

**EXCERPTED STATEMENTS FROM THE OPEN DEBATES AT THE OPENING OF
THE 62ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION**

**25 September- 03 October 2007
General Assembly Chamber**

Lithuania

President Mr. Valdas Adamkus:

(...) “Three years have passed since the adoption of the World Summit Outcome Document, which elaborated on the concept of the **Responsibility to Protect**, and yet we have been too slow to respond to massive violations of human rights and mass atrocities. The principle of the **Responsibility to Protect** can no longer be confined to paper. We are therefore encouraging the Secretary-General to follow up on the World Summit Outcome Document and take measures to operationalise this principle.” (...)

Netherlands

Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende:

(...) “In 2005 the United Nations adopted the principle of ‘**responsibility to protect**’. In doing so, we sided with all those suffering genocide or crimes against humanity. It is now time to put that principle into practice.”

“The United Nations has a key responsibility as a protector of peace and security. Each of us shares this responsibility. In this age of rapid communications and global linkage, nothing is ‘far away’ anymore. What happens elsewhere affects us all.” (...)

United Kingdom

**Secretary of State for Foreign and
Commonwealth Affairs David Miliband:**

(...) “Beyond these crises, we need also to improve our capacity to prevent the emergence of conflict. That is our vision of the **Responsibility to Protect**. A critical dimension is controlling the spread of weapons whose easy availability makes it so simple to set up militias, and provoke violence and mayhem. Last year this Assembly voted overwhelmingly to take forward UN work towards an Arms Trade Treaty. The UK government will continue to press for this goal.” (...)

Liechtenstein

Minister of Foreign Affairs Rita Kieber-Beck:

(...) “But, as true friends of the United Nations we must also continue to question the ability of the organization to fully use its potential and to fulfill the purposed and principles of its Charter. Our record in the area of reform, two years after the 2005 World Summit, it mixed: We yet have to achieve certain institutional reforms and the principle of the **responsibility to protect** must yet be translated into concrete action—such as in the case of the oppressive policies of the regime in Myanmar against its own population.” (...)

Belgium

Minister of Foreign Affairs Karel De Gucht:

(...) “Our attention for crisis management and peace consolidation must not diminish the importance of preventive diplomacy. I welcome the initiatives of the Secretary-General in this matter such as the improvement of the mediation capacities of the UN and the upgrading of the mandates concerning the prevention of genocides and mass atrocities, as well as the **responsibility to protect**. It is also necessary to make this concept more operational.” (...)

Lesotho

Deputy Prime Minister Archibald Lesao Lehohla:

(...) “We must, recall that, in the year 2005, this Assembly solemnly proclaimed the role of the entire international community, acting through the United Nations to protect populations from genocide, war crimes and other crimes against humanity. Unfortunately this not what is happening on the ground. We still notice inaction of the part of the Security Council, or its reaction coming too late!! The harrowing experience of Rwanda and now Darfur are living testimony to this. “(...)

Denmark

Ambassador Carsten Staur:

(...) “At the Millennium Summit in 2000 an unprecedented number of world leaders came together and committed themselves to an ambitious global agenda for the years ahead. An agenda that was further reinforced at the 2005 World Summit, where we also adopted the far reaching principle of the **Responsibility to Protect**.” (...)

Australia

Ambassador Robert Hill:

(...) “As members of the United Nations, we have set ourselves important goals over the past 62 years: maintaining global peace and security, supporting economic and social development and advancing human rights. In 2005 we pledged to protect those people who are most vulnerable—those facing genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. We recognized the **‘responsibility to protect’** as a central tenet of our shared humanity.”

“This **‘responsibility to protect’** underpins the notion that States must protect their own populations. But if they should fail to do so, the international community has a responsibility to act; not to stand idly by in the face of genocide or ethnic cleansing.”

“For the international community, this means we must commit to prevent—and respond to—these most serious of crimes, whenever they occur. And after the immediate crisis has passed, we must support recovery efforts to help communities rebuild and reconcile by addressing the causes of the crisis.”

“Last year the Security Council drew upon the **responsibility to protect** for the first time in a country-specific resolution, Resolution 1706 on Darfur.”

(...) “Darfur is not the only humanitarian crisis we have experienced or will face in the United Nations. Tragically, other populations will also require protection from crimes against humanity. The **responsibility to protect** provides the necessary guide to action. But it is up to Security Council members, on behalf of the international community, to act, and for all UN members to support them.”

(...) “The ‘**responsibility to protect**’ means we, the international community, must act when confronted with the most serious crimes.”

(...) “The Security Council has drawn upon the **responsibility to protect** principle, endorsed by leaders at the 2005 Summit. It is clear that the international community as a whole has a **responsibility to protect** those facing genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.” (...)