



**PERMANENT MISSION OF SINGAPORE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR BURHAN GAFOOR
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SINGAPORE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS,
AT THE INFORMAL INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE
ON THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT,
6 SEPTEMBER 2016**

Mr President,

We would like to thank you for convening this informal interactive dialogue on the Responsibility to Protect. As we are witnessing an increase in the frequency and scale of atrocity crimes, the dialogue today is timely.

We would like to thank the Secretary-General for keeping R2P high on the UN agenda. His latest report provides a rich set of recommendations on how we can take this agenda forward. I would like to highlight some key actions that we can take in line with the three pillars of the Responsibility to Protect to make a practical difference on the ground.

First, the primary responsibility for the protection of populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity rests with the State. National governments cannot abdicate their responsibility to protect their citizens. Instability and extremism flourish when the needs and aspirations of citizens are not met. Human development is key.

Last year, Leaders agreed on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The onus is on each of us to implement these goals and targets, particularly, in this context, SDG 16, on the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. While the Agenda is universal, each society and country will have to decide for itself the best policies for its particular context. There can be no one-size-fits-all approach. Singapore is committed to achieving the 2030 Agenda and to continuing to building an inclusive and harmonious society, regardless of race and religion.

Second, Member States agreed at the 2005 World Summit to support each other in their national efforts to improve resilience, forming pillar 3 of R2P. Partnerships are key. The UN, regional organisations and civil society must work with each other to support the 2030 Agenda and create in each of our countries the necessary institutions and capacities for a resilient and inclusive society. We should heed the old adage that ‘prevention is better than cure’. The priority must be to help countries ensure that the conditions for instability and conflict never arise. But if they do arise, there is a case for the international community to act in a spirit of solidarity.

Which leads to my third point. The international community has an obligation - under pillar 3- to help address situations where crimes of atrocity have occurred, in a timely and decisive manner. But to do so, the international community must act through the UN, as was made clear in para 139 of the World Summit Outcome.

Small states such as Singapore look to the Security Council to live up to its global responsibility to maintain international peace and security. Unfortunately, we have seen the veto used too often in the past to prevent action to address crimes of

atrocities, at the cost of too many innocent lives. We are therefore pleased that two P5 members, notably the UK and France, have supported initiatives aimed at limiting the use of the veto in cases of mass atrocities. We agree that blocking action at the Council in such cases is not a right and have similarly supported these initiatives as well. We therefore call on other permanent members of the Security Council to unambiguously and unilaterally state that they will refrain from using the veto to block Council action aimed at preventing or ending genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. Such a commitment will help to signal the resolve of the Security Council to play its part to support the R2P agenda and to work “to leave no one behind”.

I thank you.

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