

Statement of Guatemala
Unofficial transcription from Webcast
11 September 2013

Mr. Moderator,

I will follow your guidance in limiting my comments to three minutes which obviously does not allow me do honor to [neither] the quality of the Secretary-General's Report nor to that of the presentation of the panelists.

I have three comments, each of a different nature.

First, I wish to express our satisfaction that the General Assembly continues to build on the mandate contained in paragraphs 138 and 139 of the Outcome Document of 2005. We are clearly involved in a process and our perceptions are gaining greater clarity from year to year, as a result of these debates. It is to be noted, however, since we adopted Resolution 63/308 in 2009, all of our debates have been of an informal nature. We would like that next year our debate be a formal agenda item to clarify the way forward.

Second, we believe that the Secretary-General's Report, complemented by the presentations of the panelists, contains considerable added value through the examination of the 6 risk factors, or drivers, that contribute to mass atrocities being committed in societies as well as policy options to mitigate or eliminate those risks. At the same time, we concur with the observations of the Secretary-General that there are no universally valid explanations that account for the eruption of mass atrocities, nor on how to prevent them. But clearly, the strengthening of the State to comply with one of its primary functions, which is to defend the right to life of its citizens, is crucial.

Many factors enter into this equation and they are codified in the Report and in the presentations as well as some intangibles which, perhaps, we do not understand as well; such as the collective attitudes required to move from societies where a culture of winner-takes-all prevails towards societies that are more tolerant, inclusive and open for dialogue and consensus building.

[The] main point I wish to highlight, is that to the degree to which we strengthen the capacity of States to meet their primary responsibilities, the debate on the possible invocation of the Third Pillar takes a secondary role. In other words, regarding the holistic, conceptual framework of R2P, the accent should clearly be on prevention.

Third, my own country is mentioned in the Report, although there is no doubt mass atrocities were committed, including crimes against humanity, during the armed conflict that lasted almost four decades. The peace accords, signed in December 1996, contained specific instruments to foster a culture of peace, reconciliation and tolerance. I cannot elaborate on the matter, but we have benefited from lessons learned which proves that it is

possible to act on the intangibles altering the mindset of the collective thinking of legislation, institutions, norms and policies that permit a forging of democratic and inclusive societies where mass atrocities, contemplated by R2P become something unthinkable.

Thank you.