



STATEMENT BY

**H.E. EINAR GUNNARSSON, PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF ICELAND TO THE UNITED
NATIONS**

ON BEHALF OF

**H.E. SAM K. KUTESA, PRESIDENT OF THE 69TH
SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

AT

**THE INFORMAL INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE ON THE
RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT**

8 SEPTEMBER, 2015

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**Excellencies,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

I am pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Sam K. Kutesa, at this year's Informal Interactive Dialogue on the Responsibility to Protect.

Today's event is an opportunity to reaffirm our collective responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

A decade after the World Summit, the principle of responsibility to protect continues to receive recognition by Member States, regional mechanisms and other stakeholders. Continued engagement is required for its wider acceptance and implementation, in accordance with international law.

In this context, the continued engagement of the General Assembly, through its annual informal interactive dialogues, is a step in the right direction. However, the informal nature of this interactive dialogue suggests that there is still work to be done, among Member States and other stakeholders, to generate increased awareness and consensus.

In so doing, we must remind ourselves that the primary responsibility to protect populations from these crimes lies with state authorities, and that due attention should be given to prevention. Regional and international efforts in this regard, therefore, should focus on supporting national capacities in detecting and preventing these crimes, including supporting national judicial systems, especially in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Excellencies,

While the scale of these crimes has gradually reduced, the international community continues to witness situations around the world, especially by non-state groups and actors that constitute some of these crimes against humanity. The heinous atrocities and terrorist attacks by groups such as ISIS, Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda and Al Shabab are unacceptable, and must double efforts to stop them.

This past May, during a High-Level thematic debate, the General Assembly reiterated the importance of strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations. This effort should be extended to the principle of responsibility to protect, especially with detection and prevention of crimes of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

Efforts by the international community will also require long-term and more targeted support for societies recovering from these crimes.

This informal dialogue provides an opportunity for Member States to consider how to advance the principle of the responsibility to protect with a view to addressing existing and emerging challenges, as well as deepening collective understanding of the responsibility to protect. Let us remain steadfast in furthering the dialogue on this matter.

I thank you for your attention.