

## General Assembly Debate Statement: New Zealand

### Unofficial Transcription from webcast

The decision of world leaders in 2005 to agree the key elements of R2P was regarded at the time as momentous. But as the SG has made clear to us both in his report and in his comments today it was hardly groundbreaking and certainly we were as United Nations a relative late comer of R2P. That's because sub-regional and regional organizations particular the AU and ECOWAS and the OSCE were the real pioneers in international efforts to prevent mass atrocity crimes. So it is fitting today that we should acknowledge that fact and that we should discuss how we can learn from the experiences of these regional and sub-regional organizations and how we can enhance the UN's relationship with those groups. That's because although there are many positive examples of global to regional to sub-regional cooperation in cases of mass atrocity crimes there is still a great potential of more to come. And in that context, Mr. President, I would like to make 5 points.

First there could be greater collaboration between regional groups and the organs of the United Nations, particularly the Security Council and the Peace Building Commission. In capitals and headquarters there can be much greater discouragement of such crimes and the promotion of national responsibility and accountability. In New Zealand there have been several positive developments and that is because although R2P language is not reflected in formal documents of, say, ASEAN or the Asian Regional Forum one does find references to R2P related principles and norms such as: protection of human rights, rule of law, democracy, conflict resolution and preventative diplomacy. In fact as the SG's report points out the 2004 plan of actions of the ASEAN Security Community, for example, promotes best practice for conflict management and resolution.

Secondly, given ASEAN's regional perspective and experience there could be benefit in a closer relationship between it and the office of the Special Advisers on Genocide and R2P. Mr. President it would be remiss to discuss R2P without referring to recent events as there have been a number of lessons learned from the international community's response in respect to the threat of mass atrocities crimes in Libya and Cote D'Ivoire. As the SG's report makes clear, one such lesson is that there is no well-developed doctrine for the use of military assets even in clear cases that require invoking the doctrine of R2P. I think that Mr. President that we should be using this opportunity for a constructive debate on how such a doctrine might be constructed. What are the rules of engagement? What is the endgame? How do we simultaneously advance both political and military tracks? Another lesson is that while R2P 3<sup>rd</sup> pillar gets the media attention, pillars 1 and 2 are critically important. There should be more emphasis on pillar 2 the sovereign responsibility of states to protect their populations and on their responsibility of the international community to enable and assist those states to do those things. Libya and Cote D'Ivoire have also taught us that R2P is no academic debate. Following incidents in Libya and other areas some very difficult questions must now be faced. But we owe it, Mr. President, to the millions that have died as a result of genocide and mass atrocities that we don't shy away from discussing those difficult questions rather we debate them in a spirit of constructive and positive engagement and mutual respect. But above all it must be our commitment to those victims of mass atrocities that we the international community will not allow such tragedies to be repeated.