



Mission of Latvia
to the United Nations



Mission of Lithuania
to the United Nations

**Sixth informal interactive dialogue of the United Nations General Assembly on the Responsibility to Protect
New York, 8 September 2014**

**Statement of the Republic of Estonia and the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Lithuania
Delivered by H. E. Mr. Margus Kolga,
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Estonia to the United Nations.**

I would like to join the others by thanking the PGA for convening this meeting and by expressing gratitude to the SG for his address and for his report on the Responsibility to Protect: Fulfilling our collective responsibility: international assistance and the responsibility to protect. I also like to thank the panellists for their interventions and the Special Adviser for Responsibility to Protect, Ms. Jennifer Welsh, for her work on this topic and the preparation of this report

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania align themselves with the EU statement delivered earlier.

In addition I would like to make the following remarks:

I am pleased that we have the opportunity to continue our positive dialogue here in this forum by acknowledging that R2P is a concept that deserves our full attention. The question today is not on the concept as such, but rather on common principles of its implementation-- how to prevent or react to crimes that have occurred because the principles of the R2P were compromised or disregarded. While all pillars of the concept should receive equal and balanced attention, too often the world's attention is caught only once the third pillar is under consideration. Governments only come under real pressure to get involved once atrocious crimes have been committed and even then, rarely act. Thus, while the third pillar is of utmost importance,

more attention should be drawn to the first two pillars to reduce the use of collective response by the international community under pillar III. In this respect pillar II becomes greatly significant in supporting States to succeed in meeting their pillar I responsibility to protect their populations from atrocity crimes and reinforcing the efforts already undertaken by these States. We must not only react when States are in acute need. Prevention is a long-term investment and should be prioritized on the agenda in order to anticipate risks before a crisis or conflict breaks out. However once the conflict has already escalated, we must still be willing to act as soon as possible, in which regard I believe that the contribution of the three Baltic States in Central African Republic to the EU's EUFOR mission stands as a clear and positive example of implementation of R2P principles in action.

Unfortunately, even today there are far too many situations in the world, which vividly show us the real consequences of not taking the R2P seriously. It is in situations like these, where States are under stress, that the international community must adhere to its responsibilities under pillar II in assisting or taking collective action in a timely and decisive manner. It is important that we do not underinvest in such preventive efforts.

The international assistance must be provided by the cooperation of a wide range of actors including international organizations, regional and sub-regional bodies, states, civil society actors and the private sector, who all bear a collective responsibility to protect populations from atrocity crimes. Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia acknowledge that partnerships strengthen efforts and the collaboration of the expertise of these actors will provide the most effective form of international assistance.

In this regard we are pleased that the Report of the Secretary-General emphasizes the role of the ICC and the principle of complementarity established by the Rome Statute and other international criminal accountability mechanisms, as an important capacity-building device and as a contributor to providing assistance under pillar II. ICC can assist States in protecting their populations by sharing information, training national prosecutors and investigators and combating the impunity that facilitates atrocity crimes. We firmly believe that R2P and the International Criminal Court can complement each other, since both contribute to ending impunity. For us, supporting the work and aims of the ICC and preventing atrocity crimes are a priority.

In order to fulfill our collective responsibility we agree that the exercise of international assistance needs be based on a common set of principles.

Firstly, international assistance needs to be based on a clear and mutual understanding of the nature of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. An important step in the enforcement of the R2P principles is hence to achieve universality of the ICC's Rome Statute, as only universal ratification of the Statute can ensure accountability for international crimes, wherever they are being committed, and raise awareness.

Secondly, our delegations recognize the importance of national ownership and that a State can protect itself from these crimes by creating a strong and balanced society based on the rule of law. The local and national capacity of a State and its leaders provides an important step in constructing such a society. We also recognize that this should be combined with international assistance in the forms of encouragement and capacity-building by strengthening good governance supported by an effective and independent judiciary, as this is at the core of preventing atrocity crimes. With an inclusive approach international assistance becomes more powerful.

Lastly, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia join the Secretary General in encouraging States to use the upcoming tenth anniversary of the 2005 World Summit to evaluate and reconfirm the commitment to R2P and to ensure a coherent implementation of its common principles. We must draw on the lessons learned so far in order to achieve the most effective form of international assistance and a stronger global partnership in implementing R2P, by especially paying greater regard than previously to the preventive measures under pillar II as highlighted in the Report of the Secretary-General.

Thank you for your attention!

