



# Statement of the Republic of Vanuatu

## 2017 General Assembly Informal Interactive Dialogue on the Responsibility to Protect

*Statement delivered by Amb. Odo Tevi, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Vanuatu to the United Nations, on 6 September 2017 at the UN General Assembly, New York*

Mr. President,

1. Let me begin my brief statement by thanking you for organizing this informal dialogue on the ninth report of the UN Secretary-General on the Responsibility to Protect (R2P).
2. I wish to commend Secretary-General Guterres for the report which highlights the need to strengthen accountability for the implementation of the responsibility to protect and the prevention of mass atrocity crimes.

Mr. President,

3. The Vanuatu Government reaffirms its support for the commitment made at the 2005 World Summit regarding the Responsibility to Protect all populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Today, there are deeply troubling signs which threaten the basic doctrines of R2P. We are witnessing some of the greatest humanitarian crises of our time with millions of innocent lives being killed or at least denied the basic of human rights. The need for timely and decisive action to implement R2P in accordance with the United Nations Charter has never before been greater.

Mr. President,

4. The Vanuatu Government maintains its desire for actions to prevent mass atrocity crimes from being committed rather than reacting after they are already underway. The international community must devote its resources on preventing crises where mass atrocities occur rather than responding to them. The gap between commitment and actuality must be bridged which means strengthening accountability for R2P implementation. We underscore the importance of utilizing all available preventative tools such as diplomacy, dialogue, mediation and peaceful negotiations to halt the escalation of any mass atrocity crimes.

Mr. President,

5. The Vanuatu Government maintains the view that ensuring accountability for mass atrocity crimes is one of the most effect deterrent. Vanuatu acceded to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court on 2 December 2011 and has since maintained support for the ICC, which is the most important human rights institution in the battle to end impunity for mass atrocity crimes.

Mr. President,

6. The entire UN System must also be strengthened in order for it to better respond to protecting populations from atrocity crimes. The Vanuatu Government fully supports the Secretary General's *Human Rights Up Front* initiative which aims to mainstream R2P across the UN System and therefore strengthen capacity, coherence, cooperation and coordination between UN entities on mechanisms that prevent large-scale human violations.

Mr. President,

7. In situations of escalating risks, the UN Security Council's response must be swift, effective, consistent and must be void of vested political self-interests. In such situations, the Vanuatu Government fully supports the French and Mexican Declaration which calls for the Permanent Members of the UN Security Council to voluntarily restraint the use of their veto powers in order to uphold their responsibility to protect civilians in vulnerable situations.

Mr. President,

8. R2P is everybody's business. We all have a responsibility to protect the most vulnerable around us. At a time of unprecedented humanitarian and protection needs, the international community must spare no efforts or resources to prevent any future mass atrocity crimes.

Mr. President,

9. Be assured of Vanuatu's commitment in this endeavour.

I thank you!