

Statement delivered by Rwanda – Informal Interactive Dialogue on R2P, 6 September 2016 [UNOFFICIAL  
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Thank you, Mr. Moderator.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen – from the outset I would like to thank the Secretary General for his annual report on the Responsibility to Protect. Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. Moderator, for your appointment as Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect. We commend the work done by your predecessor, Dr. Jennifer Welsh, and it is our hope that you will capitalize on the current progress in mainstreaming R2P in the daily work of the United Nations.

Rwanda associates itself with the statement delivered by the Netherlands on behalf of the Group of Friends of R2P. This year's report of the Secretary talks of the progress in the implementation of R2P since the adoption of the World Summit Document in 2005, in global efforts to prevent genocide and mass atrocity crimes. Looking back 11 years down the road, we agree with the Secretary General that although important strides were made both at the United Nations and at the individual member states level, the Responsibility to Protect remains a source of contestation. Despite important conceptual progress and consensus built around R2P, implementation of the 2005 political commitment by member states, regional organizations and the UN itself has been inadequate in the face of a number of current crises where populations face mass atrocity crimes.

Claims about the status of R2P as a new norm of international conduct have been strongly resisted, and commission of mass atrocities are not only widespread, but reoccurring in many parts of the world. Today, Responsibility to Protect has more support in principle, but is far from being put into practice. We believe that action to prevent future genocide and mass atrocities involves broad areas of activity, including preventing armed conflict, protecting civilians in armed conflict, ending impunity, ensuring early and clear warning and taking swift and decisive action.

The Kigali Principles that are now endorsed by 35 member states present a framework for effective protection of civilians in armed conflicts. However, prevention is better than protection. It is of utmost importance that governments, regional organizations and the international community focus their attention on addressing the underlying causes of conflict. We believe that instead of spending time with conceptual and ideological debates, the international community should invest much more in the development of strong institutions that establish the foundation of good governance, based on the rule of law, democratic principles and values, and accountability to contribute in building societies resilient to atrocity crimes and contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights. Regional and sub regional organizations must also develop the capacity to streamline and implement their efforts to intervene when civilians are endangered.

Finally, we look forward to the recommendation from this interactive dialogue, including considerations of R2P as a formal agenda item by the General Assembly. Like other previous speakers, we are also encouraged by the growing number of countries who appointed a national Focal Point on R2P, and we hope more will do so in the near future.

I thank you.