), rightly entitled “Implementing the Responsibility to Protect: Accountability for Prevention”, that “there is a gap between our declared commitment in favor of R2P and the reality of populations exposed to genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.” To fill that gap, we must ensure that R2P is implemented in practice. One of the most important ways to achieve this is to reinforce the implementation of the principal of responsibility and to ensure a rigorous and transparent control of this practice, on the basis that we have agreed.

That is why, my delegation salutes all the initiatives undertaken by the UN since the 2005 World Summit. Let’s note, inter alia, the nine reports issued by the SG since 2009 on the implementation of R2P, including the one laying out the three-pillared strategy. Fortunately, the international community, in the perspective of coming together for the protection of universal human rights, firmly engaged at the World Summit to recognize that every State has a responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. It is thus reassuring to note that R2P is becoming a major instrument of international law that has the potential to prevent these mass atrocity situations in war-torn countries. Hence, from Darfur in 2006 to Libya, Cote d’Ivoire, Yemen and Syria, the Security Council has adopted resolutions assorted with appropriate sanctions, vigorously condemning the atrocities committed and calling on States to uphold their primary responsibility to protect civilians. In many cases, those responsible have been judged and prosecuted by international authorities. This is how we can prevent human atrocities.

Mr. Moderator.

The Responsibility to Protect is a fight by everyone, for everyone. Despite our accomplishments, we must strive to constantly reinforce the prevention and early warning mechanisms. Pessimism is not admissible, because the fight for human rights and human dignity must be fought every day. Every action counts and serves as a catalyst for hope.

I thank you.