

Intervention made by Mr. Sylvain Kalsakau
Deputy Permanent Representative of Vanuatu to the UN
Informal Interactive Dialogue on the Responsibility to Protect
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His Excellency, Mr. Ban Ki-moon;

Mr. President of the General Assembly;

Excellencies;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

11 years ago, world leaders met in this very city to negotiate and agree to what were supposedly audacious decisions in areas of development, security, human rights and UN reforms. The 2005 summit gave birth to the notion of the “Responsibility to Protect” (R2P) which gave the global community the right to intervene when national authorities fail in their foremost responsibilities to protect their own people from genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and ethnic cleansing.

Today, the challenges related to protecting populations from barbaric crimes remain despairingly great. Despite some headways made to prevent and effectively respond to atrocity crimes, efforts by the global community remains deplorably inadequate. We meet at a time where millions of people are crying out for unprecedented protection and other humanitarian needs.

Mr. Chair, Vanuatu remains deeply concerned at the alarming and unprecedented trend of forced displacement happening around the world which has escalated to a global crisis. This global crisis would have been

avoided had the global community not failed to uphold the principles of the responsibility to protect thereby preventing atrocity crimes escalating to levels it reached in Syria, South Sudan, Yemen and Iraq. Perhaps the world was waiting for the UN Security Council to take swift action and it should have.

Being a member of the UN Security Council is a responsibility as much as it is a privilege. The UN Security Council must be swift to act when situations remain at emerging risk to avoid full blown out atrocity crimes. The Council has a huge role to play in protecting the world's most vulnerable citizens in dire severe situations, especially women and children. When fronted with situations of mass atrocity crimes, the UN Security Council should learn to put their differences including their political interests aside for the sake of humanity.

Mr. Chair, enforcement of international human rights and international humanitarian systems remain weak. That is why Vanuatu is fully supportive of the International Criminal Court which is the most important international institution in the forefront in the fight to end impunity for mass atrocity crimes. Making those responsible for mass atrocity crimes accountable and threatened by International Criminal Court prosecutions for their actions is one of the most effective ways to prevent recurrence and create deterrence. The international community must also redouble efforts to engage in preventative diplomacy which if employed early, has proven to be an effective tool in preventing ongoing atrocities from escalating.

Mr. Chair, Vanuatu has been contributing its own members of the police force to active Peacekeeping duties since 2000. Vanuatu wishes to announce our endorsement of the *Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians*, which are significant especially as they address some of the weaknesses that undermine the effectiveness of peacekeepers in times of unstable situations. We call for

their swift implementation so that peacekeepers can be better prepared to play a role in also preventing mass atrocity crimes, and we encourage all UN Member States to join us in endorsing the *Principles*.

Mr Chair, Vanuatu remains committed to the principles of the Responsibility to Protect and calls for the full implementation of all three pillars of the norm. Vanuatu, like many other states, views the three pillars as mutually supporting and non-sequential. Vanuatu supports any meaningful investment in the prevention of atrocity crimes.

Mr. Chair, Vanuatu highly commends the current UN Secretary General in championing the principles of the Responsibility to Protect. Vanuatu fully supports the call made by the UN Secretary General for all UN member states to rededicate and deepen their commitment towards the principles of R2P through a new General Assembly resolution. Vanuatu sincerely hopes that the incoming UN Secretary General will continue to develop the *Human Rights Up Front Initiative* and will share the same passion as the current Secretary General in giving precedence to R2P in order to prevent future mass atrocities.

Conclusion

Mr. Chair, it is one thing to build consensus around the notion of the responsibility to protect and it is another to translate the principle from words into action. We all have a responsibility to protect the global population from atrocity crimes especially at times where national authorities fail in their primary duties to protect their own people. The charter of the United Nations constantly reminds us that lives irrespective of race, ethnicity or religion matters.

I thank you.