

Statement by Mr. Saad Ahmad Warraich, Counsellor, Pakistan Mission to the UN, at the informal interactive dialogue on Responsibility to Protect (September 06, 2017)

Moderator,

We thank the President of the General Assembly for organizing this informal interactive dialogue on the report of the Secretary General entitled 'Implementing the Responsibility to Protect: Accountability for prevention'.

My delegation welcomes the Secretary General's renewed emphasis on prevention in his report. Preventive diplomacy is indeed, one of the most underutilized tools in the armory of the United Nations.

Strengthening accountability mechanisms can help enhance prevention outcomes. As the Secretary General's report correctly notes, this goal could however, only be accomplished within the framework of 'agreed principles'.

Paragraphs 138 and 139 of the World Summit Outcome Document of 2005 provide the cornerstone of our collective commitment to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity.

This 'responsibility to protect' does not entail a new legal norm; it is merely a political expression of what is already obligated on states, as their sovereign responsibility towards their citizens. The primacy of individual state to protect its own population is a *sine qua non* which affords no derogation.

This mandate also does not allow itself accretion. It is therefore, essential that we must preserve the existing consensus over R2P. Any re-interpretation of this understanding, or initiatives that lack broad support, should be avoided.

Moderator,

The edifice of the R2P stands on more tenuous ground today, than ever before.

It is truly a sad reflection that decisions taken by the international community, have often betrayed the highest standards of objectivity and impartiality; and punitive actions, have often become the preferred mode of choice, and not a measure of last resort.

This masquerade of political expediency as high-flowing idealism has meant that resultant actions have lacked the legal and moral legitimacy to gain wider acceptability.

Against this backdrop, calls for accountability would invariably smack of double standards and selectivity, especially when egregious crimes including killings and mass blindings are being committed in full view of the international community. Many of these unfortunate victims have the further indignity of living under illegal and foreign occupation.

What is therefore, needed, is not a dereliction from our collective responsibility to prevent these grave crimes, but to apply consistent and uniform standards of moral outrage to them.

The 'will' of the international community, in particular, the permanent members of the Security Council, is crucial.

Moderator,

For the process of accountability to be meaningful, it should be credible; a means to constructively engage delinquency, and not a platform to castigate states over alleged acts of omission or commission. As we have witnessed in several instances, the special mandates on country-situations testify to the limits of a divisive approach. We should avoid similar 'politicization' of the UPR mechanism.

Priority should instead, be placed to assist states in creating strong national capacities including through governance and judicial reforms, to effectively address challenges within their jurisdictions.

Long-term commitment of the international community including mobilization of adequate resources in sustainable development and poverty eradication is the best investment in prevention.

On top, we must also address the root causes underlying internecine violence and conflict. This often requires a complex and painstaking process of political compromise, which is

often exacerbated, not aided, by military solutions. What is therefore, needed is an upsurge in diplomacy, not war, to achieve the goal of prevention.

I thank you.