

PHILIPPINES

Responsibility to Protect: 8th Annual Interactive Dialogue on the Secretary-General's Report United Nations General Assembly Tuesday, 06 September 2016

Mr President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over a decade since the 2005 World Summit, we affirm that the State has the primary responsibility to protect its own people from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. This is the rule of law, which is the basis not only for the civilized conduct of relations among nations, but also of the very legitimacy of a state.

We appreciate the report of the Secretary-General which takes stock of the efforts to advance and implement this norm.

Respect for the sanctity of human life and fundamental human rights and freedoms is a cornerstone of our national policy.

At the same time, respect for the sovereignty of states and national ownership anchor the rule of law in the conduct of international relations. The Charter of the United Nations provides the ways and means for our collective duty to prevent atrocity crimes.

States also have the shared responsibility to encourage and to lawfully assist other states in helping them prevent these crimes, including through preventive diplomacy and other tools mentioned in the Charter, and through capacity-building. International and regional organizations, civil society and the private sector, have a lot to contribute.

Mr President, in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, all relevant actors should focus on cooperation in employing the full range of diplomatic, political, humanitarian and developmental measures to build the national resilience of countries which may be at risk. These would include the continuous strengthening of national institutions toward good governance, reforms in the democratic electoral process, professionalizing the security forces, encouraging free and independent media, investing in basic education and shared values and cultures against extremism, addressing the use of social media and new communications technologies by perpetrators of atrocity crimes, and engaging civil society and indigenous peoples in wealth-sharing and nation-building.

Our challenge remains to balance the consistency and predictability that the rule of law prescribes, with the possibility that situations that may implicate R2P need to be examined on a case-to-case basis, since “no one size fits all”. To hope to succeed, we must continuously evaluate anachronistic working methods and procedure, including the use of the veto by the Security Council P5 on possible R2P situations.

Mr President, the Philippines supports the dialogue on the Responsibility to Protect in the General Assembly as the proper forum to consider this very important subject.

To conclude, let me very briefly mention the second meeting of the Global Action Against Mass Atrocity Crimes, which the Philippines and Switzerland co-hosted in Manila last February 2 and 3. The theme of the meeting was, “Preventing atrocities: How to strengthen national atrocity prevention architectures”.

More than 200 delegates and experts, comprising of 54 states, and over 50 non-government organizations as well as 10 international organizations, including the Undersecretary General and Special Adviser to the Secretary General on the Prevention of Genocide and R2P, participated to share their experiences in mass atrocity prevention and develop national architectures to deter such crimes.

The meeting emphasized the importance of an inclusive multi-stakeholder involvement among States, international and regional organizations, civil society and the private sector, and the grassroots community. Regional plans of action on practical tools and approaches to combat the threat of mass atrocity crimes were also discussed.

Further information is available from the website www.gaamac.org.

Thank you for your kind attention.