

Statement of South Africa – Informal Interactive Dialogue on R2P, 8 September 2015

[TRANSCRIPTION]

Mister President,

My delegation thanks you for scheduling this interactive dialogue and for the concept note that will guide our discussions here today. We further welcome the report of the Secretary General.

In addition to commemorating the 70th anniversary of the UN and many landmark decisions, this year also marks the 10th anniversary of the adoption by our heads of state and government of the concept of the Responsibility to Protect as part of the World Summit outcome document. Allow me therefore to renew South Africa's commitment to this political norm and to the three pillars of implementation that we have been discussing over the past number of years.

Mister President, the first two of the three pillars of R2P offer much cooperation opportunity to states under stress.

In the case of the first pillar, states must be encouraged to develop internal conflict resolution mechanisms and institutions through which disputes can be addressed through dialogue and in a timely manner. Strong political institutions that guarantee and protect the participation of citizens in political processes are the best guardian against atrocity crimes.

The second pillar of the international community's commitment to assist states provides a broad range of support mechanisms at the sub-regional, regional, and international level to assist states that are on the brink. Activities in this regard include elements of development assistance and capacity building with regard to conflict prevention and management either bilaterally or through international and regional mechanisms. A good example here is the African peer review mechanism that aims to assist states in developing and evaluating political systems.

Mister President, all of us here would acknowledge the responsibility under Pillar three for the international community to respond when a state is manifestly failing to protect its population against atrocity crimes. South Africa is supportive of this provision but also questions its abuse. Firstly, we agree with the Secretary General that our collective responsibility to protect must be executed within the scope of the UN Charter and utilize all the tools available to prevent and/or end such atrocities. Thus, the UN Security Council must consider all options available to it, including diplomatic, political, and humanitarian, and military action should be a measure of the last result.

In essence, mister President, South Africa strongly agrees that atrocity prevention is central to the successful implementation of R2P. Over the years, our delegation has consistently called for a greater focus on the wide range of tools available to us with regard to preventive diplomacy. In this regard,

we fully support recommendations of the Secretary General in his report. We also believe that more resources should be [inaudible] for preventive diplomacy. To succeed, R2P requires a sustained and predictable injection of resources. Thus, it is perhaps time for member states to consider the method of more effective resourcing for the implementation of preventive diplomacy including for R2P.

I thank you.