“Turning Promise into Practice:”[1]
The Challenges of and Next Steps for Implementing the Responsibility to Protect

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[1] UN Secretary-General, 2008
What is the Responsibility to Protect (R2P)?

- R2P is the commitment of the international community (through the UN) to protect populations from genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and ethnic cleansing

- Key documents
  - UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/60/1 (October 2005)
  - UN Security Council Resolution 1674 (September 2006)
What was the rationale behind R2P, and why do we still need it?

- History of mass atrocities
- Despite successes, countless cases of international community’s inability and/or unwillingness to prevent and end mass atrocities
- Ongoing cases of mass atrocities
The Challenges to Implementing R2P

1) Strengthening the understanding of R2P
   - Primary myths and critiques

2) Operationalizing it
   - Existing programs
   - Sufficient resources
   - Criteria for the coercive use of force

3) Building political will
   - Strong opposition to R2P, despite its adoption
   - Difficultly regarding prevention
   - Humanitarian aid vs. effectively addressing the core problems
The Next Steps for Implementing R2P

1) Strengthen the understanding of R2P
   • Explain what R2P is, its scope and limits
   • Toolbox of policy measures
   • Identify examples of R2P responses

2) Operationalize R2P
   • Common themes
   • Prevention
   • Early warning
   • Timely and decisive responses

3) Build political will
   • Defend from misuse
   • Raise the political costs of inaction for governments
   • Build on support from the “Global South,” incl. Rwanda
Reasons for Optimism & Action

**Optimism**

- UN Secretary-General supportive of R2P
- Creation last year of UN Special Adviser on R2P
- Formation of international coalition of civil society groups working to implement R2P

**Action**

- UN General Assembly debate on R2P and Secretary-General’s report on implementing R2P
- Further research, creativity and strategies needed
Resources about R2P and Mass Atrocities

Websites
- International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP): http://responsibilitytoprotect.org/
- Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (GCR2P): http://www.globalr2p.org/
- Asia-Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (APR2P): http://www.r2pasiapacific.org/
- Genocide Prevention Month (April is Genocide Prevention Month): http://www.genocidepreventionmonth.org/

Readings
- Gareth Evans. The Responsibility to Protect: Ending Mass Atrocity Crimes Once and For All.
- Samantha Power. “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide
- Responsibility to Protect-Engaging Civil Society Project. Global Consultative Roundtables on the Responsibility to Protect: Civil Society Perspectives and Recommendations for Action.

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