

PHILIPPINES

**Responsibility to Protect:
7th Annual Interactive Dialogue on the Secretary-General's Report
United Nations General Assembly
Tuesday, 08 September 2015**

Mr President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, we mark a full decade since the concept of the Responsibility to Protect was introduced in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document.

Last year, the Philippines participated in this dialogue for the first time since the very first dialogue in 2009.

We support the continued dialogue on R2P in the General Assembly as the appropriate forum to discuss the matter.

We appreciate the report of the Secretary-General which takes stock of the efforts to advance and implements this norm.

Without a doubt, States have the fundamental duty to protect their own people from atrocity crimes. After all, this is the rule of law, which is the basis not only for the civilized conduct of relations among nations, but also of the very legitimacy of a state.

States also have the shared responsibility to encourage and to lawfully assist other states in helping them prevent these crimes.

The Philippines has a long-standing respect for the sanctity of human life and fundamental human rights and freedoms. It is a cornerstone of our national policy.

The Philippines also has a long-standing respect for the principle of state sovereignty, which anchors the rule of law in the conduct of international relations.

Our collective duty to prevent atrocity crimes does not invite ways and means that are outside the ambit of the Charter of the United Nations.

Last year, we agreed that assistance and capacity-building in the economic, political and humanitarian spheres should be based on a clear understanding of the nature of atrocity crimes. In addition to States, international and regional organizations, civil society and the private sector, have a lot to contribute in this regard.

In the context of the post-2015 development agenda, these actors should focus on cooperation to build the national resilience of countries which may be at risk. These would include the gamut of constitutional and legal protections, beginning with the continuous strengthening of national institutions toward good governance, as well as protecting human rights. We should also facilitate reforms in the democratic electoral process, professionalize the military, encourage a free and independent media, and engage civil society and indigenous peoples in wealth-sharing and nation-building.

Since 2009 up to the present, some States have also taken the view that R2P to be accepted as a norm should be consistently and uniformly applied. On the other hand, others have cited the full range of development issues in arguing that “no one size fits all”, that there is a need for “flexibility”.

Our continuing challenge, then as well as now, is that we want the consistency and predictability that the rule of law prescribes, while at the same time situations that may implicate R2P need to be examined on a case-to-case basis.

We should also continuously examine and strengthen our regional and multilateral institutions, and continuously assess and critique established but anachronistic working methods and procedure in the United Nations.

Preventive diplomacy should be exhausted and enhanced. We need to seriously discuss and interphase R2P with mediation, dialogue, negotiation, and referral to the International Criminal Court, and other tools mentioned in the UN Charter.

Finally, education is key to arresting atrocity crimes and nipping them in the bud. It cannot be stressed enough that education and shared values and cultures, in all its diversity, should be promoted and ingrained at all levels of education.

Thank you for your kind attention.