

Statement delivered by Panama – Informal Interactive Dialogue on R2P, 6 September 2017
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Panama supports the declaration from the Netherlands on behalf of the Group of Friends for the Responsibility to Protect.

My country would like to highlight what the Secretary-General mentions in his ninth report, where he proposes encouraging all member states to designate a national focal point and to join the growing global focal points network on R2P. We share the recommendations in the report on five steps for internal action by states, stressing in particular the importance of prevention, particularly for accountability and regular self-assessment as effective mechanisms for prevention of atrocity crimes.

To this end, we recommend working together to design universal instruments or tools which could strengthen the processes of accountability and self-assessment. Specific recommendations for institutional resilience could also be drawn up. These, as Panama sees it, could be a guide for member states and would allow them to systematize their processes and guarantee that all aspects with regard to atrocity crimes are taken into account.

The prevention of atrocity crimes such as genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity is a crucial responsibility of a state's authorities. A vibrant and active civil society can also strengthen and support national capacity. Their cooperation with governments and their presence on the ground is crucial to identify potential risks threatening populations and, in turn, this can prevent atrocity crimes. Civil society can also play a key role at local level by overcoming barriers and mobilizing.

Moderator,

We are pleased to see progress being made toward recognizing the Responsibility to Protect in the Security Council. Decisions adopted by the Council are fundamental to prevent atrocity crimes. Therefore, we would call upon member states, particularly permanent member states of the Security Council, to avoid the use of veto in such situations as proposed by France and Mexico and built upon the code of conduct promoted by the ACT group. One hundred and twelve countries have already signed up to this. In line with the crucial role of the Security Council which is a guarantor of peace and international security, any failure to comply these duties would severely undermine not only this body but also that of the whole United Nations system. We need, therefore, a paradigm shift that stresses ethical values to ensure that our actions are not only fair but also effective at protecting people at risk. Preventative diplomacy must become a central tool.

Finally, my delegation would urge member states to implement the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report, to renew our commitment to prevention and to protect civilian populations against all these crimes. This can only be done by building capacity and having a true political will.