

Statement delivered by Cuba – Informal Interactive Dialogue on R2P, 6 September 2017  
[UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTION FROM WEBCAST]

Cuba would like to reiterate that the responsibility to protect is still of great concern to many countries, particularly small, developing countries because of the lack of consensus and definitions of this concept. This can be easily manipulated for political ends. Cuba believes that at present we cannot talk about implementation of the responsibility to protect because there is not even consensus about its scope and implications yet. Until we resolve differences of interpretation and know exactly what it means and give it legitimacy, only then can it be implemented. It applies only in cases of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Atrocity crimes does not form part of this. So this should not be used to reference these type of crimes. Cuba would, therefore, like to express its concern that the terms mass atrocity or atrocity crimes could be used in a selective way and for political means.

International efforts to prevent these crimes must contribute to strengthening the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, particularly sovereign equality and self-determination. There are a number of ambiguities around these concepts and, therefore, any action would be totally interpretative and not negotiated because there are a number of contradictions around the whole concept. Therefore, the principles are voluntary nature and consent of the nature of the states regarding the responsibility to protect must be taken into account.

This new report seems to be trying to make movement towards practical implementation of these supposed three pillars and their obligations to be placed upon member states, which they do not even accept it.

Moderator,

The United Nations must be democratic and here we have a lack of certainty about who is deciding what and who to protect and who can decide that member states cannot protect its own population and how can we decide when this is being used and whether it is being used for interventionist reasons. This action could only be taken with the consent of the member state affected. This concept cannot be used as justification for a case which may not even exist.

We need to have appropriate mechanisms to ensure that international laws are respected. Until we have decided when and how force should be used, this can be manipulated for political reasons or for interests not linked to the well-being of the populations who are supposedly being protected.

Cuba has reiterated on a number of occasions that the most pressing need for the international community is to try to find solutions to the real causes behind such situations—development and poverty in other words. Inequality and social exclusion must also be addressed as must hunger,

exclusion, lack of access to drinking water. There are a number of structural problems which lead to conflicts breaking out and then leading to extreme situations and these can then be true disasters.

Cuba would like to reiterate that the international community is not impassive in the face of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. This goes without saying but in many cases, the promotion of the responsibility to protect is used for other reasons in order to facilitate interference in internal affairs and try to change regimes and governments and to interfere in other countries—in many cases small, developing countries. In the history of the world we have seen this many times in the past is a reason of great concern to us.

Thank you.