

# **11 September 2013 - General Assembly - Informal interactive dialogue on the responsibility to protect - Statement by Mr Gérard Araud, Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations**

Mr. President,

France supports the statement to be made by the EU.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report, as well as Mr. Adama Dieng for his ongoing efforts for more than a year now to consult with and warn states about the most heinous crimes, and mobilize their efforts to combat them. I would like to congratulate Professor Jennifer Welsh on her appointment.

Mr. President,

There is very broad consensus on the notion that prevention is central to the responsibility to protect. It's clear that prevention is the preferred solution for all participants.

Prevention in a national context notably requires the adoption of laws to combat discrimination which, as we know, contributes to violence. This reaffirms the importance of the fight against racism, anti-Semitism and homophobia, and the importance of all efforts within our societies to promote attachment to the respect for human rights. I would like to reaffirm the importance of the Human Rights Council's universal periodic review which can play a very important role to this end. We all agree on that.

But we shouldn't forget that prevention may involve the use of force. Prevention is not just the first pillar. It's not just a matter of taking measures for the sake of it, without any regard for the suffering of others. It's a commitment - made in 2005 - to implement a series of measures to prevent future atrocities, including through the international criminal justice system, including through coercive military initiatives when decisive action is required. All of these efforts play a role in prevention.

Take for instance what happened in Mali. I welcome the swearing in of the new Malian president following a democratic process. This democratic process was made possible by the intervention of the ECOWAS forces and then the deployment of the UN mission MINUSMA, with our support. The risks of sectarian violence have been addressed, the country has been unified, the state restored and the people protected. Of course not all problems have been resolved. During this reconstruction phase the international

community remains fully responsible for helping the authorities in their efforts to ensure national reconciliation, reform the security sector, promote development and the fight against impunity. This still remains essential in order to prevent past conflicts that haven't been fully resolved from fueling new violence. Prevention is therefore at the heart of the three pillars and the reconstruction phase. The International Criminal Court is continuing its work in Kenya, Libya and Côte d'Ivoire. But not in Syria because the Security Council hasn't referred the situation to it, despite our requests.

I will conclude, very quickly, by emphasizing how surreal this debate is, since at this very moment, while we're talking about prevention, the Syrian government is in the process of murdering its own people. More than 100,000 people have died. The Syrian government, while showing complete indifference, used its air assets and then artillery against civilian neighborhoods, in violation of international humanitarian law, and is now using chemical weapons. It first of all tested the waters by using them in a limited way. It's now using them on a massive scale, which doesn't surprise anyone. I would like to reiterate that all our meetings focusing on "never again" will do absolutely nothing to respond to the brutality of a regime that wants to murder its own people.

Lastly, I want to reiterate France's proposal to develop a code of conduct whereby the permanent members of the Security Council collectively agree to refrain from using their veto with respect to mass crimes, which the responsibility to protect is supposed to prevent.

Thank you.