

Former Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy to present 'The Responsibility to Protect' at University of Minnesota Law School Contacts:

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MINNEAPOLIS / ST. PAUL (11/14/2011) —☐ Lloyd Axworthy, former Canadian foreign minister, will present “The Responsibility to Protect” from 3:30 to 5 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 22, in Room 25 of the University of Minnesota Law School, 229 19th Ave. S., Minneapolis. Minnesota Secretary of State Mark Ritchie will introduce Axworthy.

Axworthy was twice president of the U.N. Security Council and has held seven different Cabinet positions in the Canadian government. He has gained international distinction for his advocacy of an International Criminal Court, the “Responsibility to Protect” principle and, in work for which he was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize, the abolition of landmines. He holds 12 honorary doctorates and is currently President of the University of Winnipeg. His book “Navigating a New World: Canada’s Global Future” was published in 2003.

Over much of the world, autocratic regimes have used the mantle of “national sovereignty” to protect themselves from outside intervention as they undertook genocide or ethnic cleansing campaigns against ethnic or religious minorities, tribal populations, dissident political movements or other allegedly undesirable groups. Traditionally, the rights of states have trumped the rights of people.

But in 2005 the U.N. General Assembly unanimously approved a fundamentally new concept of what sovereignty means, declaring that it not only gives states certain rights but also entails the responsibility of states to protect their own citizens. Further, the new doctrine stipulates that when a state fails to uphold this responsibility, the international community, acting through the United Nations, has not just a right but an obligation to act in the interest of an endangered population and, as a last resort, can even use force to do so when all means of peaceful intervention have been exhausted.

Laudable though the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine appears, international resolve to apply it has been wanting on multiple occasions. Axworthy will address this reluctance and what can be done about the problem in his presentation. A question and answer session will follow.

The lecture is free and open to the public.

Sponsoring Organizations: Minnesota Chapter, Citizens for Global Solutions; United Nations Association of Minnesota; Minnesota Alliance of Peacemakers, Advocates for Human Rights; Canadian Consulate General, Minneapolis; Advocates for Human Rights; World Without Genocide at William Mitchell College of Law; the Minnesota International Center; and the following units of the University of Minnesota: Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Human Rights Center of the Law School, Human Rights Program of the College of Liberal Arts,

Department of Political Science, Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs and Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Global Change.

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