



THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1 September 2017

Excellency,

Further to my letter dated 15 August 2017, attached please find the draft programme for the informal interactive dialogue of the General Assembly on the Responsibility to Protect, scheduled for Wednesday, 6 September 2017, from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm and from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm. The informal interactive dialogue will take place in Conference Room 4 at the United Nations.

The meeting offers an opportunity to engage in constructive discussions about the principle of the Responsibility to Protect, and to consider the recommendations embodied in the 2017 Report of the Secretary-General on the Responsibility to Protect.

I look forward to your active participation in this interactive dialogue.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Thomson', written in a cursive style.

Peter Thomson

All Permanent Representatives  
Permanent Observers of the United Nations  
New York

**General Assembly informal interactive dialogue on the Report of the Secretary-General on  
the Responsibility to Protect  
The responsibility to protect and accountability for prevention**

**United Nations Headquarters, Conference Room 4  
6 September 2017 – New York**

**Information Note and Provisional Programme**

***Background***

At the 2005 World Summit<sup>1</sup>, Member States expressed a commitment to the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity (“atrocities crimes”). The General Assembly further reaffirmed this role during its sixty-third session<sup>2</sup>. In keeping with these decisions, and building on previous meetings over the past decade, the General Assembly will hold its annual informal interactive dialogue on the responsibility to protect on 6 September 2017.

Since 2009, the Secretary-General has prepared nine annual reports on different aspects of the responsibility to protect. In 2009, the Secretary-General presented a comprehensive strategy to operationalize the principle, including a three pillar strategy for its implementation, in his report on “Implementing the responsibility to protect” (A/63/677). Subsequent reports focused on early warning and assessment, in 2010 (A/64/864); the role of regional and sub-regional arrangements, in 2011 (A/65/877); timely and decisive response, in 2012 (A/66/874); State responsibility and prevention, in 2013 (A/67/929); international assistance and the responsibility to protect, in 2014 (A/68/947); the vital and enduring commitment to the responsibility to protect, in 2015 (A/69/981); and mobilizing collective action: the next decade of the responsibility to protect, in 2016 (A/70/999). Each of these reports has been discussed by the General Assembly during an informal interactive dialogue. The dialogues have featured broad participation by Member States, representatives of regional organizations and civil society. This year, the General Assembly will consider the first report of the current Secretary-General on the responsibility to protect, which is the ninth report on this topic overall.

The report, entitled “Implementing the responsibility to protect: Accountability for Prevention,” reflects on key elements of legal, political and moral accountability for implementation in each of the three pillars of the responsibility to protect. It acknowledges the existing gap between our stated commitment to the responsibility to protect and the daily reality confronted by populations exposed to the risk of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Although the responsibility to protect is a relatively well established principle, it is vulnerable to imperfect implementation unless those actors responsible for its implementation can be held accountable for their action or inaction. Therefore, one of the principal ways to close this gap is

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<sup>1</sup> A/RES/60/1, paragraphs 138 and 139.

<sup>2</sup> A/RES/63/308

to strengthen accountability for the implementation of the responsibility to protect and by ensuring rigorous and open scrutiny of practice, based on agreed principles.

The report outlines practical steps that can be taken by Member States, intergovernmental bodies and the United Nations system to strengthen accountability. It begins by outlining the relationship between the legal, moral and political responsibilities associated with the responsibility to protect and different forms of accountability.

Many of the elements of the first pillar constitute legal obligations of States under international humanitarian, human rights, refugee and criminal law. Accountability for the provision of assistance to Member States by other States to help them fulfil their responsibility to protect under the second pillar does not only have a moral character: it is also a political obligation stemming from the commitment made by Heads of State and Government. In the case of the third pillar of the principle, relevant bodies are both politically and morally accountable - including the General Assembly, Human Rights Council and Security Council - with regards to both responsiveness and timely and decisive action, when needed. Another aspect of accountability relates to accountability for ensuring that Security Council mandates are implemented efficiently and with full respect for the United Nations Charter and the mandate given by the Security Council.

The 2017 report of the Secretary-General on the responsibility to protect also identifies a number of steps that can be taken to strengthen accountability for atrocity crimes prevention at the national level, to enhance the role of intergovernmental bodies and to improve the accountability of the United Nations system to those it serves. The 6 September 2017 General Assembly dialogue on this topic will contribute to clarifying the legal, political and moral dimensions of accountability under the responsibility to protect principle and contribute positively to its implementation. The dialogue will build on three preparatory panel events that were held in April and May 2017 in New York and Geneva, as well as some regional consultations, which also served to inform the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General.

### ***Purpose***

The 6 September 2017 dialogue has several purposes. First, it will provide a forum for Member States to assess the existing gap between commitment to the responsibility to protect and implementation of the principle, as well as to discuss measures conducive to close it. Second, it will constitute an opportunity to exchange views and perspectives on accountability in relation to implementation of each of the three pillars. Third, the dialogue will suggest next steps to accelerate implementation and accountability for prevention. Fourth, the dialogue will help underscore the need for a renewed faith in collective action and an improved capacity to coordinate an effective atrocity prevention collective agenda.

### ***Expected outcomes***

The fact that genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity continue to be committed constitutes a stark reminder of the need for continued dialogue by the General Assembly on how to prevent these crimes. As in previous years, the 2017 informal dialogue on

the responsibility to protect offers an opportunity for re-affirmation of the individual and collective responsibility to protect, and for further discussion on how to bolster and accelerate efforts for effective implementation of the principle.

The dialogue is intended to emphasize the value of a collective and preventive approach to protecting populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, as well as their incitement. It will also serve to discuss how to implement the concrete recommendations included in the report of the Secretary-General on the responsibility to protect.

### ***Provisional programme***

The informal, interactive dialogue will take place from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm and from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm on 6 September 2016 in General Assembly Conference Room 4 at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General will provide opening remarks. Panelists will provide remarks on the theme of the report from the perspective of the three pillars of the United Nations. The Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect, who will moderate the dialogue, will then open the floor to delegates and other participants. Delegations are encouraged to engage in an open and interactive discussion. They will be requested to limit their statements or interventions to a maximum of three minutes.

There will be an established list of speakers. Delegations wishing to speak are kindly requested to register through the General Assembly Affairs Branch (Mr. Carlos Galindo, e-mail [galindo@un.org](mailto:galindo@un.org), with copy to e-mail [gaspeakerslist@un.org](mailto:gaspeakerslist@un.org)). Interpretation has not been confirmed for this meeting and will be provided on an "as available" basis.

<b>Time</b>	<b>Programme</b>
10:00 am	<p><b><u>Opening remarks</u></b></p> <p>H.E. Mr. Peter Thomson, President of the United Nations General Assembly</p>
10:10 am	<p>Remarks by H.E. Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General</p>
10:20 am	<p><b><u>Interactive dialogue</u></b></p> <p>Moderator: Mr. Ivan Šimonović, Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect</p> <p><b><u>Remarks by panelists:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs (tbc)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Mr. Achim Steiner, Administrator United Nations Development Programme</li><li>▪ Mr. Adama Dieng, Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide</li></ul>
1:00 pm	Interactive dialogue adjourns
3:00 pm	Interactive dialogue resumes
	<b><u>Summary comments and closing remarks</u></b>
5:55 pm	Mr. Ivan Šimonović, Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect
6:00 pm	Interactive dialogue concludes