

2016 UN General Assembly Dialogue on the Responsibility to Protect

“Mobilizing Collective Action: The Next Decade of the Responsibility to Protect”

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**Statement by Ms. Tina Jiwon Park**

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New York | 6 September 2016

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Mr. President,

Thank you for convening this important dialogue on R2P. I am honoured to speak on behalf of the Canadian Centre for the Responsibility to Protect.

We fully endorse the Secretary-General's report and commend his personal leadership on this principle.

We meet at a critical juncture in our history, as we bear witness to over 400,000 Syrians who have been killed in the last five years and millions of others who are fleeing from danger every day.

Beyond Syria, we face dire humanitarian crises in North Korea, Sudan, Yemen and many other places where the gravity and scope of human suffering seem daunting at times.

But the complexity of these challenges compels us to be more pragmatic and persistent in upholding the core values of human dignity, equality and freedom from fear.

As our dialogue today has amply demonstrated, Responsibility to Protect has come a long way since its inception as an idea in 2001 and the endorsement in 2005.

Today, there is a clear consensus about a wide range of tools that R2P offers, the three-pillar approach, and prevention as our top priority. The debate is no longer about why R2P matters but how R2P can be implemented.

The Canadian Centre for R2P respectfully offers three points as we move forward:

1. We call upon member states to develop national strategies on R2P, including specific policy measures tailored to the political culture of each country. States bear the primary responsibility for protection and the future of R2P can only be as strong as the domestic capacity in terms of political leadership and deployable resources.
2. We encourage member states to improve mechanisms for partnerships and effective coordination, such as appointing a National R2P Focal Point. Creating a culture of resilience and infrastructures for peace and justice will be a long-term process, and we need to engage more with parliamentarians, academics, journalists, NGOs and businesses towards our common goal.
3. We urge member states to pay special attention to the protection of women and children who are most vulnerable in conflict situations. As the photo of three year old Aylan Kurdi reminded us, too many children around the world are denied their right to life and education. We are deeply concerned as well about the rise of child soldiers and sexual violence. We must recognize that freedom from fear and freedom from want are critical for a more secure and peaceful future.

Mr. President,

The next decade of R2P should be measured against our action, not our promises. And to deliver on our pledge of “never again,” we must mobilize our efforts in a timely and decisive manner in the face of very complex and volatile crises.

Respect for human dignity and equality is at the core of R2P principle and the UN Charter. When we sacrifice the freedom and dignity of one person, we risk our own, for we all share a common humanity.

Today, in the face of some of the greatest humanitarian challenges of our times, we must remember our collective responsibility to speak up and take action.

Thank you.

*Tina J. Park*

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