

**Statement delivered on behalf of the Permanent Mission of Guatemala to the United Nations**

**General Assembly informal, interactive dialogue on the “Responsibility to Protect: State Responsibility and Prevention”**

11 September 2013

(UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTION FROM SPANISH TRANSLATION)

Mr. Moderator,

I will follow your guidance in limiting my comments to three minutes, which obviously doesn't allow me to do honor to the Secretary-General's report, nor to the presentation of the panelists.

I have three comments, each of a different nature. First, I wish to express our satisfactions that the GA continues to build on the mandate contained in paragraphs 138 and 139 of the Outcome Document of 2005. We're clearly involved in a process, and our perceptions are gaining greater clarity from year to year as a result of these debates. It is to be noted, however, that since we adopted Resolution 63/308 in 2009, all of our debates have been of an informal nature. We would like that next year our debate be a formal agenda item to clarify the way forward.

Second, we believe that the Secretary-General's report, complemented by the presentations of the panelists, contains considerable added value through its examination of the six risk factors or drivers that contribute to mass atrocities being committed in societies, as well as policy options to mitigate or minimize these risks. At the same time, we concur with the observations of the SG that there are no universally-valid explanations that account for the eruption of mass atrocities, nor on how to prevent them. But clearly, the strengthening of the state to comply with one of its primary functions, which is to defend the right to life for its citizens, is crucial.

Many factors enter into this equation, and they are codified in the report and the presentation, as well as some intangibles which perhaps we do not understand as well, such as the collective attitudes required to move from societies where a culture of winner-takes-all prevails, towards societies that are more tolerant, more inclusive, and more open to dialogue and consensus-building.

But the main point I wish to highlight is that, to the degree that we strengthen the capacity of states to meet their primary responsibilities, the debate regarding the possible invocation of the third pillar takes a secondary role. In other words, regarding the holistic conceptual framework of RtoP, the accent should clearly be on prevention.

Third, my own country is mentioned in the report. Although there was no doubt that mass atrocities were committed, including crimes against humanity during the conflict that lasted almost four decades, the peace accord signed in December 1996 contains specific instruments to foster a culture of peace, reconciliation, and tolerance. I cannot elaborate on the matter, but we have benefited from lessons learned, which prove that it is possible to act on the intangibles, altering the mindset of the collective thinking by accepting the importance of legislation, institutions, norms, and policies that permit a forging of democratic and inclusive societies where mass atrocities contemplated under RtoP become something unthinkable.