



## **General Assembly**

**“Responsibility to Protect: Timely and Decisive Response”**

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti**

**Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations**

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(check against delivery)



Mr. President,

At the outset, let me thank you for convening this informal dialogue to examine the report of the Secretary-General on the 'Responsibility to Protect: Timely and Decisive Response'.

I would also like to thank Professor Edward Luck, former Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Responsibility to Protect, for the inclusive and open manner of conducting consultations with Member States.

The Secretary-General's report addresses important issues regarding the third pillar of the responsibility to protect. It is our firm belief that the further development of the responsibility to protect must take into account an enhanced understanding and a broader range of views of what it means to act collectively, through the United Nations, when national authorities manifestly fail to protect their populations.

Brazil also believes that, as we look into the implementation of R2P, we should step back to consider the broader issue of conflicts and their impact on civilian populations. It is particularly disheartening that the primary victims of war are vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly and the dispossessed. It is our obligation to identify and combat the root causes of conflict.

Mr. President,

Brazil appreciates the fact that the Secretary-General has welcomed the initiative on the 'responsibility while protecting' (RWP) and dedicated one section of his report to that idea, first mentioned by President Dilma Rousseff in her opening address to the General Assembly last September.

Since then, there has been significant interest from several stakeholders in broadening this dialogue. Brazil has been engaged in fruitful exchanges with countries from different regions, either in the UN or bilaterally, as well as with specialists and non-governmental organizations. We are pleased to note that some of the misgivings to RWP initially voiced by a few delegations have receded and the purpose of Brazil's proposal is now clearly understood.

During a seminar recently held in Rio de Janeiro, Professor Gareth Evans synthesized what he sees as the two major substantive new elements in the RWP proposal: 'first, a set of criteria or guidelines to be fully debated and taken into account before the Security Council mandates any use of military force; and secondly, for some kind of enhanced monitoring and review processes which would enable such mandates to be seriously debated by all Council members during their implementation phase.'

These two sets of ideas deserve our careful consideration and could constitute a cluster of issues for further debate among us as we consider ways of integrating a RWP dimension into R2P.

But it is always worth reminding ourselves that prevention is the best policy. It is the emphasis on preventive diplomacy that reduces the risk of armed conflict and the human costs associated with it. In that regard, we commend the initiative by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to establish 2012 as the year of prevention, which has Brazil's full support. Other initiatives such as 'Friends of Mediation' reflect the same spirit of promoting the exercise of collective responsibility in the pursuit of peace through diplomacy, dialogue, mediation, negotiation and prevention.

We are convinced that, in the face of a complex reality of overarching political changes, it is important that the international community demonstrate renewed commitment and strengthened confidence in its capacity to make use of the tools established by the UN Charter for the promotion of the peaceful settlement of disputes. We must avoid the tendency to hasten towards extreme measures.

The use of force always brings with it the risk of causing unintended casualties and disseminating violence and instability. The fact that it is exercised with the aim of protecting civilians does not make the collateral damage or unintended destabilization less tragic. The use of force can make a political solution more difficult to achieve. This is why it must be utilized in the most judicious way.

Sequencing between the three pillars of R2P should be logical, based on political prudence. It does not mean the establishment of arbitrary check-lists. The international community should refrain from establishing automatic linkages between the protection of civilians and the use of force.

Building upon the 2005 Outcome Document, the 'responsibility while protecting' not only calls for vigilance and sober judgment in identifying where threats of magnitude exist and are growing, as the Secretary-General puts it; RWP also defends more consistent and trustworthy guidelines and parameters for the accountable exercise of collective security by the Security Council.

Further discussion based on the principles, parameters and criteria proposed by the 'responsibility while protecting' may offer a good basis for sharpening our understanding of the exercise of collective security in full respect of the Charter. Such a discussion should look to the future, rather than to the past.

Brazil stands ready to contribute to this debate.

Thank you.

