

Statement of Ambassador P.R. of Spain Fernando Arias González

Informal Interactive dialogue of the General Assembly about the Secretary General's report on Responsibility to Protect

Thank you Mr. President. I'd like my first words to be of appreciation for the task carried out by the previous UN Secretary-General Special Advisers for the Responsibility to Protect, Mr. Edward Luck and for the Prevention of Genocide , Francis Deng; My congratulations, Mr. President, for your recent appointment as UN Secretary-General Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide. I wish you great success in your management and rest assured that you count with Spain's total support.

Spain associates itself entirely with the EU's statement, and in its national competency would like to add the following appreciations.

Spain firmly supports the concept of Responsibility to Protect just as it was delineated by Heads of state during the 2005 World Summit and in successive reports by the Secretary-General. In the same way, Spain has supported the UN system's pertinent instances whenever this principle has been invoked to exhort states to fulfil the responsibility that the exercise of sovereignty implies.

The concept of sovereignty as a responsibility has been mentioned today. The exercise of a "responsible sovereignty" demands decisive and timely action on the behalf of the international community. Echoing the words of the Secretary General in reference to the suffering of the Syrian people, inaction is not an option. Inaction erodes the faith of our citizens in the United Nations system.

Mr. President, as seen during the course of this debate, even if the concept of Responsibility to protect is completely settled, it's still necessary to forge consensus about the methods used in its implementation. It's important to consider the different sensibilities of member states and regional groups. In this direction, both the Brazilian initiative *Responsabilidad al Proteger*, and the Secretary General's report provide clarity: the principles of R2P must be applied with maximum coherence and uniformity. Nonetheless, the choice of instruments, without excluding any of the ones the UN Charter puts at the international community's disposition, will depend on each case's specific circumstances.

It's essential to recognize that the invocation of the third pillar, in other words, a decisive and timely action, the object of today's debate, compiles a wide range of options. It's up to us to ponder and define with more clarity the conditions, modalities, requirements, possibilities, degree of execution, and as has been adequately mentioned by Subsecretary General Simonovic, the consequences of the option of choice. It would be wrong to limit the debate about instruments to be used solely to coercive measures, and amongst these to the military dimension: this distorts de concept of R2P.

Amongst these measures, Spain grants special importance to preventive diplomacy and mediation, an evident example of the existing correlation between the second and third pillars.

In this instance, allow me to remind you that during the ministerial week of the 67th General Assembly, next September 28th the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, together with his Moroccan homologue, will launch the initiative for mediation in the Mediterranean region. Said initiative, which was announced in the frame of the 66th General Assembly and counts with the participation of the Secretariat, has a vocation to develop national mediation capacities and to coordinate the different actors in the Mediterranean scope.

To end my speech I would like to request the panellists' comments regarding two aspects of the report which I consider of particular interest but that have nonetheless not received particular attention today.

Firstly, a greater interlocution with civil society will enrich the debate and may facilitate early and effective response.

Secondly, I would like to highlight the role of humanitarian agencies, whose actions must nonetheless not be a substitute nor be mistaken with political action, which belongs to R2P. Humanitarian response is governed by the principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality and its efficiency depends on the guarantee of the humanitarian space.