

## Press Release

### **Despite Shortcomings Summit Declaration Offers Genuine Step Forward on Preventing and Ending Genocide**

Though filled with missed opportunities and serious failures, the United Nations General Assembly's unanimously approved declaration on UN reform does include the international community's "responsibility... to help protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity" when individual states "manifestly fail" to protect their own populations from these grave threats.

This clear affirmation of a shared responsibility to protect isolates any government that commits atrocities against its own people and confers political legitimacy on those governments that wish to take appropriate collective action to protect populations from such atrocities, wherever they may occur.

"By affirming a shared responsibility to protect populations from genocide, the international community has taken an historic step toward realizing the promise of 'never again.' There are no more excuses for governments to stand idly by in the face of another Darfur or Rwanda. Now, commitments on paper must be realized in action," said William Pace, Executive Director of the World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy.

A vast majority of NGOs monitoring the UN reform process agreed yesterday that governments failed the world's citizens by blocking historic advances on such issues as the establishment of a strong Human Rights Council, a new Peacebuilding Commission, and ending extreme poverty and impunity for the worst human rights violators. In doing so, NGOs agree, these governments failed to equip the international community with the means to realize their responsibilities.

Despite these criticisms, agreement on a shared responsibility to protect means that people who live under threat of genocide from their own governments, state-sponsored actors or other non-state actors now have a new tool to battle the often deadly indifference and paralysis of the international community. This declaration ensures that governments will be held accountable for their actions, and inaction, both at home and abroad in the face of genocide and other grave crises.

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#### **Note to Editors:**

**R2PCS** works with civil society partners to promote international norms and monitor governments, the Security Council and other international bodies on the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

**R2PCS** is a project of **WFM-IGP**, an international citizen's movement working for justice, peace, and sustainable prosperity.

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