

**Informal GA inter-active dialogue on
Early Warning, Assessment and Responsibility to Protect
New York, 9 August 2010
EU speaking elements and questions**

Final draft 6 August 2010

Mr. President,

I have the honour to address this informal interactive dialogue of the General Assembly on behalf of the European Union.

Introduction

The EU would like to thank the President of the GA for convening this informal interactive dialogue on the important topic of early warning, assessment and the Responsibility to Protect. We also thank the Secretary-General for his intervention and his recent report on the subject. We are grateful to the distinguished panellists for providing interesting insights on the topic. The EU has a few questions for the panel, but allow me first to outline some general thoughts and initiatives.

RtoP general comments

The EU strongly supported the inclusion of the responsibility to protect concept in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document. It recognized the responsibility of each individual State to protect its population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. In 2005, we also collectively recognised the responsibility of the international community, through the United Nations, to help protect populations from such crimes.

As world leaders agreed, the international community needs to develop the necessary and appropriate tools to live up to this responsibility, namely to continue to improve its capacity to prevent and respond to mass atrocities. Given the importance of the matter, we deem it necessary for the Assembly to continue the consideration of RtoP on a regular basis, and we think it is timely to continue the discussion on implementation during this GA session.

Importance of prevention

The EU considers that prevention is a key component of RtoP and early warning is instrumental for saving human lives. Together with the exercise of political will and leadership, the collection, analysis and expeditious communication of information on situations that could lead to RtoP crimes are essential for the adoption of timely preventive measures. As noted by the Secretary-General in his report, insufficient information sharing is an unnecessary obstacle to a swift response and therefore, appropriate and up-to-date sharing of information is a must.

It is evident that a significant amount of information is already collected within the UN system; this information should in most cases suffice to provide the necessary base upon which assessments can be made and recommendations for action formulated. However, we need the capacity to track, centralize, analyse and assess this information, and the UN system should rationalize its structures to this effect so as to provide decision makers with informed assessment. In this context, we commend the efforts of the Secretary-General to implement the mandate that was given to him by paragraph 138 of the World Summit Outcome Document to establish an early warning capability.

In light of the desired coherence, it seems logical to us to bring the work of the Special Advisers on R2P and the Prevention of Genocide closer together and that they should be serviced by a joint office that is an integral part of the Secretariat and has a solid and predictable basis. We trust that all necessary practical arrangements for joining their work and making it more effective will be made swiftly. We also trust that everything is done to strengthen the cooperation between all relevant UN departments and agencies in the work against mass atrocities.

EU Action on RtoP

The EU is actively engaged in early warning and is constantly trying to improve the speed and effectiveness of its response to such situations. We hope that the new foreign policy structures in Brussels will lead to further improvements to that end. As we believe that cooperation is a key factor of an improved international response to RtoP situations, we are in regular contact with UN bodies and other regional organisations on these matters.

The importance of regional approaches / EU-AU cooperation

In our view, regional approaches have a particularly important role to play regarding R2P situations. Neighbouring countries and regional organisations are indeed key partners for the development of 'tailor made' strategies that are often best suited to respond to such situations.

One important EU initiative in this regard is our collaboration with the African Union. The EU appreciates very much that the African Union in cooperation with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) such as ECOWAS has worked to reinforce its Early Warning capabilities. As part of the implementation of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy and Action Plan on Peace and Security within the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), the EU was glad to provide technical support to the African Union's Continental Early Warning System that links the regional early warning centres together. It is set to anticipate and prevent conflicts in Africa through collecting data and information. This is to help the AU Peace and Security Council to take decisions and appropriate measures, including the deployment of the African Standby Force.

Conclusion

The EU stands ready to continue implementing RtoP in its own foreign policy structures and to cooperate with the UN, Member States and regional organisations on how to do this in the best and most effective manner. Timely early warning is key to give concrete and effective meaning to the preventive ethos embodied in the responsibility to protect.

Possible questions

To conclude, the EU would like to ask the panel the following questions:

- Could you please elaborate on the concrete steps that the UN Secretariat wishes to take in coming months to improve early warning and assessment?

- How would the proposed expedited procedure for the consideration of situations at risk work in practice?
- What can Member States do to cooperate in this regard? More generally, where do you see room of improvement of cooperation with and assistance to the Special Advisers?
- What could be done better to help states build capacity to protect their populations from these crimes and to assist those which are under stress before crises and conflict break out.
- What are the challenges that remain in the collaboration with regional partners? What would you like to see addressed in next year's dialogue?