



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA TO THE  
UNITED NATIONS**

**Statement by**

**H.E. Eugene-Richard Gasana**

**Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations**

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**Implementing the Responsibility to Protect**

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*Check against delivery*

Mr. President,

Thank you very much for convening this debate to consider the Secretary General's Report on Implementing the Responsibility to Protect. Let me also take this opportunity to thank the Secretary General for his eloquent and powerful presentation of his report which we warmly welcome. Let me also thank his Special Advisor, Professor Ed Luck for his continued commitment and contribution to furthering consideration of the Responsibility to Protect. The adoption of the World Summit Outcome Document by our Heads of State and Government four years ago enshrined the Principle of the Responsibility to Protect and marked a pivotal moment in the international community's response to genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. The Secretary-General's report and the deliberations we have had in the last few days, we hope will provide for the logical next steps in realizing and implementing the aspirations of our heads of state and government as set out in paragraphs 138 and 139 of the World Summit Outcome Document.

Mr. President,

The Genocide that claimed the lives of over a million of my country men and women, my own kith and kin in a hundred days, 15 years ago is known to all of you and has been cited by many speakers as the rationale for the Responsibility to Protect. In many respects this is the case, our tragedy is compounded by the fact that the Genocide in Rwanda was entirely preventable. The early warning signs were there, a UN peacekeeping force was present on the ground but as the Permanent Representative of New Zealand reminded us yesterday, some permanent members of the Security Council debated whether to call it Genocide or not while people were massacred almost 10,000 a day. Some have argued that even if the Responsibility to Protect had been agreed the genocide would still have taken place, that may very well be the case, however, we are firmly of the view that the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, the Secretary General's report and the debate we are having today and will have in the future make it much less likely that the horrific events that took place in Rwanda in 1994 are not repeated anywhere.

Mr. President,

The Secretary General's report builds upon paragraphs 138 and 139 of the World Summit Outcome and clarifies the concept into three pillars and four

crimes. The three pillars namely, the protection responsibilities of the state, international assist and capacity building and timely and decisive response offer an unambiguous framework for the implementation of R2P. The African Union and African regional economic communities have made great strides in line with the three pillars to implement and operationalise R2P. The AU constitutive makes clear the policy of non-indifference in its Constitutive Act and in its article 4H outlines the right to intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity , the AU Peer Review Mechanism, the AU Standby Force and the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) among others highlight the leading role African States have taken. It is imperative that the laudable efforts of the African Union under pillar two are given the necessary support in order to augment and strengthen them.

My own government has been active in its efforts in line with the three pillars. Through the East African Community and the establishment of the East African Standby Brigade, the ICGLR Regional Programme of Action for Peace and Security, my government has also steadily increased its contribution to peacekeeping and will continue to do so. Rwanda will continue to support and strengthen partnerships between civil society organizations and government to highlight the Responsibility to Protect in Rwanda and the region.

Mr. President,

We are cognizant that aspects of R2P require further elaboration;

- The thresholds for intervention and who determines that the threshold has been met require further clarity
- The respective roles of the General Assembly and the Security Council in implementing R2P
- The critical issue of the use of the veto in cases of Genocide, which we firmly believe should be abolished
- The establishment and strengthening of early warning mechanisms
- The question of intervention; we however take a different view on this aspect, the objective of R2P should be to eliminate the need for intervention by ensuring that the measures called for in pillars one and two are implemented in timely and transparent manner.

We view this debate as an important step in further clarifying these concerns.

In conclusion, Mr. President, it is our considered view that the debate on the Secretary General's report on implementing the Responsibility to Protect should not be an exercise in intellectual posturing or an opportunity to grind political axes or to engage in polemics, it is simply about the value we place upon human life. It is a fallacy to believe that the events that took place in Rwanda are limited to or can only occur in a particular region or country, history suggests otherwise, it is incumbent upon us to make certain that history does not repeat itself.

I thank you.