

Statement delivered by the Delegation of Turkey to the United Nations, at the United Nations General Assembly Thematic Panel Discussion "From commitment to implementation: Ten years of the Responsibility to Protect," convened by the President of the General Assembly [Unofficial Transcription]

25 February 2016

The Responsibility to Protect establishes a delicate balance between safeguarding the humanitarian concerns of the international community while aiming to respect the principle of national sovereignty. It is yet to be an established norm of international law, its scope and application need to be defined, refined and developed.

Turkey is convinced that the legal definition of the Responsibility to Protect should be based on the largest possible consensus of the international community, the concerns of all UN member State should be taken into consideration. The rules and procedures for implementation also need to be shaped, the steps should not be carried out to reinterpret or renegotiate the well-established principles of international law and the existing legal framework on the crime of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, but to find ways to implement them in a faithful and consistent manner.

In this regard, we believe that, as many have said today, that preventative policies and mediation should have a prominent role, therefore we attach particular importance to preventative diplomacy and efforts towards the peaceful settlement of disputes. We hope that the discussion on the Responsibility to Protect and its application will help us pave the way for restricting the veto power of permanent members of the Security Council in matters related to crimes against humanity and the crime of genocide.

The Responsibility to Protect is not only related to Chapter VII of the UN Charter but, also, is a part of international humanitarian and human rights law. Therefore, the norm of Responsibility to Protect could be implemented with the close collaboration of the Security Council and the General Assembly in a well-defined manner. This will also result in the establishment of a more inclusive and objective decision-making mechanism, which would have the international community avoid arbitrary decisions. We are witnessing conflicts where international humanitarian law and human rights law are being increasingly violated by various actors. This multiplies the importance and relevance of the Responsibility to Protect.

With this in mind, we find the idea to include the Responsibility to Protect on the formal agenda of the 71st session of the General Assembly as a natural development. We perceive the initiative of the cross-regional group to present a draft General Assembly resolution to this end as a significant step. It is worth underlining that such a resolution should seek to maintain the delicate balance between all three pillars of the Responsibility to Protect.

Last, but not least, populations escaping from crisis and crimes should also be taken into consideration. Bearing in mind, oftentimes, the limited capabilities of neighboring countries, the economic burden of the refugees or asylum seekers should not be left to their fate. Therefore, the scope of the Responsibility to Protect should also cover the needs and protection of such populations within the context of burden sharing.