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**Statement on behalf of The Group of Friends on the
Responsibility to Protect at the UN General Assembly
Informal Interactive on the Responsibility to Protect**

Intervention by H.E. Karel J.G. van Oosterom
Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
to the United Nations

New York, 6 September 2016

Mr. President,

I have the honor of delivering this statement on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect, co-chaired by the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Republic of Rwanda. Liechtenstein has indicated that it does not want to be associated with this joint statement.

The Group commends the Secretary-General and Deputy-Secretary-General for their commitment to advancing R2P over the course of their respective terms. Their leadership has been crucial in advancing the agenda and putting the plight of the most vulnerable civilians up front.

We take this opportunity to reaffirm our full support for the United Nations (UN) Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, and welcome the Secretary-General's decision to appoint Ivan Simonovic as his Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect.

Mr. President,

The adoption of R2P at the UN World Summit in 2005 was an historic commitment made by all Member States.

In the ten years since, we have seen:

- The establishment and expansion of the Group of Friends, which consists of 50 members from every region of the world in New York and Geneva;
- The launch of a Global Network of R2P Focal Points, consisting of 55 member states and the European Union, as well as other atrocity prevention networks;
- The inclusion of R2P in over 50 Security Council resolutions, including directly in the mandates of a number of UN Peace Operations, and in over 15 resolutions at the Human Rights Council;

These are just some examples of the undeniable progress in implementing a norm that commits the international community to do better to prevent and protect populations from the most egregious international crimes.

While we recognize this progress, we must admit that in too many situations the international community continues to fall short in upholding the Responsibility to Protect.

The world is witnessing a distressing disregard for international human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law.

Hospitals, schools, children, doctors, journalists and peacekeepers have become targets in too many armed conflicts.

Our individual and collective commitment to the Responsibility to Protect vulnerable populations from mass atrocity crimes is needed as much as ever.

Mr. President,

The Group of Friends would like to raise the following points in response to the Secretary-General's report.

These reports have expanded our collective understanding of the Responsibility to Protect, and for that the Group is immensely grateful.

1. We fully support for the 'three pillar' approach articulated by the Secretary-General in his inaugural report on R2P and emphasize that the three pillars are mutually reinforcing and non-sequential.

We reiterate our call for the full and effective implementation of all three pillars and reiterate our intent to strengthen investment in prevention and to ensure more timely and decisive response to early warning signs.

2. Regarding the third pillar, we recall paragraph 139 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, where the international community reiterated its readiness to take collective action, in a timely and decisive manner, through the Security Council, in accordance with the Charter, including Chapter VII, on a case-by-case basis and in cooperation with relevant regional organizations as appropriate, should peaceful means be inadequate and national authorities manifestly fail to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. The links between the Human Rights Council and Security Council should be strengthened to improve early warning and early action.
This is precisely why in November 2015 the Group of Friends was launched in Geneva, and why we are working between the membership in New York and Geneva to realize this, including through exploring the important role of Geneva-based institutions and mechanisms for prevention.
3. The Group calls for R2P to be moved onto the formal agenda of the General Assembly.
4. We value the *Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes* as a useful guide for assessing the risk of atrocity crimes.
It can serve as an important tool for mainstreaming atrocity prevention in the UN, including in relevant UN Peace Operations, as well as assisting Member States to strengthen their own capacities.
5. It is in the world's interest to have a Security Council that responds in an early and appropriate manner to situations where populations might face the risk of mass atrocity crimes.
In line with the Secretary-General's Human Rights Up Front initiative, we also encourage the Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and on R2P to be invited to brief the Security Council more regularly.

6. Accountability for mass atrocity crimes is among the most effective ways of preventing their recurrence.

We strongly encourage States to ratify or accede to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and also encourage consideration by Member States to ratify other relevant international legal treaties.

7. The Secretary-General's call for the expansion of atrocity prevention networks is an important one.

We welcome the holding of the 6th Annual Meeting of the Global Network of R2P Focal Points in South Korea in June and commend the 55 Member States and the EU for appointing R2P Focal Points.

8. Finally, we recognize the important role of civil society in supporting the advancement of R2P.

In particular, we would like to thank the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect for their invaluable role as Secretariat of the Group of Friends.

I will conclude, Mr. President, with a question for the panelists:

Can you elaborate on concrete and viable examples of how the next Secretary-General of the United Nations can continue to advance the Responsibility to Protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity?

I thank you, Mr. President.