



## GEORGIA

### Statement by Mr. Giorgi Mikeladze, Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Georgia to the United Nations

at the 9<sup>th</sup> United Nations Informal Dialogue on the Responsibility to  
Protect

6 September 2017, New York

*(Please check against delivery)*

Thank you Mister Chair,

Let me start by thanking the Secretary-General for his report on “Implementing the Responsibility to Protect: Accountability for Prevention”.

Georgia has been continuously supporting the principle of responsibility to protect and has been participating in the network of national focal points on R2P. Therefore, we are glad to observe increased commitment to this principle worldwide. As the report notes, Consensus about the purposes of the responsibility to protect spans every continent and there is no longer any question that the protection of populations from atrocity crimes is both a national and international responsibility.

We welcome Secretary-General’s increased focus on Pillar I and his emphasis on prevention agenda. Georgia is a country that has suffered from several waves of ethnic cleansing due to the foreign military occupation, where thousands of persons inside the occupied territories face regular human rights violations and the risk of forced displacement. Against this background, we fully understand the importance of strong

national and international preventive tools to avert the outbreak and protraction of crises that take such a heavy toll on humanity.

We concur with the Secretary-General in his finding that all three components of accountability for atrocity prevention - moral, legal and political are vital and should be addressed by Member States and international community with resolve. It is also important to recognize the link between the R2P and the 2030 Agenda, particularly with the Goal 16 on peaceful, just and inclusive societies. Developing transparent, accountable and inclusive institutions is at the core of these efforts.

Georgia is committed to advance its relevant national mechanisms, be it through the ratification of the core instruments of international human rights and humanitarian law or putting in place national human rights institutions to address atrocity prevention. Human Rights Treaty Bodies have a particular importance to this end. Georgia has issued a standing invitation to all Special Procedures and has been regularly accepting visits from various Special Rapporteurs, the most recent of them being the Special Rapporteur on IDPs and SR on Violence against Women, to name the few. The Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review Process is another significant cornerstone among these efforts. Notably, we have already entered the third cycle of UPR.

Distinguished Delegates,

As the report rightly notes, “there remains too much of a gap between the solemn commitments and legal obligations of Member States and actual lived experience of vulnerable populations.” In this context, let me recall the dire situation of people living on the other side of the occupation line in the two Georgian regions of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia. Despite numerous calls from international community, including the latest Human Rights Council Resolution on Georgia, both occupied regions remain closed for international human rights bodies, including the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, while the people on the ground face grave violations of freedom of movement, restrictions on education in native language, deprivation of property rights, unlawful detentions and more. This situation creates an acute risks that could potentially grow into atrocity crimes and requires stronger international attention. The responsibility of Member States to

assist is of paramount importance in this regard, especially as we address the cases, when a sovereign state is prevented from exercising its responsibility due to foreign military occupation.

In conclusion let me touch upon the critical role of the Security Council in sustaining peace. It is imperative that the Security Council is able to act in a timely and efficient manner to avert mass atrocities. In this context, we reiterate our full support to the French-Mexican initiative on voluntary veto right restriction to prevent these crimes.

Finally, let me reiterate Georgia's commitment to advance the goals and objectives of responsibility to protect and support the Secretary-General in his endeavor to integrate atrocity prevention into the UN prevention platform.

I thank you.