

General Assembly - Interactive Informal Dialogue on the Responsibility to Protect

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Statement delivered by the Deputy Permanent Representative and Charge' d'Affaires a.i. of Italy to the United Nations, Ambassador Inigo Lambertini, at the General Assembly Informal Interactive Dialogue on the Report of the Secretary General on the Responsibility to Protect ---

Mr. President,

First, I would like to thank you for convening this important debate, a major opportunity to reaffirm the global commitment to the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for the advocacy he continues to provide through his annual reports, the Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect for their crucial work in promoting the concept of R2P and Mr Feltman and Mr. Steiner for their presentations.

Italy aligns itself with the statements delivered by the European Union and the Group of Friends and would like to make some brief remarks in a national capacity.

There is no longer any doubt that the protection of populations from genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity is at the same time a national and international responsibility. Yet, atrocity crimes continue to take a devastating toll on humanity, while the international community spends far more time and resources responding to crises than on preventing them, as the Secretary-General emphasized in his latest report and in his remarks to the Security Council earlier this year.

Furthermore, the growing numbers of attacks against civilians, schools, hospitals, humanitarian workers and peacekeepers - as well as the widespread and systematic use of sexual and gender-based violence as a deliberate strategy by state and non-state actors - are a stark reminder that we need to close the gap between our commitment to the R2P and the reality populations at risk face. Our efforts should honor the norms

and principles that safeguard humanity under international humanitarian law, human rights and refugee law.

This is why Italy fully supports the Secretary-General's call for a new approach to close this gap, through prioritizing meaningful preventive efforts and strengthening accountability for the implementation of the R2P.

As the top Western Troop-Contributing Country for peacekeeping operations, Italy has acknowledged the importance of the Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians since the moment they were launched, and wishes to highlight the importance of early warning mechanisms, such as the UN Framework for Analysis for Atrocity Crimes, which should be integrated into pre-deployment and in-theatre training for all peacekeepers.

Italy, moreover, has appointed a National R2P Focal Point and participates in the Global Network of R2P Focal Points, together with fifty-eight other Member States from every region of the world, as along with the European Union. As it attaches great importance to improving national and collective accountability for prevention, Italy wishes to echo the Secretary-General's encouragement to all Member States to follow suit.

When it comes to the need for improved accountability for atrocity prevention, efforts to mainstream R2P across the whole UN system must be further strengthened so that all the internal tools and capacities available can serve this purpose and effectively protect vulnerable populations. In this regard, I would like to reiterate my Country's support for such initiatives as Human Rights Up Front, which aims to improve the system-wide capacity of the UN to prevent and respond to serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. We therefore call on the Secretary General to put R2P and the prevention of mass atrocities at the heart of his prevention agenda.

As a member of the Security Council in 2017, Italy has also made its best efforts to cooperate with other Member States and ensure that the Security Council acts effectively and consistently when faced with situations of emerging risk, upholding our responsibility to protect the world's most vulnerable civilians. Indeed, the unity of the Security Council is the crucial factor to achieve the core objective of this Council: the protection of civilians.

Thank you.