



CZECH REPUBLIC

Statement by

H.E. Mrs. Edita Hrdá

Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the UN

**at the Interactive Debate of the General Assembly of the United Nations on
the Responsibility to Protect**

New York, 5 September 2012

Check against delivery

Mr. President,

The Czech Republic would like to align itself with the statement delivered previously on behalf of the European Union.

We very much welcome the initiative of the President of the General Assembly to convene this interactive dialogue. As a Member State of the Group of Friends of Responsibility to Protect, the Czech Republic would also like to take this opportunity to reiterate its steady commitment to the ideas and values that the RtoP represents.

Together with other delegations, we were delighted to be informed of the appointment of the new Special Advisor for Genocide and we hope that a new Special Advisor for RtoP will be found soon. We are grateful for the work and relentless effort of the two outgoing Special Advisors, Francis Deng and Edward Luck; it is our belief that without their courage and endeavour the success of RtoP implementation would not have been conceivable.

Mr President,

It is thanks to RtoP that over the past seven years the discussions on conflict prevention and solution and related responsibilities have experienced a major shift in quality. This should be emphasised as its highly commendable and encouraging contribution.

Not only does the frequency, with which meetings on RtoP take place and new initiatives related to and stemming from it are announced, reflects the ever so high number of conflicts that need to be examined against the yardstick of RtoP principles, it also generates the necessary debate about the root causes, prevention and solutions to the conflict. A network of national focal points is emerging and may one day become another source of new impetus for RtoP in its global public diplomacy role.

We can see that - regardless the “realpolitik” and often the situation on the ground - much more attention is now paid to the principles of civilian protection and governmental responsibility than ever before. “The world is watching” so to speak, and not only “watching”, it now has the terminology to describe what it sees and the tools at hand to mend it. The actual delivery is indeed oftentimes a different matter...

In this context, let me express our appreciation for the current Report of the Secretary General: “Timely and Decisive Response”, a title which resonates with a particular urgency these days.

The Report aptly illustrates the profound misunderstanding that is often attached to the use of measures under all three RtoP pillars. The RtoP tools need to be seen as interlinked and mutually reinforcing, rather than separate and sequential. The prevention of and response to a failure of a state to protect its population against genocide, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and war crimes are closely connected.

Such actions never of course occur unheralded. The Czech Republic, as a Member State of the Human Rights Council, would like to highlight the role of this UN body as well as its potential in the context of RtoP situations prevention. The tools it provides, such as the Universal Periodic Review or Special Sessions, are indeed unique in their ability to send a powerful signal about the international community zero tolerance policy towards crimes and violations covered by RtoP and the accountability of their perpetrators.

We very much agree with the recent words of the High Commissioner for Human Rights about the role of HRC Fact-finding Missions. Their objective and up-to-date information and their recommendations point to appropriate national or international actions to curb crimes and violations covered by the RtoP.

Also, having the collective memory of the totalitarian regime at the back of its mind, the Czech Republic highly values the work of non-governmental organizations, which is essentially irreplaceable in pointing out RtoP situations worldwide. We do our utmost to support NGOs at home and abroad as well as to pass on some of our own historical experience. Yet, we are very well aware that there is always room for improvement.

Thank you, Mr President.