



THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Statement by H.E. Ambassador KIM Sook

Permanent Representative

**Informal Interactive Dialogue on the Report of the Secretary-General on the
responsibility to protect: Timely and decisive response**

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Thank you Mr. President,

1. I would like to begin by expressing my appreciation to you for organizing today's important informal interactive dialogue on the responsibility to protect (R2P): timely and decisive response.

Mr. President,

2. R2P has been developing steadily since the 2005 Summit Outcome Document when world leaders made a landmark commitment to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. The 2009 report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of R2P then proved to be an important milestone for operationalization of the development of the norm.

3. Similarly, 2010's interactive dialogue on early warning and assessment facilitated a greater understanding of the issues inherent in R2P and reinforced the notion that preventing, rather than just responding to mass atrocities, should be prioritized for a variety of reasons. Last year's interactive dialogue on regional and sub-regional arrangements in implementing R2P further elevated the issue within the Organization.

4. My delegation appreciates the 2012 report of the Secretary-General, which represents another important step for the larger implementation of R2P.

5. The report notes the three pillar framework established in the 2009 report, namely, the protection responsibilities of the state; international assistance and capacity-building; and timely and decisive response. It suggests, and I quote, that “one should not draw too sharp a distinction between prevention and response” and that “the three pillars are not sequential and are of equal importance; without all three, the concept would be incomplete.” We support this view.

Mr. President,

6. The Government of the Republic of Korea, as a member of the Group of Friends of the R2P, has been a strong supporter of R2P and has been taking every opportunity in international fora to contribute to solidifying support and full implementation of the concept.

7. Strengthening the international community’s toolkit to effectively respond to mass atrocities is indeed in everyone’s interests. However we must take note of the fact that each case is different and there is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach in employing R2P’s three pillars. Similarly, Member States, the UN, and civil society should move forward with the awareness that particularly tough cases are often highly politicized. As such, in some cases, responding in a timely and decisive manner may be more difficult in practice than it is in discussion. I couldn’t agree more with the report in suggesting that “Disagreements about the past must not stand in the way of our determination to protect populations in the present.” Indeed, as Secretary-General Ban said this morning, “inaction can not be an option.”

8. Taking this opportunity, I would like to now reiterate that the most efficient way to achieve the goals of R2P is prevention. However, if pillars I and II do not work, pillar III will be critical. The report of the Secretary-General notes the many R2P tools available under the UN Charter, including the non-coercive responses under Chapters VI and VIII that Deputy Secretary-General Eliason said are “under-utilized” this morning, as well as coercive tools under Chapter VII. In recent years, the experience has proven that the threat or actual use of referrals to ICC could undoubtedly serve a preventive purpose. The report also highlights the preference to first address situations with peaceful measures.

9. My delegation is concerned, however, about the possibility that too much attention on pillar III, in particular coercive measures, might have a negative impact upon the overall further development of the norm. Again, this is why our efforts should be focused on further strengthening pillars I and II, the “human rights friendly” non-coercive measures that Assistant Secretary-General Ivan Šimonović stressed earlier during this meeting. Along these lines, my delegation welcomes Secretary-General Ban’s declaration that 2012 is “the year of prevention.”

10. The Republic of Korea also believes that Governments, sub-regional and regional organizations, and UN bodies should continue to engage in dialogue as well as collaborative efforts, including with civil society organizations, to more fully establish and deepen mutual commitments and to agree upon viable strategies to protect populations from R2P crimes.

Mr. President,

11. Lastly, I would like to reaffirm our commitment to promoting the development of R2P and halting the commission of mass atrocity crimes. Thank you.