

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

NEW YORK

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

New York, August 21, 2013

Excellency,

Further to the letter of the President of the General Assembly dated 29 July 2013 regarding an informal interactive dialogue of the General Assembly on the responsibility to protect, I am pleased to forward for your information the attached note and updated programme.

You will recall that this informal dialogue will take place on Wednesday, 11 September 2013 from 10:00am to 6:00pm in the Trusteeship Council (CB).

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zdravko Ponos', written over a horizontal line.

Zdravko Ponos
Chef de Cabinet

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

Information Note and Tentative Meeting Programme
Informal interactive dialogue on
the Report of the Secretary-General on the Responsibility to Protect:
State Responsibility and Prevention

21 August 2013

United Nations General Assembly
11 September 2013 – New York

Background

As decided at the 2005 World Summit (paragraph 139 of the Outcome Document) and confirmed by the General Assembly (resolution 63/308), the General Assembly continues its consideration of the responsibility to protect (RtoP). To this end, the General Assembly will hold its annual informal, interactive dialogue on the responsibility to protect on 11 September 2013.

Since 2009, the Secretary-General has prepared annual reports on different aspects of the responsibility to protect. In 2009, the Secretary-General presented a comprehensive strategy to operationalise the concept in his report, “Implementing the responsibility to protect” (A/63/677 of 12 January 2009) which outlined a three-pillar strategy for implementation. The General Assembly discussed this strategy in an informal interactive dialogue on 23 July 2009 and in a formal debate on 23, 24, and 28 July 2009. In 2010, the Secretary-General produced a second report on “Early warning, assessment and the responsibility to protect” (A/64/864 of 14 July 2010), which was discussed at an informal interactive dialogue in the General Assembly on 9 August 2010. On 12 July 2011, Member States discussed the third report of the Secretary-General on “The role of regional and sub-regional arrangements in implementing the responsibility to protect”. On 5 September 2012, Member States considered the fourth report of the Secretary-General entitled “Timely and decisive response” which focused on the third pillar of the responsibility to protect. This year, the report of the Secretary-General focuses on State

responsibility for protecting its populations through the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. It is expected that the Secretary-General, senior United Nations officials and representatives of Member States will speak at the dialogue.

The 2013 report of the Secretary-General expands on the 2009 report of the Secretary-General, which stressed the enduring responsibility of the State to protect its populations, whether nationals or not, by preventing genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, and from their incitement. The report reiterated the declaration by the Heads of State and Government in paragraph 138 of the Summit Outcome that “we accept that responsibility and will act in accordance with it” which is the bedrock of the responsibility to protect. That responsibility lies first and foremost with the State and derives from the nature of State sovereignty and from pre-existing and continuing legal obligations of States. Stressing that prevention is the “key ingredient for a successful strategy for the responsibility to protect,” the 2013 report of the Secretary-General explores the causes and dynamics of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. The report provides an overview of the measures that could be taken not only to prevent these atrocity crimes but also to build societies that are resilient to genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. The report highlights some examples of initiatives that Member States are already taking in this regard and identifies additional steps that can strengthen national atrocity prevention efforts.

The 11 September 2013 dialogue has several purposes. First, it will provide a forum for Member States to interact with expert panellists to assess the causes and dynamics of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Second, it will be an opportunity to exchange views and perspectives on the range of structural and operational measures that Member States could take to prevent these crimes and violations. Third, the interactive nature of the dialogue will serve to clarify and to deepen our collective understanding of the responsibility to protect concept and the way forward in strengthening national atrocity prevention efforts. As the General Assembly has

continued its consideration of the responsibility to protect, the concept has been further sharpened and refined. Yet, the commitment and input of Member States are essential for its continued development and effective implementation.

Expected outcomes

The fact that atrocity crimes continue to be committed around the world is a reminder of the need for continuing dialogue in the General Assembly on how to prevent these crimes. At the 2013 informal dialogue on the responsibility to protect, it is expected that Member States will consider their primary responsibility to protect populations by preventing genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, share experiences and lessons learned on national atrocity prevention efforts and chart the way forward for the full and balanced implementation of the responsibility to protect concept.

The dialogue is intended to facilitate discussions among the United Nations, Member States, regional and sub-regional organisations and civil society, and to emphasize the value of a collective approach to protecting populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, as well as their incitement.

Programme

The informal, interactive dialogue will take place on 11 September 2013 in the Trusteeship Council at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. It will consist of opening and closing sessions as well as a morning panel discussion.

Following presentations by panellists, the floor will be open to delegates and other participants for questions to the panellists, as well as for brief interventions to share experiences and perspectives. Delegations are encouraged to engage in an open and interactive discussion. Delegations are kindly asked to limit their interventions to a maximum of three minutes.

There will be an established list of speakers. To register, kindly send an email indicating the name of and the level of the speaker to the General Assembly Affairs Branch (poliakova@un.org) before 1:00pm on 10 September.

Time permitting, some civil society organisations may be invited to speak during the event. Civil society organisations interested in attending the event should register with osapg@un.org for a special events ticket. Organisations interested in speaking at the event should express this interest when registering to attend.

Programme

Time	Programme
10:00 am – 10:30am	Opening remarks H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremic, President of the General Assembly H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General
10:30am – 1:00pm	<u>Panel discussion and interactive dialogue on State responsibility and prevention</u> <u>Moderator:</u> Mr. Adama Dieng, Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide <u>Panellists include:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mr. Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General (for the morning session) ▪ Ms. Jennifer Welsh, Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Responsibility to Protect ▪ H.E. Ms. María Cristina Perceval, Permanent Representative of the Mission of Argentina to the United Nations ▪ H.E. Ms. Cécile Kyenge, Minister of Integration of Italy <u>Panellists will address:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The causes and dynamics of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity ▪ The range of structural and operational measures for prevention ▪ Lessons learned from experiences to date in undertaking preventive action ▪ The way forward in strengthening national atrocity prevention efforts

	<i>After a first round of remarks by the panel, Member States will be invited to address the issues listed above and to share their perspectives and experiences. Some civil society organisations may be invited to speak.</i>
3:00pm – 5:45pm	<u>Interactive dialogue</u> : Continuation of interventions from the floor.
5:45pm – 6:00pm	Concluding remarks