



# New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations

Te Māngai o Aotearoa

## **General Assembly Informal Interactive Dialogue on the Report of the Secretary-General on the responsibility to protect**

Monday 8 September 2014

### **New Zealand statement**

Ambassador Jim McLay,  
Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations



Thank you Mr Moderator.

New Zealand welcomes the Secretary-General's Report and the interactive dialogue today. We extend our thanks to all of the Panellists for their insights.

At the most practical level, pillar two of the Responsibility to Protect is vital for actively reducing the risk of mass atrocities occurring. With the best of intentions, not all states have the means to protect their populations singlehandedly and in isolation. It is for this reason that at the World Summit our leaders identified the international community's *collective* responsibility to help protect populations. At its heart, pillar 2 is about how, through partnership, we can live up to our shared responsibility. Such partnerships must not be understood as something only activated in times of crisis, but something much more reflective of what we know about preventing mass atrocities.

New Zealand wishes here to focus on a few matters already raised today which we think are particularly important.

First, we agree that prevention actions must be prioritised. For us, this is a key guiding principle for Responsibility to Protect. As the Report notes, the need for integrated prevention mechanisms has consistently been overlooked by the international community. This Organisation has, for example, long identified conflict prevention as a thematic vision but has often not been successful in achieving practical conflict prevention outcomes. Having a system-wide and coordinated focus on prevention, both at the pre-conflict stage, and in the post-conflict, rebuilding stage, is vital for laying a foundation for preventing risk factors for atrocities and conflict from re-emerging.

Second, we welcome the Report's focus on the importance of national ownership. This is essential if the kinds of assistance identified in the Report are to lead to enduring improvements which prevent atrocities from occurring. This has been New Zealand's experience in our own region. For example; the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands which was discussed in the Secretary-General's Report, demonstrated that tailored interventions and nationally-defined objectives were required to achieve effective and long-term capacity building in the security sector and government institutions. Cookie-cutter or externally imposed approaches will not work in the long run.

Third, New Zealand supports fully the focus of the Report on partnerships for implementing pillar two. The role of regional organisations is vital, as they understand the realities on the ground. These organisations are well placed to facilitate via existing channels of communication, and to convene co-ordinated responses which are sensitive to national concerns. Again, the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands is a good example, with all assistance provided under the auspices of the Pacific Islands Forum.

Fourth, the Arms Trade Treaty is an important step toward reducing unregulated arms transfers and illicit trafficking which so often fuel atrocity crimes. New Zealand has

supported the ATT from its inception and is pleased to have ratified the Treaty last week. We expect the Treaty will reach the 50 ratification milestone in the coming weeks. We have developed a Model Law which many other states can use to guide their own implementation of the Treaty, as one practical measure to assist other Member States to build their resilience.

Mr Moderator,

We once again thank the distinguished Panellists. Time allowing, we would be interested to hear their views on what practical measures the UN system could take to operationalise the principle identified in the Report of prioritising prevention.

Thank you.