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Statement by
H.E. Mr. Abdullah Hussain Haroon,
Permanent Representative of Pakistan

at the

Thematic Debate on
“Responsibility to Protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic
cleansing and crimes against humanity”

Agenda Item 44 and 107:

“Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the
outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the
economic, social and related fields; Follow-up to the outcome of the
Millennium Summit: report of the Secretary- General”

July 23, 2009

Statement

by

Ambassador Abdullah Hussain Haroon

Permanent Representative of Pakistan

on

**Responsibility to Protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic
cleansing and crimes against humanity**

Mr. President,

Excellencies and Dear Colleagues,

We thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this Thematic Debate on Responsibility to Protect and the Secretary General for presenting the report.

Mr. President

It is the first time since the adoption of 2005 World Summit Outcome document that we the member states of the United Nations are debating the concept of Responsibility to Protect (R2P). In the past such debates calling for conflict resolution, peace building and effective role of United Nations and international community have been stimulated as a reaction to some unfortunate tragedies of scale of Rwanda and Srebrenica. Although our world is faced with challenges of magnitude, mercifully this debate has not been triggered by an event of scale and is a result of a process to discuss the concept of R2P which is a one that needs to be delicately dealt with, requires transparency and need to take all member states on-board.

Mr. President,

In this discussion we are guided by the paragraphs 138 and 139 of 2005 World Summit Outcome document and this remains our yardstick for discussions on the concept of R2P. The following elements are important for our delegation:

- There is no difference on the necessity to protect innocent civilians. However, it is clear that the scope of the concept of R2P is restricted

to “responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity”.

- It should be recognized that the responsibility for the protection of civilians rests, first and foremost with individual State where they live. Sovereignty of state should remain the over-arching principle for the contemporary international relations. R2P should not become a basis to contravene the principles of the non-interference and non-intervention or question the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of States.
- The international community’s responsibility in case of an R2P situation is to provide “appropriate, diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means, in accordance with Chapter VI and VIII of the Charter”.
- R2P will be on a “case by case basis” as appropriate. It may not be a norm but an exception in the case if “peaceful means be inadequate and national authorities are manifestly failing to protect their population” from the four specified situations.
- In a world of sharply increasing socio-economic inequities, state building and state-strengthening would continue to depend on socio-economic development. Situations leading to R2P are more often than not the result of under-development and poverty which need to be addressed in the development framework. Commitment to “helping states build capacity to protect their populations” would remain our best prevention.

Mr. President,

A comprehensive approach starting from conflict prevention and utilization of all existing mechanisms in the UN system is required to prevent the four grave situations in an effective and holistic manner. The existing mechanism of Genocide convention, the Geneva Conventions, the humanitarian law and the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court as well as the existing mandates of the Security Council, the ECOSOC and the Human Rights Council can be effectively utilized to prevent the four grave situations.

Mr. President

The report of the Secretary General stimulates the discussion on the concept of R2P. Ours is at this stage essentially a work in progress. Let me share with you some food for thought, these include:

- Consistency of language and expression will help in furthering the concept of R2P for example while the report rightfully acknowledges the genocide in Rwanda, the tragedy of Srebrenica which was described as genocide by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia is termed as “mass killings”.
- The forthcoming proposal by Secretary General on strengthening UN’s Early Warning Capacity will be critical in moving forward the discussion.
- We need to evaluate the accountability factor and the cost of false alarms.
- How to address trust-deficit in the background of historical injustices including foreign occupation.
- How to agree on level of threshold requiring R2P.

Mr. President,

R2P shall be a delicately defined process and in order to prevent any misunderstanding or misuse of the concept as a tool to pressurize or interfere in the internal affairs of a sovereign state, the continuous double standards and selective approach to different conflicts in the world including situations under foreign occupation in the world would have to be systematically rectified to remove the doubts about the implementation of R2P.

We look forward to further debate the concept of R2P in the General Assembly.

I thank you.
