



BRAZIL

General Assembly

Informal Interactive Dialogue on the Report of the Secretary-General on the responsibility to protect (“Fulfilling our collective responsibility: International assistance and the responsibility to protect”)

**Statement by H.E. Antonio de Aguiar Patriota,
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(check against delivery)

Mr. President,

Thank you for convening this informal dialogue to assess the report of the Secretary-General on “Fulfilling our collective responsibility: International assistance and the responsibility to protect”. Recent debates on R2P have overlooked the importance of international cooperation. The fact that this report focuses on Pillar II is a significant step towards fixing this imbalance and placing emphasis on the prevention aspects of the concept.

Brazil is firmly convinced that the most effective means for protecting civilians are non-coercive ones. The dynamics introduced by hastened resort to force are often much more pernicious than virtuous – and our first consideration in R2P situations should be not making matters worse.

For R2P to overcome criticism and controversy, it must be made clear that it does not lie in the exceptional and sporadic imposition of coercive measures, but rather in the constant and steady task of assisting States in developing capacity to protect their populations and building safer societies. When privileging horizontal approaches based on cooperation and dialogue, we are reinvigorating the original preventive ethos which informed R2P’s origins.

Mr. President,

R2P is much more about prevention than it is about response.

However complex it may be to define what a good partnership for the purpose of Pillar II is, the key aspect in this regard was raised in the SG’s report: “the responsibility to protect is intended to reinforce, not undermine, sovereignty”. Our challenge is not just to equip States to exercise their

responsibilities, but mainly to work in partnership with them to build societies where R2P crimes are more unlikely to happen.

Especially important for this end are efforts towards what the 2011 R2P report has dubbed “structural prevention”, including the promotion of development and food security and the eradication of poverty.

The UN should play a pivotal role in providing cooperation under Pillar II. However, the Organization’s capacity to work on structural prevention has been severely limited by the imbalances which define its current budgetary dynamics. Projects towards development and human rights are underfunded, while programs on the domain on international peace and security receive the bulk of available resources. Very little is left for structural prevention projects, which have been mostly financed by voluntary contributions – thus evading stricter accountability and following the interests of major donors, instead of the priorities agreed upon by this General Assembly.

It is curious to observe that some influential member States continuously evoke the necessity of protecting civilians in conflict scenarios, but when it comes to the UN budget, raise difficulties to strengthen the development pillar. Brazil is firmly convinced that civilians are better protected in more prosperous and inclusive societies. An exclusively or excessively security-centered approach can be insufficient or even detrimental do R2P’s protective goal.

Non-discrimination is a principle that should guide international cooperation under Pillar II. When assisting States to fulfill their responsibility to protect, the international community must not permit the adoption of selective approaches or double standards. Civilians in one State are no less deserving of protection than civilians in other States, including in occupied territories.

It is of paramount importance to draw a clear dividing line between prevention and response. The statement that Pillar II encompasses military assistance to States under stress, even when their consent is granted, is problematic. The idea that consented resort to force lies under “prevention” would leave to “response” nothing but the resort to force without the consent of the State concerned, inadequately extending the importance of such extreme course of action within R2P.

Mr. President,

As we approach the tenth anniversary of R2P, it becomes every day clearer that the UN should move from a culture of “reaction” to one of “prevention”. The coming months will be an opportunity for an honest and objective evaluation of the implementation of R2P during the last decade. We cannot shy away from recognizing that, in the name of R2P, thousands of civilians were put in danger.

Unfortunately the XXIst Century, though still in its initial years, offers more examples of irresponsibility towards civilians than the opposite. We look forward to an objective 10-years evaluation of R2P in which a careful assessment of where we stand be made possible with the full regard given to the “responsibility while protecting” idea when it comes to Pillar III.

Thank you.