

STATEMENT

BY

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OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

DURING

**THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY INTERACTIVE
THEMATIC DIALOGUE ON THE
“RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT”**

NEW YORK

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Mr. Chairman

1. Allow me to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to you for convening this meeting to discuss the advancement of a critical norm, which embodies our individual and collective commitment – ***“the responsibility to protect”***.
2. I also wish to thank the Secretary General for his instructive report A/63/677. I applaud him for his continued efforts towards promoting and building normative consensus around this noble concept.

Mr. Chairman,

3. Four years ago our Heads of State and Government adopted the doctrine of “responsibility to protect” as part of the 2005 Summit Outcome document. This pronouncement at the highest political level was a clear demonstration of strong collective commitment to protect the world's populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, impunity and crimes against humanity. In other words, by so doing, our leaders affirmed their individual and collective responsibility, as enshrined in the UN Charter, to protect and safeguard the welfare of humankind, in accordance with international law.
4. We need only to recall for a moment some of the gross atrocities of recent years to realize the difference that this concept, might have made, had it been in effect.
5. History is indeed replete with bitter lessons of grave mayhem, partly because we were indecisive on whether the human rights abuses committed or threatened by the authorities were serious enough to warrant international attention and action.

6. Our past failures to prevent grave human rights violations should challenge us to rededicate ourselves to the solemn oath and pledge of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war and untold sorrows.
7. In this regard, it is imperative that we recognize the responsibility to protect as a central tenet of our shared humanity. In line with their obligations States must demonstrate political will and commitment to ensuring that populations at risk have access at all times to maximum protection and, that perpetrators of abuse are held accountable for their actions. Advocacy, monitoring and capacity building should become the hallmarks of our actions.
8. We note with pleasure and satisfaction, that the Secretary General's report advocates for a three-pillar approach for putting the concept into practice; firstly, that States themselves have the primary responsibility for protecting their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity; secondly, that the international community has the responsibility to help them do so, and thirdly, only in instances where a State is manifestly failing to protect its own population, would the international community have the responsibility to take timely and decisive action to rescue the situation.
9. Even in such circumstances, it is important that the international community should not undermine the sovereignty of the countries concerned, under the pretext of providing support and assistance.
10. Furthermore, the Secretary General's report has not only demonstrated the urgency of operationalizing the concept as a preventive tool, it has also identified measures and actions that

could be taken in order to make the response to the needs of vulnerable populations more effective.

11. We all agree that we have a role to play in this process and that appropriate actions in protecting populations must go beyond statements of intent and expressions of concern. Meaningful and practical protection should be based on concrete and effective actions. In this context, member States should live up to their responsibilities.

12. The international community for its part must demonstrate political will and support by ensuring that all peaceful means of preventing or resolving a conflict are fully explored. This also means we must all be prepared to take collective appropriate and necessary action, in a timely and decisive manner.

Mr. Chairman

13. Early warning capability is indeed essential in putting responsibility to protect into effect. There could be no better example than Rwanda of the need to work hard to operationalise the concept in order to prevent grave crimes against humanity.

14. Botswana strongly believes that concrete steps and willingness to make flexible and pragmatic use of all means available to us will enable us to save populations from grave crimes against humanity. This is the conviction which informed our ratification of the Rome Statute which established the International Criminal Court. We believe that the International Criminal Court provides a viable judicial mechanism for addressing issues of impunity and gross human rights violations.

Mr. Chairman

15. My delegation deems the respect for democracy, good governance, human rights and the rule of law to be interlinked and mutually reinforcing, and as prerequisites for promoting and protecting human rights at national, regional and international levels.

16. We therefore pledge our full support for measures designed to contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights.

Mr. Chairman

17. In conclusion, I wish to underscore the point that we all have a duty towards “responsibility to protect”. We must therefore keep our efforts coordinated and bound with a unity and singularity of purpose. We must all be voices for collective action in the face of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

I thank you for your attention.
