



**Permanent Mission of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela  
to the United Nations**

**September 6, 2016**

**INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE ON THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT**

In his address to the Stanley Foundation Conference on the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), in New York on 18 January 2012, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon stated:

*In 2011, history took a turn for the better. The responsibility to protect came of age; the principle was tested as never before (...) We gave hope to people long oppressed. In Libya (...) by our words and actions, we demonstrated that human protection is a defining purpose of the United Nations in the twenty-first century.*

Security Council authorized intervention in Libya did not put an end to violence and had the unintended effect of exacerbating tensions on the ground and causing more harm than good to the very same civilians it was supposed to protect. It soon became clear that the interventions' goal was not the protection of civilians but regime change. Furthermore, large quantities of weapons and ammunition from the conflict, including surface-to-air-missiles and man-portable air defense systems, found their way to neighboring countries, exacerbating insecurity, organized crime and terrorism in the region.

Rather than questioning whether military intervention may do more harm than good, many R2P proponents often argue that the real risk comes from too few military interventions. This rather causal approach to military intervention ignores the potential for escalating violence, civilian casualties, damage to infrastructure, and the many potential negative effects associated with the use military force.

The centrality of military intervention in R2P is obvious when one considers that the coercive option is the only one of the three pillars that is widely funded and functional. For example, bombing Libya cost approximately 1 billion dollars and that is just the incremental cost, because the forces were already funded and trained. That is about 13 times more than what was spent in reconstructing the country. In the meantime, the Peacebuilding Fund faces severe challenges to raise just \$100 million.

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What we are trying to say is that rather than unhelpfully pitting two fundamental, overriding principles of international law, non-intervention and the protection of human rights, against each other and focusing on building a last resort option for when all else fails, there is a dire need to devote all attention, energy and resources to ensuring that the system does not fail to begin with. But there seems to be no real commitment to do this and thus the existing funding gap for prevention and sustaining peace in this Organization.

More than ten years have gone by since paragraphs 138 and 139 were adopted. Peacekeeping and peacebuilding have been reviewed openly and transparently. The same should be done with R2P and so we call on the PGA to convene an open ended working group to review the responsibility to protect with a view to adopting simultaneous resolutions in the General Assembly and the Security Council by this time next year.

Thank you.