

**MEETING OF GLOBAL NETWORK OF R2P NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS**

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**OPENING STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR KEN KANDA**

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- Colleague Permanent Representatives of Costa Rica and Denmark,
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- R2P Experts

Let me join my Colleague Permanent Representatives from Costa Rica and Denmark in welcoming you to the official launch of what we expect to be the foundations of a global net-work of the Responsibility to Protect ( R2P) national focal points, together with their respective regional arrangements, working in synergy with the UN. I would also like to express sincere appreciation to Denmark for her generous sponsorship of this meeting, a further testimony of Denmark's unwavering commitment to promote R2P.

Despite the existence of some residual issues to deal with in the theoretical construct of R2P, a consensus appears to have emerged on at least three key issues :

- The State is the primary actor in domestic and international affairs and has the primary responsibility to protect its people.
- It is better to prevent than to intervene after the dreaded act, and capacities should be developed to avoid reaching the stage of commission of atrocities together with attendant intervention.
- Continuous building of institutional capacity and transformation is critical to effectively handle prevention, containment/management at the
- regional/ regional and the UN, when the state system is failing to protect against mass atrocities and genocide.

Special attention should therefore be paid to education, promotion of

human rights and human security , early warning mechanisms, alternative dispute settlement arrangements, etc.

To the extent that sub-regional and regional bodies provide platforms for more intense collaboration and mutual support for peace, stability and general development, it stands to reason that regional approaches are going to be very key and strategic in concretizing the R2P agenda.

Happily, the UN is planning a session on R2P and regional organizations this summer here at the UN, with a view to fast tracking the concretization of R2P. Last week, I was privileged to have been part of a preparatory meeting facilitated by the Stanley Foundation at the instance of Dr. Edward Luck, the Senior Advisor to the UN Secretary General. The well attended seminar further confirmed the growing consensus on R2P and the strategic focus of prevention, together with the accompanying regional approach to national level action.

At least examples already exist in Europe and Africa, especially West Africa, with ECOWAS and its current R2P architecture, albeit at varying stages of development.

Admittedly, sub-regional and regional mechanisms may not be enough to deal with R2P situations, especially under pillar 3 intervention to protect civilians. There is therefore the need for the UN to develop its capacities in support of these regional arrangements under pillar 3. I would however, hasten to add that the international community should be seen to be laying emphasis more on pillars 1 and 2 in its support to Member-States, and their respective regional mechanisms.

To that end we also look forward to the UN, clearly designating its focal point within the UN system, to help nurture the growth and consolidation of national and regional institutional mechanisms and focal points.

Let me therefore reiterate that if we are to move this process forward, the following actions would be critical:

- Help create a global R2P four-tier system of institutional capacity building at the national, sub-regional, regional and UN levels with a view to addressing capacity deficits and enhancement requirements, including the promotion of relevant synergies.
- Work, to the extent possible, with existing structures and avoid duplication.

It is also my hope that while a state structure of focal points is developed from the national level, through the sub-regional to UN , a parallel non-governmental mechanism should be promoted in support of the state arrangements at all levels.

Finally, let me also emphasize that there is often a risk of misunderstanding the role of focal points whether it is at a national or regional level. As focal point, I think we should endeavor to be an entry point to a functioning national or regional mechanism, architecture, or network. To that end, we should be so located as to be able to provide the multi-task technical roles of entry point for national or regional facilitation, advocacy and inter-institutional networking,( both public and public/private).

Let me also emphasize that in this compelling exercise of R2P promotion, the countries that we here represent as experts, need to put the right foot forward especially at these very early stages in order to help generate the optimum momentum for concretizing R2P globally.

May the launch of this global network serve as a catalyst for further UN action to gain global acceptance and practice of R2P, especially at the national and regional levels.