



General Assembly Sixty-sixth session

05 September 2012

Informal interactive dialogue on the "Report of the Secretary-General on the responsibility to protect: Timely and decisive response"

H.E. Mr. Geir Otto Pedersen
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary General, distinguished Panellists and colleagues,

I would like to express my appreciation to the President of the General Assembly for convening this timely and interesting panel discussion on the Responsibility to Protect. I would also like to thank the Secretary General for his comprehensive report, and the panellists for valuable contributions today.

Mr. President,

Let us start by remembering that historically, our chief failing as an international community has been the reluctance to act in the face of serious threats. And that the principle of R2P was first articulated in response to the international community's failures to protect populations from genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and ethnic cleansing.

The Secretary General's report clearly illustrates the interconnectedness between prevention and response. For Norway, it is important that a discourse on R2P reflects that the principle consists of more than the third Pillar, and more than the use of force. Likewise, prevention relates to all three pillars. If the international community acts early enough, the choice needs not be between doing nothing and using force. It could involve a broad range of tools available to the UN, such as mediation, preventive diplomacy, fact-finding missions, Special Envoys/Rapporteurs, referrals to the ICC and targeted sanctions, as well as action by the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council.

(Check against delivery)

It is important to keep the scope of R2P narrow, relating only to the four crimes (genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity). However, while the scope should be kept narrow, the response should be deep, employing a **wide array of prevention and protection instruments** available to Member States, the UN, regional and Subregional organizations and their civil society partners.

The report's detailed discussion of **non-coercive measures of the third pillar**, while also emphasizing the **non-sequential and mutually supportive relationship between all the pillars** is timely and adds to our discussion.

Mr. President,

R2P is firmly anchored in well-established principles of international law. **R2P does not constitute a new legal basis for authorizing the use of force outside the UN Charter.** R2P does not alter, it indeed reinforces, the legal obligations of Member States to refrain from the use of force except in conformity with the Charter.

Mr. President,

States' responsibility to protect their citizens was certainly in place before 2005. The report at hand also emphasizes this important point; namely that **there are never situations in which states do not have a responsibility to protect their populations from mass atrocities** – the question is therefore not whether R2P applies to a situation, but rather how best to operationalize the principle and protect populations in different circumstances. One important feature of R2P is that it provides an important **framework to guide the discussions of the Security Council.**

Mr. President,

Today's debate addressing the range of tools available and lessons learned contributes to bringing prudential arguments and cases to the table. In our deliberations, we must remember how remarkably far we have come in such short time. In the words of our Secretary General: "The world has embraced R2P not because it is easy, but because it is right."

Thank you Mr. President.