

Informal Interactive Dialogue on the Responsibility to Protect

6 September 2016

Ambassador Laura E. Flores H. – Permanent Representative of Panama to the United Nations

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentleman,

I would like to begin by thanking the office of the PGA for convening this timely dialogue as well as the panelists who have shared their views earlier this morning. The responsibility to protect is an important commitment for us Member States.

Panama adheres itself to the statement delivered by the Netherlands on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect.

We welcome the eighth report of the Secretary-General on the Responsibility to Protect and join our voice to his call for a collective action to prevent and respond to atrocity crimes.

The report, even in its title, presents us with a clear vision: In the next decade of R2P, the key to advance is to mobilize collective action from a multitude of stakeholders.

The prevention of “atrocity crimes”, such as genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity should be the primary responsibility of State authorities. In addition, a vibrant civil society sector is crucial to strengthen and support national capacities. Their collaboration with Member States and their presence on the field is crucial to identify potential risks that threaten populations and, in turn, prevent the occurrence of atrocity crimes. Civil Society can also play a key role at the local level by overcoming barriers and mobilizing action.

Mr. President,

We are pleased to see progress in the recognition of the Responsibility to Protect within the Security Council. The decisions taken by the Council are crucial to the prevention of atrocity crimes. We therefore call upon the Permanent members of the Security Council to restrain from using their veto in these situations as proposed by France and Mexico and as expanded through the Code of Conduct promoted by the ACT group and which 112 countries have subscribed, pledging not to vote against situations that could become acts of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, in line with the primary role of the Security Council which is to ensure international peace and security. Any failure to uphold these duties severely undermines not only this body, but also the entire United Nations system.

We need a paradigm shift that emphasizes ethical values, to ensure that our actions are just and fair.

Mr. President,

My delegation calls upon all Member-States to implement the recommendations made in the Secretary General report, to recommit to prevention, to ensure accountability at all levels, and to do everything in their power to prevent the recurrence of atrocity crimes. The protection of populations from these crimes can only be done through capacity building and genuine political will.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate our commitment to the full and consistent implementation of the three pillars of R2P, and encourage the next Secretary-General of the United Nations to prioritize and commit to this important norm.

Thank you.