

Preparatory Workshop for the Second Meeting of the R2P Focal Points Network The Stanley Foundation and the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect

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The 2005 United Nations World Summit Outcome Document outlined the unequivocal responsibility of states and the international community to protect populations from genocide, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and war crimes. In doing so, states committed to taking steps at the domestic, regional, and international level to protect populations from mass atrocities and making the promise of “never again” a reality.

In September 2010 the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, in association with the governments of Denmark and Ghana, launched an initiative to support governments in their efforts to operationalize the **Responsibility to Protect (R2P)** at the national level through the appointment of R2P Focal Points.

Focal Points are senior officials mandated to enable national efforts to improve mass atrocity prevention and response. (...) Costa Rica and Australia have since joined Denmark, Ghana, and the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect as co-organizers of the initiative and the Focal Points Network.

In advance of the second formal meeting of this Focal Points Network, the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect and the Stanley Foundation convened R2P Focal Points and other national representatives, UN mission ambassadors and experts, UN officials, and mass atrocity specialists for a preparatory workshop to address the challenges faced by individual R2P Focal Points and their developing global network.

Held on February 24-26, 2012, as part of the Stanley Foundation’s 43rd United Nations Issues Conference, the workshop considered how countries with diverse forms of government, institutional capacities, and bureaucratic cultures might tailor their internal process—and the profile of an R2P Focal Point—to suit their national context. (...)

(...) Reflecting on the objectives and orientation of R2P Focal Points and their global network, participants outlined the following operating principles:

- Mass atrocity risk is dynamic and universal. Developing national capacities to prevent and halt

atrocities involves a process of continuous self-reflection relevant to all states.

- The specific profile of the Focal Point should be determined by national context and capacities.
- Focal Points should be positioned with the authority to convene policymakers across relevant ministries. They should possess deep insight into the workings of their national system and a skill for operating within the nuances of their institutional context.
- The core objective of a Focal Points network is to create a “community of commitment” that increases state capacity to implement R2P’s three-pillar framework.
- The network will promote education and awareness of R2P principles through support provided to member governments and engagement with those outside the network.
- The community is conceived as a network, not a coalition. Members remain free to determine their position and approach to specific situations and policy applications.
- The network will serve as a support system for states committed to R2P objectives; first, in developing national action plans and capacities and ultimately, in policy development and coordination.

To read the full policy memo, see [here](#)

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