



THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

335 East 45th Street, New York, N.Y. 10017
Tel (212) 439-4000, Fax (212) 986-1083

Statement by H.E. Mr. PARK In-kook

Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations

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Mr. President,

At the outset, let me join the other speakers by expressing my deep appreciation for convening this plenary meeting on the issue of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P).

At the September 2005 World Summit, global leaders humbly acknowledged the historic and collective failures of the international community to save human life, reflecting on Rwanda's genocide, the massacres in Srebrenica, ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, and made a solemn promise that they would seek to prevent such atrocities in the future. These Heads of State asserted that it is a fundamental obligation of Governments to protect their people from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. Furthermore, they affirmed the collective responsibility to protect people at risk of mass atrocities and crimes against humanity.

With the concerted embrace of the historic notion of Responsibility to Protect, a lengthy debate over whether to act ended. Instead, discussions turned to how, exactly, this principle would be implemented. This remains the most pressing question before us at this juncture. However since the 2005 agreement, some concerns and assertions of the concept of R2P have been expressed, largely due to misperceptions or extended interpretations on the concept.

In this regard, my delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's report and the GA debate on "Implementing the Responsibility to Protect" which provides a precious opportunity to ensure common understanding on R2P and to reach consensus on the overall direction of its implementation, turning promise into reality.

The Republic of Korea fully supports the Secretary-General's clarification on R2P, as described in his report, among others;

- 1) The primary responsibility lies in the individual Government while the international community bears the secondary responsibility. After all, R2P is a call for States to address serious human rights issues and to protect its populations from atrocities. "Responsible sovereignty" should be upheld.
- 2) R2P is an ally of sovereignty, not an adversary. R2P helps states to meet their core protection responsibilities and facilitates success in the field. In this sense, the substance of R2P has nothing to do with so-called "humanitarian intervention." R to P is distinctly different from humanitarian intervention since it is based on collective actions, in accordance with UN Charter, but not unilateral one.
- 3) R2P has a narrow scope, applying only to the four specified crimes and violations, but not other calamities such as HIV/AIDS or natural disasters. As such, not all humanitarian tragedies or human rights violations can or should activate R2P.
- 4) While the scope may be narrow, the responses must be deep. The deployment of preventative and protective instruments wielded by Member States, the UN system, and regional and sub-regional organizations and their civil society partners should be definitive.
- 5) In extreme situations, which necessitate timely and decisive collective responses, what is most required is an early and flexible response tailored to each situation, yet ultimately focused on saving lives.

My delegation endorses the above-emphasized points of the Secretary-General.

Based on this understanding, the Secretary-General details the "Three Pillar" approach for turning the principle of R2P into an implementable and operational tool by suggesting a wide range of options under each respective pillar.

Pillar One is self-evident. As the report states, protection of populations is a defining attribute of sovereignty. The policies and measures suggested in the report are all effective tools for authorities to implement R2P. Among others, we'd like to call upon the Member States to pay special attention to the following measures;

- to ensure the effective mechanisms for handling domestic disputes
- to respect human rights as an essential element of responsible sovereignty,
- to become parties to and implement relevant international instruments on human rights, international humanitarian and refugee law, and the Rome Statute of the ICC
- to engage in candid self reflection, searching dialogue, and periodic risk assessment
- to consider introducing criteria relating to R2P into regional peer review mechanisms

The Republic of Korea attaches great importance to Pillar Two, which is the commitment of the international community to assist states. As the Secretary-General's report pointed out, if the political leadership in a given state is determined to commit R2P crimes, assistance would be of little use. However, if the leadership is willing to implement its R2P but lacks the capacity to do so, international assistance can play a critical role. In this connection, we welcome the Secretary-General's emphasis on the need for assistance to states, rather than just waiting for them to fail. This explicitly shields humanitarian populations from grave risk and also bolsters collective international security more broadly.

Among the recommendations and illustrative examples of activities to assist states, we take special note of the role of regional and subregional mechanisms. In fact, the African Union pioneered R2P principle by stating in its 2000 Constitutive Act that it would not be indifferent in the face of failure by an AU Member to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. Building the capacities of regional organizations to assist states and to deal with situations under stress within their respective regions would be a sound investment.

While encouraging Member States to consider proposals to build capacity, such as standing or standby rapid response mechanisms, as well as to ask for assistance when under pressure, the delegation of the Republic of Korea stresses the need to mainstream the goals of R2P into the broad activities of the UN system. In the areas of human rights, humanitarian affairs, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, governance, and development, there should be a common strategy to assist states' implementation of R2P.

Mr. President,

Now let me turn to Pillar Three, "timely and decisive measures." The most ideal situation would be for all states to be determined, as well as capable, to fully implement their obligations under R2P with efficient assistance from the international community wherever needed. However, when a state is manifestly failing, the international community has a collective responsibility to prevent atrocities and to save lives, responding to the imminent threats, as clearly stated by the World Summit Outcome Document.

The Republic of Korea understands that the collective obligation is not to "intervene," but rather to take whatever timely and decisive actions the international community deems appropriate to respond to immediate threats to the lives of peoples, in accordance with the UN Charter. In this vein, it should be noted that many of the actions suggested as illustrative examples in the Secretary-General's Report, including mediation, are not coercive. In fact, the Report suggests a broad range of tools available, including pacific measures under Chapters 6, 7, and 8 of the Charter. With respect to coercive measures to be taken in extreme cases, we believe that R2P should be implemented in accordance of the relevant provisions of the UN Charter and there is no implication of any change to the respective role of the GA and Security Council.

The primary role of the Security Council in authorizing coercive measures as a last resort reminds us of the privilege, and duty, of the five permanent members, which must be matched with their special responsibility. In this context, we support the recommendation of the Secretary-General's report for the P5 to refrain from employing the veto, or the threat of veto, in situations of manifest failure to meet R2P obligations.

While noting the need to continue to consider principles, rules, and doctrine that should guide the application of coercive force relating to R2P, we would like to express our full agreement with the Secretary-General's contention that capacity, will, and imagination are most significant and that success lies in an "early and flexible response, tailored to the specific needs of each situation, focusing on saving lives."

Mr. President,

Looking forward, one urgent task that we should undertake is to buttress the UN's early warning capacity. There is no doubt that early warning and assessment through the UN is a necessary component for successful preventive and protective action. In fact, the "establishment of an early warning capability" is what leaders agreed upon in 2005. As suggested by the Secretary-General, bolstering the office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide would be fruitful primary step.

In conclusion, the Republic of Korea would like to express its unwavering commitment to R2P. The sole purpose of R2P is to save populations from the most heinous crimes through an emphasis on the primary responsibility of states and the complimentary and collective responsibility of the international community. It is our sincere hope that the 63rd General Assembly will take concrete steps to put this norm into operation, redressing "never again collective failures" and "to save human life." The Secretary-General's recommendation for the GA, in particular, continuing the consideration role of the GA, conducting periodic review of the implementation of Member States, and submitting Secretary-General's report on implementation steps, will be a solid basis for the possible outcome of the current GA session. We must, collectively, take this critical leap forward to make the future more secure for vulnerable populations around the world while striving to avoid the costly error of stumbling backwards to past blunders.

Thank you.