

## **Statement on the Occasion of the Informal Interactive Dialogue on the Role of Regional and Sub-regional Arrangements in Implementing the Responsibility to Protect**

**(New York – 12 July 2011)** As demonstrated in the third informal interactive dialogue on the responsibility to protect held at the General Assembly, in line with the commitment made at the 2005 World Summit (paragraph 139 of the Outcome Document) and confirmed by the General Assembly resolution (63/308), continuing considerations of the responsibility to protect exhibit growing international endorsement of the evolving principles. We welcome the international community's recent efforts to apply the responsibility to prevent as the foremost important element of the responsibility to protect principles.

For this reason, we urge Member States to continue their support for regional and sub-regional initiatives to put the responsibility to prevent into practice. We have seen repeatedly that prevention is most successful and effective when the peoples of the region own and share the task with others. To fully realize the three-pillar approach recommended by the Secretary-General's report on "Implementing the Responsibility to Protect" in 2009 (A/63/677), it is crucial to diversify the responsibilities across regional and sub-regional dimensions.

Over the last ten years, global trends have demonstrated increased commitment to prevention as a fundamental institutional approach. This has been illustrated by a number of activities taking place at the international, regional, and sub-regional levels:

- In 2001, Sweden convened four international fora culminating in the Stockholm International Forum on Genocide Prevention of January 2004. These constituted one of the first attempts to take the matter of prevention seriously at the international and political levels. At the Forum, Secretary-General Kofi Annan announced the establishment of the Office of Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, which was fully supported by the subsequent commitment of Member States in the 2005 World Outcome Document.
- Beginning in 2008, the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the Argentinean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Tanzanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs jointly initiated a series of Regional Fora that served to prioritize prevention of genocide and other mass atrocities. Designed to seek prevention as a viable orientation of state policies and practices at the regional level, the first Regional Forum took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in December 2008, the second in Arusha, Tanzania, in March 2010, and the most recent in Bern, Switzerland in April 2011.
- At the sub-regional level, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) has been concerned with prevention since the signing of the *Protocol for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity and All forms of Discrimination* in November 2006 by all ICGLR member states. In collaboration with the Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide (OSAPG) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), ICGLR organized the foundation seminar

in September 2010 in Kampala, Uganda, to establish the “Regional Committee for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity and All forms of Discrimination”. The Committee represents a first example of efforts by an inter-governmental body to operationalize the prevention of mass violence at the sub-regional and national levels.

We welcome these important developments, and urge Member States to fully support these recent efforts to diversify and share the responsibility to prevent atrocity crimes across different regional and sub-regional arrangements. The momentum has broadened the international support of the principles of the responsibility to protect, and they must be implemented through enhanced cooperation across international, regional, sub-regional, and national levels.

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