



PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

BY

**H.E. USMAN SARKI,
AMBASSADOR AND DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

AT THE

**FIFTH ANNUAL INFORMAL INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE ON THE
REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE RESPONSIBILITY
TO PROTECT: *STATE RESPONSIBILITY AND PREVENTION***

NEW YORK, 11 SEPTEMBER, 2013

Moderator,
Mr. President,

At the outset, let me join others to thank the President of the General Assembly for organizing this thematic debate on the Secretary-General's report on the "Responsibility to protect: State responsibility and prevention". My delegation commends the Secretary-General for preparing the report. It emphasizes measures that individual States need to undertake to strengthen their capacity to prevent mass atrocity crimes. I would also like to thank the distinguished panelists for providing interesting insights and fresh perspectives on this concept aimed at strengthening global commitment towards collective security.

2. Today's interactive dialogue provides an opportunity for an examination of our common commitment to the principle of Responsibility to Protect. In particular, it offers Member States a unique opportunity to demonstrate our increasing concern over the exacerbation of global crisis and the conviction that only successful proactive engagements can mitigate the impacts and burdens of conflict.

Mr. President,

3. R2P and its three pillars, not only derives its global legitimacy on international humanitarian and human rights law, but also represents a global conceptual and policy shift in the notion of sovereignty and security, with new emphatic ascendancy on human security rather than on State security. It is in this regard, that Nigeria believes it is the primary responsibility of States to protect lives and provide adequate security for their citizens.

Mr. President,

- ✓ 4. The experiences drawn from various conflict situations both in the past and currently going on, have conveyed clear lessons that the cooperation of Member States is critically essential to the successful implementation of the Responsibility to Protect. Therefore today's dialogue is very timely for Member States to re-examine our collective role towards the implementation of the vision which gave birth to this concept in 2005.

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Mr. President,

5. African States have anticipated the significance of this principle, and are the first to incorporate it in a regional charter. Article 4(H) of the African Union Constitutive Act clearly demonstrates the commitment by AU Member States to this principle. Indeed, certain instruments adopted and actions taken by countries within the West African sub-region under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) could be considered as precursors of Responsibility to Protect (R2P).

6. For example, the ECOWAS Protocol on Mutual Defense Assistance signed on 29 May 1981, in Sierra Leone and the interventions led by Nigeria through the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Liberia in 1990, helped to stop the grave and systematic violations of human rights in these countries.

7. Nigeria has also undertaken efforts both bilaterally and in concert with regional organizations to support peaceful resolution of conflicts in various countries in Africa, especially in the West-African sub-region. Cognizant of the nexus between State responsibility and prevention, Nigeria has also strengthened institutions that engender good governance, human rights, rule of law, effective

policing, early warning mechanism and accountability, as well as strengthening the protection of minorities and vulnerable persons.

8. The development of these institutions, as well as fostering dialogues, has increased prospects for peace and stability. Indeed, the lessons from these experiences motivated Nigeria to call for the convening of an open debate on Preventive Diplomacy at the Security Council in July 2010. It reflected our concern that successful engagements can stop crisis before they spread, reducing the impacts and burdens of conflict.

Mr. President,

9. Nigeria is firmly committed to the fight against impunity. We believe that impunity must be addressed resolutely wherever it occurs. In essence, all persons found to have committed crimes against humanity or war crimes must be held accountable for their activities. This, we believe is the collective responsibility of States, the legal institutions and other stakeholders, but placing greater emphasis on States. (3)

+ 11. It is this firm conviction of Nigeria on the need for global action against mass atrocity crimes and security threats to mankind, which underlined Nigeria actions in ratifying important international legal instruments, such as the Rome Statue of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and most recently the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) on 12 August, 2013. It is also one of the underlying factors in Nigeria's continued involvement in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Mr. President,

✓ 12. Since the operationalization of R2P in 2009 and global acceptance of shared responsibility to protect populations from crimes against humanity, the scale and scope of new forms of conflict appear to be outpacing our collective ability to respond effectively. The biggest challenge continues to be the selectivity and

double standards in the application of the concept of R2P. It is in this connection, that Nigeria welcomes the recent appointment of Dr. Jennifer M. Welsh, as the UN Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Responsibility to Protect.

13. This Office should continue to mainstream R2P among Member States and regional bodies without making exceptions or selective application of standards, in order to develop an action plan to assist Member States in delivering their commitment to prevent ^{so-called} atrocity crimes. Undoubtedly, a comprehensive overview of the structural and operational preventive measures, with focus on national and regional strategies, as well as the appointment of national Focal Points on R2P, constitute core elements of preventive action.

✓ 14. It is in this regard, that Nigeria wishes to commend the Republic of Ghana for their leadership in advancing Africa's commitment to the Responsibility to Protect. The recent two-day Regional Consultative meeting on strengthening National, Regional and Continental Co-ordination towards building national peace infrastructures for conflict prevention which ended yesterday 10th September, 2013, as well as other initiatives underscore this commitment.

Mr. President,

15. Nigeria reaffirms its longstanding commitment to support all peaceful resolution of conflicts. We also call for the enhancement of global commitment

towards an effective implementation of R2P, devoid of selectivity, partiality, double standards and politicization. We should concentrate on strengthening the prevention and early warning mechanisms of regional and sub-regional organizations, on the promotion of peace and security. We believe impunity remains the greatest challenge in confronting mass atrocity crimes, while inaction and indifference are its accomplices.

Thank you.