

**Remarks by Ambassador Masood Khan, Pakistan’s Permanent  
Representative to the United Nations,  
at 68<sup>th</sup> UNGA’s Informal Interactive Dialogue on  
Secretary General’s Report 2014 on Responsibility to Protect (R2P)  
“Fulfilling our Collective Responsibility: International Assistance and R2P”  
Conference Room 3(CB), 8 September 2014**

**Mr. Moderator,**

The heinous acts of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity are unconscionable and must be prevented before they occur. The international community cannot allow recurrence of the tragedies of Rwanda or Srebrenica. There should be no exceptionalism in pursuit of the goal of protection of civilians. Palestine is a case in point.

Responsibility to Protect is designed to strengthen, not weaken, sovereignty and sovereign equality of states, as enshrined in the Charter. The concept of R2P conflates individual state responsibility with the collective responsibility of the international community, which is the *raison d’être* of the United Nations. No outside actor should arrogate to itself the responsibility to judge the fragility or instability within a state to justify intervention. All actions must have the weight of international law behind them.

Contrary to a general perception, developing countries and conflict prone societies have a critical stake in the Responsibility to Protect. They do, however, ask for fulfilling this responsibility according to the rule of law and agreed parameters. The United Nations should sit at the helm. Any action in regard to R2P should be taken by the Security Council by adopting resolutions, the General Assembly by invoking *Uniting for Peace*, and regional organizations by acting in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter.

**Mr. Moderator,**

All three pillars of R2P form part of a continuum and therefore are sequential. The basic thrust of the first two pillars is to prevent atrocity crimes by building societies on the basis of reconciliation, justice and security. R2P response should not be activated only after eruption of or a full-

blown armed conflict. Inordinate delays complicate situations, and make an R2P response costlier and less efficient. Timely action, on the other hand, obviates the need for a possible intervention under Chapter VII using military means and punitive sanctions, which have to be employed as a last resort, when every other effort has failed. Success under the first two pillars would signal that the state concerned and the international community has averted a major catastrophe.

We appreciate the Secretary General's comprehensive report on R2P which outlines practical measures for encouragement, capacity-building, and protection assistance. We support common principles of assistance given in the report, especially about national ownership, mutual commitment and prioritizing prevention. I particularly like the Hippocratic adage, First do no harm. Results of assistance to a state for R2P should not be worse than inaction.

The entire UN system, especially the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as national and international financial institutions should support R2P to deal with poverty, disease, illiteracy, economic deprivation and underdevelopment, which are the root causes of conflict. Moreover, the Security Council and General Assembly's engagement with the African Union, Arab League, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, ASEAN, OSCE and other regional organizations should be deepened.

Military assistance, wherever needed, should be provided with the consent of the affected state and in accordance with the scale and needs of the situation.

All said and done, preventive diplomacy is an underutilized tool. The Council tends to embrace Chapters VII and VI-and-a-half more readily. Both at the UN and national levels, full use of conciliation, mediation, arbitration, ICJ and good offices should be made.

Finally, we agree with the Secretary General that the best guarantees to contain volatility are inclusive governance, impartial bodies to oversee smooth political transitions, strong and functioning security sector, independent judicial and human rights institutions, and impartial media. Investment in capacity-building in these areas is critical to save conflict prone societies from mass atrocities.

I thank you.