

General Assembly Debate Statement: France
Unofficial Transcription from webcast

Thank you Chairman,

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for this debate and for the report on the Third Pillar of the Responsibility to Protect. I also welcome the new special advisor for the Prevention of Genocide, Mr. Adama Dieng, he has the full support of France in the fulfillments of his task.

The Responsibility to Protect is a concept to which France is very much attached. It reflects the preeminent place of human rights in international law. It is a concept that is based on action, it is a concept which enables us to save lives. The international instruments adopted since the Second World War puts human rights at the centre of our attention. It is a political concept the Responsibility to Protect refers a state to obligations that they have signed up to but have not always respected and bears witness to this consciensness of humanity. As the secretary-general underscored a little earlier we have tools that can lead to specific results. The times of defining definitions has now passed.

The responsibility to protect is above all a concept based on action, orientated towards action, and based on the consensus of 2005 it has been implemented successfully several times, particularly in Kenya, Libya, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire.

I would call for caution with regards to trying to provide a framework for the Responsibility to Protect. We mustn't look for an excuse for inaction and it is essential that all tools are used. The three pillars are equally important and without them the concept would be unbalanced and incomplete. Mediation, commissions of inquiry, preventive diplomacy, targeted sanctions, the peacebuilding commission. All of these tools must be implemented together as part of an overall strategy adapted to circumstances and this was stressed by the Ambassador of Cote d'Ivoire just now.

In addition to Responsibility to Act that we are dealing with today R2P includes with equal emphasis the importance of preventing and rebuilding. Because France is so interested in prevention we are part of that "*volley*" that deals with this. We would like to thank Guatemala, Costa Rica and others for the initiative that we support. 2012 was declared by the Secretary-General to be the year for prevention and therefore it would be important for the next R2P report to deal with this issue of prevention.

All tools but also all partners must be activated. The Human Rights Council, regional organizations, the International Criminal Court, humanitarian actors and civil society. All working together towards a common objective of having to protect populations when states do not have the capacity or the will to do so.

Today this concept should be reinforced and not weakened. As the Secretary-General has stressed although all of our thoughts have turned to Daraya, Aleppo, Homs and the

massacres there. We cannot debate R2P without mentioning the drama being experienced by the Syrian people.

And secondly we must avoid removing the consensus of 2005 with additional points. We must attempt to save human lives. The idea of a sequencing between the three pillars and the using of peaceful means and the definition of pre-established criteria before action would be simple excuses for inaction. While we do not want to add to the concept it is also not desirable to take anything away from the concept. All states must respect their citizens. And all articles of the Charter must be applied, Article 54 with the obligation to inform the Security Council we think this is the case in the Libyan incident for example with regular reports that were provided. This must be implemented. Article 2 Paragraph 7 must be fully implemented which provides for the limits of non-interference. It should also be applied when dealing with crimes against humanity, war crimes, genocide, ethnic cleansing. The international community must react by using the whole panoply of instruments to its disposal including Chapter VII and invoking the International Criminal Court. And with regard to Syria to request the removal of Bashar al Assad today is not regime change but it is recognizing that those who perpetrate war crimes against civilians thousands of individuals have no longer any legitimacy.

Thank you.