

INFORMAL DISCUSSION ON RESPONSIBILITY WHILE PROTECTING

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 21, 2012

STATEMENT BY WILLIAM AWINADOR-KANYIRIGE,

DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF GHANA TO THE UN

Honorable Minister of External Relations of the Federative Republic of Brazil,

Let me join previous speakers in thanking you, your dynamic Permanent Representative and her able team, for arranging this important session. I also wish to express appreciation to Dr. Edward Luck, Special Adviser of the Secretary-General for R2P, for kindly co-chairing the meeting.

Mr. Chairman,

No one can question the relevance of the principle of responsibility to protect (R2P) as an evolving global norm. The African Union (AU) in the Ezulwini Consensus of 2005 subscribed to the principle of R2P. But the AU, in its wisdom, also cautioned that it should not be used or misused as an opportunity to undermine the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of states. It is also instructive that the AU at the same time called for the reform of the Security Council to make it more representative and accountable.

Earlier on, the Economic Community of West African States(ECOWAS) had committed to this principle through the trail-blazing ECOMOG intervention in Liberia in 1990. Indeed ECOMOG in Liberia can be described as the precursor of contemporary R2P intervention on the international level.

More recently, at the 66th session of the GA in 2011, the President of Ghana found it necessary to reiterate Ghana's commitment to R2P.

This is why Ghana readily joined Denmark in 2010 to help arrange an informal session on R2P, in the margins of the 65th session of the GA, with a view to helping concretize R2P implementation; an initiative that was subsequently joined by Costa Rica and Australia as co-chairs of the process, with continued technical back-stopping provided by the Global Center for R2P and the Stanley Foundation in New York.

A global network for R2P national focal points has since been launched and we encourage member-states to be part of this process as co-owners.

Mr. Chairman,

When it comes to implementation, the transition from conceptualization to operationalization is faced with challenges as in any other similar enterprise. The devil they say is always in the detail. R2P in Libya has provided an early signal regarding the need to sharpen the concept of R2P to avoid misunderstanding, minimize collateral damage and other unintended impacts as well as ensure sustainability.

What is currently obtaining along the northern borders of Niger and Mali is quite instructive, not to mention the terrorist incursions into northern Nigeria using the Sahel belt as safe haven.

The Brazilian Concept of Responsibility while Protecting (RwP) should therefore be seen against this background. It provides us a life-line, indeed an early opportunity to fine-tune the R2P concept.

It stands to reason that R2P without an in-built mechanism of RwP may not only render R2P ineffective but could threaten its very sustainability.

We do not understand the Brazilian proposal to be a new concept but rather an initiative to clarify the concept of R2P. Neither do we consider the call for clear sequencing of pillars 1-3 of R2P to be an invitation to wait or delay action until we are in pillar 3 scenario. Sequencing would entail emphasizing, building and utilizing capacities under pillars 1 and 2 and continue to utilize same to the extent possible even during and after pillar 3 intervention!

We therefore encourage support for this timely initiative which can only serve to strengthen the concept of R2P, ensure effective implementation and promote global ownership of the process.

Similarly the on-going effort to help define parameters for establishing national R2P focal points, including national, regional and global networks for R2P would help to complement the initiative of R2P/ RwP, as two mutually reinforcing processes. Needless to add, the accompanying process of promoting the rule of law and leveraging the International Criminal Court (ICC) to confront impunity from whatever quarters would be necessary.

If R2P reassures our peoples of protection wherever they may be, RWP should encourage our peoples and their respective governments to remain committed to R2P.

Mr. Chairman,

I cannot conclude without a mention of our hope that under pillars 1 and 2 of R2P, the international community would deploy all necessary measures in support of the governments and peoples of Africa particularly in the areas of Security Sector Reform, Education and Youth Employment, with a special focus on the Sahel Region.