



New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations

Te Māngai o Aotearoa

Informal interactive dialogue on the report of the Secretary-
General on the “Responsibility to Protect: State responsibility
and prevention”

Statement by Jim McLay
Permanent Representative
11 September 2013



Informal interactive dialogue on R2P

Thank you Mr Moderator.

New Zealand welcomes this year's interactive dialogue

We also warmly welcome the appointment of Jennifer Welsh as Special Adviser of the Secretary General on R2P – we are pleased that this important role has been filled by someone so well qualified and we wish Ms Welsh every success in fulfilling her mandate.

The on-going situations in Syria, the Democratic Republic of Congo and in Sudan remind us of the consequences of the failure to fulfil the Responsibility to Protect consistently. Much has already been said on these topics today, and we echo these deep concerns for civilian populations facing mass atrocity crimes.

We welcome the focus of this year's dialogue on the topic of prevention and, particularly, the recognition that efforts to build national resilience are necessarily multifaceted and customised to national circumstances.

Given the time constraints, we wish to make only a few observations:

- Preventative efforts relevant to R2P go much deeper and must start much earlier than simply the prevention of armed conflict. While invariably conflict prevention and atrocity prevention are closely related, we must not lose sight of those atrocity crimes that occur outside of, or are unrelated to, armed conflict.
- In addition to being fit for the local environment, effective atrocity prevention strategies need to be comprehensive and integrated. While national legal or constitutional protections form the foundation for this work, the law alone is not enough to build lasting resilience. We must not only identify the diversity of risks, but also the diversity of structural and operational measures that can contribute to reducing the risk of atrocity crimes.
- The full women, peace and security agenda has particular relevance to fulfilling the Responsibility to Protect, including fundamental principles on women's equal participation and representation in political processes and decision making. Women often have a significant role in political processes at the local and regional level, and this must be enhanced at the national and international level in order to ensure comprehensive political settlements. Equally, gender perspectives must be incorporated in national atrocity prevention strategies.
- The New Zealand Government has decided to appoint a National Focal Point to ensure system wide coherence in fulfilling the responsibility to protect. Experiences of other National Focal Points will be important and New Zealand looks forward to exchanging views and lessons learnt with the wider network, particularly with other small states.

- NGOs and regional and sub-regional organisations play an important role in both early warning mechanisms and in building national resilience. Consultation and involvement with these groups in both the preparation of UN and national strategies is important.

Finally, we look forward to the next report of the UNSG and would encourage its early receipt to ensure a timely debate on the topic.

Thank you.