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Joint Press Release by the Governments of Botswana and the Netherlands

Fourth Annual Meeting of the Global Network of R2P Focal Points

Gaborone, Botswana 12-13 June 2014

The Governments of Botswana and the Netherlands co-hosted the fourth annual meeting of the Global Network of R2P Focal Points in Gaborone, Botswana, on 12 and 13 June in association with the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect. The meeting brought together senior government officials from more than 30 countries as well as high-level representatives from ECOWAS, SADC and the UN, including the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect, Dr. Jennifer Welsh.

The meeting was launched by the Honourable Mr. Phandu T. C. Skelemani, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Botswana, who noted: "Every one of us present here today has a contribution to make, based on our capacities and capabilities. We must therefore keep our efforts coordinated and bound by unity of purpose. We must be voices for action in the face of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity."

During the two-day meeting, delegates participated in a range of plenary sessions, contributing to a dynamic exchange of views that strengthened collective understanding of the roles of R2P Focal Points in preventing mass atrocity crimes. As Dr. Simon Adams, Executive Director of the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, stated at one session: "Each year this international network of committed governments gets stronger as countries work together to prevent these most conscience shocking crimes."

The national R2P Focal Points initiative was launched in 2010 by the governments of Denmark and Ghana with Australia and Costa Rica later joining the facilitating group. The initiative calls upon all governments to appoint a national R2P Focal Point. This senior official is tasked with formulating protective strategies to prevent and halt mass atrocities crimes both nationally and internationally. The existing network includes senior officials representing 41 countries from all regions of the world.

As the successful conference concluded, Mr. Koen Davidse, Director, Multilateral Organisations and Human Rights Department, Kingdom of the Netherlands, commented: "A diverse group of stakeholders deepened their understanding on how we can prevent and respond to atrocity crimes. We looked at improving the rule of law, democratic control of the security sector and involving business and affected communities."

For more information regarding the event or the national R2P Focal Points initiative, please contact Savita Pawnday (spawnday@globalr2p.org).