

Statement delivered on behalf of the Permanent Mission of Slovakia to the United Nations

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

11 September 2013

(UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTION)

Mr. Chairman: ready to speak, ready to protect. Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to thank the Secretary General Ban Ki-moon for his remarks and position, as well as Deputy Secretary General Jan Eliasson for his endless effort in this area.

I would also like to thank the Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide, Mr. Adama Dieng, for the preparation of the report, and welcome the new Special Advisor for Responsibility to Protect, Mrs. Jennifer Welsh.

Mr. President, at the outset, I would like to align myself with the statement presented earlier by the Distinguished Representative of the European Union. Slovakia is a strong supporter of RtoP, as a concept articulated in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document. We are of the view that the first pillar, covering the preventive aspect of the concept, is of utmost importance. We commend the Secretary General for the measures he had outlined in his yearly report focusing on risk factors and policy options for mass atrocity prevention.

In our opinion, responsibility and prevention are the key factors for success in this field. A state where we were born we call motherland, or patria. It is obvious that every citizen expects from leaders that they will respect rights and protect lives. We, the voters, gave them the right to govern. They, on the other hand, have the responsibility to stand up for this task. Responsibility to protect their own people within national borders is one of its highest duties. Purposeful attacks on the citizen demanding their constitutional rights, targeted attacks on minorities, should be noted, condemned, and, if all other means fail, reacted to by the international community with respect to international law.

RtoP is not a law – it is a norm. As such, and as a concept, it may often fall hostage to national, or some international, interests. What is legal should be moral, but what is moral may not always be legally defined. Therefore, the rules for taking steps up to coercive ones must be clear; must contain just cause, right intention, legitimate authority, and appropriate means.

Moreover, they should come at the right time and include post-action elements for restoration. Otherwise, the international community, United Nations, fails to fulfill one of its principle tasks and duties – protection of peace, protection of citizens, and protection of innocent and vulnerable ones.

At the international level, Slovakia is a co-chair of the UN Group of Friends on security sector reform, [and] supports all the activities enhancing effective and accountable security institutions for the state and its peoples. Prevention, protection, and restoration of peace should respect the rule of law as a guiding principle for securing respect for human rights, people-oriented security, and economic and social development.

We need to upgrade our discussion and exchange of view on international and regional levels. In this regard, I would like to thank Slovenia for organizing regional RtoP national focal points meeting in Ljubljana in April 2013. In our national capacity, Slovakia has taken several steps to build national

capacity to prevent mass atrocity crimes. As for the recent one, we have appointed a national RtoP focal point at the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs. Unfortunately, not only these days do mass atrocity crimes being committed in different parts of the world, [such as the] alarming situations as in Syria. More and more innocent people, especially the most vulnerable – children and women – are dying every day. The pictures we are getting are not sad – they are horrifying. We strongly condemn any use of chemical weapons. It is a clear crime against humanity. Perpetrators of such heinous crimes, regardless of who they were, shall be brought to justice. We therefore call on the International Criminal Court as a unified judicial body designated to deal with the most serious crimes under international law.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.