

## **Russian – Statement at the July 2009 GA Debate on RtoP (As Delivered)**

The Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations

Statement By: Mr. Margelov, Special representative of the Russian President on cooperation with African countries

**Mr. Margelov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his contribution to the consideration of the conceptual basis of the responsibility of States to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, and for his report on this subject, entitled “Implementing the responsibility to protect” (A/63/677). Drafting such an important document on that issue undoubtedly called not only for significant intellectual effort, but also for a degree of courage, because we are talking here about one of the most important issues of our time, on which there is quite a broad diversity of opinion.

The Russian Federation advocates pursuing comprehensive work on the concept of the responsibility to protect. In that regard, we are guided first and foremost by the provisions of the relevant paragraph of the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1). In our view, it is very clear and plain. Its wording is in line with the provisions of the United Nations Charter and other norms and principles of international law.

We believe that the initial responsibility to protect people from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity lies with States. States should constantly strengthen and expand their own means to uphold that responsibility. We agree with the Secretary-General’s opinion on the importance of States’ “self-reflection” in that area.

In our opinion, the role of international community should, in the first instance, focus on providing comprehensive assistance to States in strengthening their own capacity and on preventive diplomacy. In that context, we support the mission of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide. We agree that timely reaction on the part of the United Nations can help to avert mass loss of life.

As regards the situation when peaceful means prove to be inadequate and the State is manifestly not in a position to protect its population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, any intervention by the international community should be of an exceptional nature and fully compliant with international law, in particular the United Nations Charter.

The concept of the responsibility to protect has enormous potential for change. Its development and implementation could significantly shape key trends that will determine the future of the entire system of international relations and the international rule of law.

That is precisely why we are convinced that we should be measured and cautious in addressing any idea regarding implementation of the authoritative and relevant ideas of the 2005 World Summit Outcome document on the responsibility to protect. We warn against taking rash and hasty steps to apply that idea arbitrarily to specific countries and against interpreting it too broadly. That is not only counterproductive, but also dangerous in terms of harnessing international efforts to promote international peace and security.

The Secretary-General’s proposals on instruments and procedures to implement the responsibility to protect are of interest. However, in our opinion, the conditions for turning those ideas into practical mechanisms and institutions have not yet been met. We consider that the proposed strategy for implementing the responsibility to protect should focus on broad recognition of that concept in clear and understandable terms. However, such recognition does not seem possible to us without further in-depth work on its main elements in the light of the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter. An important step in that area was taken with the approval of paragraphs 138, 139 and 140 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome. However, that work is far from complete.

Today’s outline on the responsibility to protect has been formulated within the United Nations. We

believe that the Organization should remain the central forum for discussing this issue.