

Remarks by Ambassador Rick Barton, U.S. Representative to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, at the General Assembly Interactive Dialogue on Responsibility to Protect

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AS PREPARED

The United States applauds the decade long development of theory and practice on Responsibility to Protect and the progress cited today.

The Secretary-General's report -- and today's discussion-- have expanded our understanding of the role of regional and sub-regional organizations with regard to R2P. In particular, the Secretary-General has highlighted a number of opportunities for sharing best practices across regions. We welcome the following elements of the report:

First, the initiative to intensify our mutual efforts including that of regional and sub-regional organizations to prevent and respond to mass atrocities.

Second, the important statement in paragraph 8 of the report

about the universality of R2P principles and emphasizing that regional differences must not dilute or diminish the responsibilities outlined in the 2005 Document.

Third, the report's call for regional and sub-regional groups to develop and reinforce standards and norms, and to be instruments of moral authority in their regional neighborhoods.

Fourth, the report's call for regional and sub-regional bodies to develop planning and preparedness measures to deal with an imminent threat of mass atrocity crimes, just as governments and international bodies prepare for natural disasters. Regional and sub-regional groups have critical roles to play in early warning, assessment, and early intervention with mediation, preventive diplomacy, and information sharing.

The moral force of the Responsibility to Protect comes through in many passages of the Secretary-General's report, such as in its call to honor and publicize courageous individuals who, in the report's words "refuse to look away or to participate, who shelter the vulnerable, and who speak out against the dehumanization of the targeted groups and for human rights and human dignity."

The Security Council's decisive action in Libya shows the progress we have made in learning from our past failures to prevent mass atrocity crimes and in living up to the aspirations we set for ourselves under Responsibility to Protect.

Thank you.