

Summary - Human Rights Council side-event on the Responsibility to Protect United Nations Association – United Kingdom

9 July 2012

On 19 June 2012, the Permanent Missions of Hungary, Nigeria, Uruguay, Thailand, and Australia to the United Nations in Geneva organized a side-event in the Human Rights Council to discuss the Council's role in implementing the responsibility to protect. Please see a summary of the event from James Kearney, Peace and Security Programmes Coordinator at the United Nations Association in the United Kingdom, who attended the meeting.

(...) To further explore the Human Rights Council's important role in supporting the practical implementation of the responsibility to protect, the Permanent delegations to the United Nations (Geneva) of Hungary, Nigeria, Uruguay, Thailand and Australia invited a select group of civil society organisations to take part and contribute to this important debate.

In his 2009 report, the Secretary-General called on States to “assist the Human Rights Council in sharpening its focus as a forum for considering ways to encourage States to meet their obligations relating to the responsibility to protect.” This side event sought to help facilitate such discussions in a collaborative and transparent way, and focused on how the Council can help States, through dialogue and cooperation and with their consent, protect populations from mass atrocity crimes. The event also sought to highlight best practices and current initiatives – national, regional and international – in advancing the prevention and protection goals related to the responsibility to protect. Panellists included General Martin Luther Agwai, Deputy Military Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on Peacekeeping Operations; H.E. Mr. José Luis Cancela, Permanent Representative of Uruguay to the United Nations in New York; Edward Luck, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Responsibility to Protect; H.E. Mr. Sihasak Phuangketkeow, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand and past-President of the Human Rights Council, and Dr Csaba Törő, Senior research fellow, Hungarian Institute of International Affairs. The session was moderated by Professor Gareth Evans, former Australian Foreign Secretary and President Emeritus of the International Crisis Group, and featured a video message from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, supporting the event (transcript of message attached).

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by the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights Navi Pillay given during the side event.