

Statement delivered by the Delegation of Romania to the United Nations, at the United Nations General Assembly Thematic Panel Discussion on "From commitment to implementation: Ten years of the Responsibility to Protect," convened by the President of the General Assembly [Unofficial Transcription]

26 February 2016

Mr. Chairman,

I join the other distinguished speakers in thanking the PGA for convening this timely debate on the responsibility to protect and I also thank the panelists for their most comprehensive and enlightening presentations. Romania aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Representative of the European Union and I would like to add now some comments from a national perspective.

Today, we have this thematic discussion in the context of the first decade of the RtoP. It is indeed a reality that significant progress has been accomplished in the past years. At the same time, we are forced to admit that appalling war crimes are still committed in many parts of the world, not only by states, but increasingly by non-state armed groups, which spread violent extremism and affect large groups of the population underpinning the international community's safety and security. Therefore, I believe we must win the campaign against extremism and firmly refuse to accept that violence and conflict are a kind of "new normal".

In the face of the increasing number of mass atrocities taking place globally, we have to articulate our response, which must be based on a strong political will and to calibrate it in order to include prevention as a key element to avoid war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. We also have to pay more attention to early warning signs and tackle the drivers of violent extremism. Nothing will do more in this respect than terminating conflicts, which generate such crimes.

In the last few years, we have witnessed a very dangerous shift in conflict dynamics, which makes the RtoP concept even more relevant. Several resolutions referencing RtoP have been adopted by the UN Security Council and the Human Rights Council, but they did not prevent new mass atrocities. Therefore, it is high time now to further move from commitment to implementation. I fully share the Deputy Secretary-General's remark that RtoP was not designed to be accountable rhetoric.

Romania supports the Code of Conduct proposed by the ACT group and, of course, the work of France and Mexico regarding the Security Council action to prevent or end mass atrocities, but we also have to keep in mind that decisions concerning the Third Pillar of the RtoP are of the exclusive competence of the Security Council. At the same time, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda will offer solutions not only for preventing conflicts and crimes related to them, but also for healing broken societies and building a stable future for fragile and vulnerable communities.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I believe we need to strengthen the cooperation between New York and Geneva and work more focused with the Human Rights Council and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, as they are also a valuable tool for prevention.

Thank you.