



**Joint press statement by the governments of Costa Rica, Denmark and Ghana
First Meeting of National Focal Points for the Responsibility to Protect
17-18 May, 2011, New York**

The governments of Costa Rica, Denmark and Ghana hosted the first meeting of national focal points for the responsibility to protect, on Tuesday 17 and Wednesday 18 May 2011, in New York, in association with the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect. During the meeting, the participants renewed their commitment to institutionalize the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) at the national level and established the foundation for a global network of national focal points for R2P.

At the close of the 2005 World Summit, States agreed that they have a responsibility to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, and to prevent these crimes. They also stated that the international community should support individual States in exercising this responsibility, and furthermore, that the international community has the responsibility, through the United Nations, to use appropriate measures to help protect populations from those crimes. Moreover, States expressed their intention to help one another to build capacities to protect their populations, and to provide assistance in stressful situations in order to help prevent the outbreak of crises and conflicts.

Five years later, in September 2010, the Foreign Ministers for Denmark and Ghana convened an informal ministerial meeting that resulted in the launching of the National Focal Points Initiative, whereby the first 11 national focal points for R2P were appointed. Costa Rica soon joined as a partner, and the three countries decided to further the Initiative by calling for the first meeting of national focal points. The objective of the meeting was to advance the fulfillment of R2P by strengthening national and collective capacities to prevent and halt mass atrocities.

The high attendance at this first meeting of national focal points in May 2011 signals the relevance and timeliness of the effort. The participants agreed that this cross-regional network of national focal points for the responsibility to protect offers the opportunity to build partnerships on how to better operationalize early warning, assessment and early engagement at the national level. They also stressed that building the capacity to prevent these crimes at the national, regional and international levels can significantly reduce the need to respond to instances of “manifest failure.”

The national focal points discussed their domestic roles and exchanged ideas on how to better coordinate efforts to assess risks, warn against, prevent and halt mass atrocities, including through national outreach and other educational efforts. They recognized the value of developing sub-regional, regional and global networks of focal points, including through a targeted effort to enlarge the number of national focal points, shared viewpoints on the way forward, made a commitment to continue communicating on future activities and resolved to hold periodic meetings on the matter. The next meeting of national focal points from capitals will be held in the first half of 2012.

New York, 18 May 2011