

Statement delivered by Venezuela – Informal Interactive Dialogue on R2P, 6 September 2017
[TRANSLATION]

Mr. President:

1. This informal dialogue of the General Assembly on the notion of the Responsibility to Protect is taking place in an international context characterized by uncertainty, increased tension and armed conflict resulting from interventionism and aggression by military powers whose actions affect peace and international security.
2. The aggressive rhetoric of some powers, which deliberately and illegally threaten sovereign countries with military intervention, to restrict their right to self-determination must be a reason for concern by this organization and its member states and be fully rejected. The Charter of the United Nations speaks about the respect for sovereignty. These powers have promoted and carried out military intervention in sovereign states and often these are the main defenders of this Responsibility to Protect concept. Rather than protecting the rights of people, it is often used as an instrument to destabilize and bring down legitimate governments or to dismantle political institutions in the countries that are victims of aggression. This happened in Iraq and Libya and is still happening in Syria. These three brother countries are suffering from the devastating effects of such aggression. Therefore, it is paradoxical and dangerous that the promoters of this notion apply double standards in dealing with conflict situations. They show particular interest in some countries while they ignore the perpetration of atrocity crimes in other cases such as the Palestinian case or in the humanitarian situation in Yemen.
3. Sovereignty is with the people. This is a principle which nobody in the United Nations can violate. Nobody can decide which country or which government is legitimate and breach their sovereignty. This is established in the Charter of the United Nations. Such a situation is a threat to international peace and security and the Security Council has all possibilities to act if this is the case.
4. In Libya during the military intervention, peace was not achieved despite the efforts of its people and its authorities. Now, Libya is in a situation of economic, social and political instability which is extreme and which is led by non-state armed actors including terrorist groups. The obvious failure of military intervention in Libya was justified under this excuse of protecting its citizens and this clearly shows the contradictions of the situation with regard to promoting human rights and international humanitarian law. The situation in Libya was a manipulation for media and political reasons of big media corporations and interventionist countries and was carried out not to protect civilians in the country but rather to bring down a government, as high authorities of those countries participating in the intervention acknowledged.

5. **Mr. President**, Venezuela has reiterated its commitment to the need to prevent crimes against humanity, war crimes, genocide and ethnic cleansing—whoever has committed them and wherever they are perpetrated.
6. On a number of occasions, Venezuela has expressed its rejection of the intentions of some states to invoke the notion of the Responsibility to Protect in reference to conflict situations involving civilians. We have firmly opposed trying to incorporate this in a de facto way into the principles and standards within the Charter of the United Nations.
7. Venezuela would like to thank the Secretary-General for presenting his report but at the same time, this only gives the vision of those who are in favor of this concept and leave aside those who are critical to it.
8. We are concerned that this report says that the Responsibility to Protect enjoys the consensus from the members of the United Nations. That is not the case. This proposal has been severely criticized and questioned by a significant number of countries, including Venezuela. They continue to consider doing it against sovereignty, territorial integrity, and sovereign equality of states and also in clear contradiction of the principles of nonintervention and internal affairs, self-determination, peaceful solutions of conflict and avoiding the use of force.
9. The Secretary-General's report tries to promote the implementation which there is not even an agreement on as to its nature and scope. There are many doubts about the principles within this. It also claims to use legal instruments and mechanisms to legitimize its use, even when there is no explicit mention of this idea with them.
10. Venezuela believes that there are still many differences as to the content and scope of the notion of the Responsibility to Protect. So, we categorically reject the proposal of possibly including this in the 72nd period of the General Assembly. We believe this should be further discussed.

Thank you.