

Finland high-level forum on RtoP explores how to take the norm forward *The Hanaforum was organized by the Swedish-Finnish Cultural Centre - Hanasaari; the Embassy of Canada in Helsinki; the United Nations Associations of Finland and Sweden, and the Finnish Red Cross, in cooperation with the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The forum aimed at enhancing the understanding and political will regarding RtoP, and to create possibilities of taking the initiative further during the 64th session of the UN General Assembly. Panelists included*

- *Roméo Dallaire, Senator and former Force Commander of the United Nations peacekeeping force for Rwanda;*

- *Jan Egeland, Director of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs;*

- *Hans Corell, former Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and the Legal Counsel of the UN.*

Speech by President of the Republic Tarja Halonen

Office of the President of the Republic of Finland

28 August 2009

(...) The

responsibility to protect

is a programmatic, rather than a clearly a legal concept. From the legal point of view, it is a question of already existing mandates and responsibilities. The implementation of the

responsibility to protect

is measured by how well it guides the international community and particularly the UN Security Council to timely action in order to prevent catastrophes. (...)

For us northern people, it is a good challenge to note that the possibility of military intervention in the case of a serious attack against civilian population was first incorporated into the Constitutive Act of the African Union in 2000. In this light, the question of intervention does not seem to fall on the north-south axis, even though many developing countries have criticized the idea of military intervention.

Conflict situations are often hardest for women and girls – their human rights are at a particular risk and many of them become subject to the worst violence.

The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security was adopted in

2000. The implementation of the Resolution requires national action plans. The Norwegian action plan from 2006 was an encouragement for us. Finland's plan was completed a year ago. Now we are working on an action plan together with Kenya. In 2008, the UN Security Council adopted UN Resolution 1820, which condemns rape and sexual violence. We must do our utmost to put these resolutions into action. I have proposed that systematic rape in armed conflict should be classified as a forbidden weapon of war.

Last March, we organised together with Liberia an international colloquium in Monrovia on women's empowerment. The Colloquium sent out a strong message about the need to fully implement Resolution 1325. Women's key role in climate issues was also discussed. We will organize a new meeting on these topics next month in New York in conjunction with the UN General Assembly.

We also have to work so that we do not need to apply the responsibility to protect. It is best to prevent conflicts. At the same time, we must prepare for future conflicts. Natural catastrophes are not included in the **responsibility to protect**. In the future, competition for natural resources may be more and more often the cause of conflicts. The consequences of climate change may also increase the risks of conflicts. Conflict prevention in accordance with the principles of the **responsibility to protect** is central also in these situations.

We must support the possibilities of people for decent life and work in the changing environmental circumstances. Work for fairer globalization is also effective long-term work to prevent conflicts.

The devastating effects of the current economic crisis are particularly felt in the developing countries. We must remain strong with our efforts for eradication of the poverty in accordance with the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals. Finland and the other EU countries have committed themselves to the UN development aid goal of 0.7 per cent of the gross national product by the year 2015. We must retain this goal also in the current economic situation. Source: <http://www.presidentti.fi/netcomm/news/showarticle.asp?intNWSAID=72904&intSubArtID=28605>