



**Remarks**

**by**

**H.E. Mr. Charles Thembani Ntwaagae**

**Vice-President**

**H.E. Mr. John W. Ashe**

**President of the 68<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations**

**General Assembly**

**Informal interactive dialogue on the report of the  
Secretary-General on the Responsibility to Protect**

**Closing remarks**

**New York**

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*Please check against delivery*

Excellencies,

Mr. Adama Dieng, Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide,  
Ms. Jennifer Welsh, Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Responsibility to  
Protect,

Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to deliver this closing statement on behalf of the President of the General Assembly.

At the outset, allow me to thank the panellists for their insightful presentations, in particular with respect to the regional dimension of Pillar II of the responsibility to protect.

The high level of interest in this dialogue is testament to the commitment of this Assembly to consider and explore the conceptual and practical development of the responsibility to protect. In light of the severe crises affecting civilian populations around the world today, improving the international community's ability to prevent and respond to atrocity crimes is a matter of great importance.

These tragedies call for us to focus on actual implementation of the responsibility to protect, based on sovereign equality and a collective responsibility on the part of Member States.

During today's discussion, we explored ways and means of providing States the assistance required to help protect populations from genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

Member States reiterated that the Responsibility to Protect supports state sovereignty. Furthermore, they underscored that assistance towards the prevention of atrocity crimes under Pillar II must be based on consent.

Participants told us that partnerships, as articulated in the "Spirit of Pillar II", are essential for preventing and responding to such crimes. Many stressed the importance of action at the regional level.

To step up our prevention efforts, we heard that we must build on progress being made within the United Nations. Some pointed out that more can be done by focusing on existing tools for human rights and development.

Finally, many expressed support for the Assembly to continue its important role in further developing and operationalizing the concept of the responsibility to protect, and that it should take part in the stocktaking exercise that will take place next year.

It is my hope that the experiences shared by our panellists and participants today will spur new initiatives to ensure the protection of populations against atrocity crimes and I urge Member States to expand their support towards prevention and response. I would also like to invite this Assembly to consider the recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General.

Excellencies,

Next year, we will celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 2005 World Summit Outcome. This will be an opportunity to take stock of where we are, where we have succeeded, where we fell short, and to articulate our vision for the future of this agenda. As we renew our collective commitment to ending these unspeakable crimes, we can bring hope to the millions of people around the world who yearn for the promise of a life of safety and dignity.

Thank you.

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