

**Statement of the Arab Republic of Egypt
at the
Informal Interactive Dialogue of the General Assembly on the Responsibility to
Protect**

(Wednesday 6 September 2017)

Mr. President,

The Egyptian delegation joins others in thanking the President of the General Assembly for convening this informal interactive dialogue on the 'Responsibility to Protect.' Holding such an informal dialogue on an annual basis enables the General Assembly to continue consideration of this important issue in a manner that both garners the widest possible consensus among member-states and that is in line with the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

Egypt takes note of the ninth report of the Secretary General entitled "the responsibility to protect and accountability for prevention" as well as the holding of three preparatory panels by the special advisor. We hope, moving forward, that any future course of action is agreed on first by the general membership and that the Secretary General's upcoming reports on R2P reflect the wide array of opinions and views expressed during these panels. Due to time constraints we will limit our intervention to a number of points which we believe should guide our deliberations on the subject matter, with a view towards reaching consensus.

First, notwithstanding the fundamental responsibility of member-states to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing as enshrined in numerous international human rights instruments, we nevertheless believe that that the notion still contains a number of political and legal gaps, which if left unattended would do more harm than good with regards to the universal acceptance of the principle of R2P. It is therefore imperative that we strive to achieve consensus on the conceptual framework of the principle before continuing to mainstream R2P across the UN System. Such clarifications are in our opinion an essential prerequisite before we can include R2P on the formal agenda of the General Assembly or before any practical steps pertaining to the operationalization of the concept can be undertaken, including in the area of accountability. Here we would like to affirm Egypt's steadfast and unwaivering commitment towards preventing impunity and ensuring accountability in the face of international humanitarian law violations as was most recently illustrated in a number of undertakings, including OP 9 of Security Council Resolution 2286 on the protection of healthcare in armed conflict and which Egypt was a co-penholder.

Second, we assert that the primary responsibility to protect populations from such crimes rests with member-states. The principal role of the international community in this regard should therefore focus on enabling and assisting states in developing their capacities to carry out these responsibilities, while respecting the principle of national ownership regarding the policies and programmes pursued. The international community should therefore focus on preventive diplomacy and the use of force should only be considered as a measure of last resort, after all other tools have been exhausted and in full conformity with the UN Charter and international law.

Third, while we fully endorse the view that prevention lies at the core of the responsibility to protect, we assert that a holistic and comprehensive approach should be adopted vis-a-vis R2P which is not solely limited to military or security aspects, but should also be interpreted more broadly so as to address the root causes of conflict including foreign occupation, poverty alleviation, food insecurity, environmental degradation as well as religious and ethnic discrimination and intolerance.

Finally, moving forward, there is a need to refrain from incorporating initiatives and mechanisms into R2P that are non-consensual and which have been developed outside inter-governmental processes and frameworks, including the "Human Rights Upfront Initiative," and the "Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes." Failure to do so may raise suspicions of some memberstates who view R2P as a tool that can be manipulated to intervene in the internal affairs of vulnerable countries for political gain. As such, any reference to non-consensual initiatives should be avoided until they are duly considered and endorsed by the wider membership.

Mr. President,

To conclude, I would like to assert Egypt's unwavering commitment to international norms pertaining to the protection of populations from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. In this vein, we will continue to strive towards reaching a consensus on all outstanding aspects pertaining to R2P, in a manner that would address the concerns of member-states, while providing more effective protection to populations on the ground against such violations.

I Thank You