



# BELGIQUE

**ASSEMBLEE GENERALE – 63<sup>ème</sup> Session**

**LA MISE EN ŒUVRE DE LA  
RESPONSABILITE DE PROTEGER**

**DECLARATION  
DE  
S.E. MONSIEUR JAN GRAULS  
AMBASSADEUR  
REPRESENTANT PERMANENT DE LA BELGIQUE  
AUPRES DES NATIONS UNIES**

**LE 23 JUILLET 2009**

## UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION

Mr. President,

Four years ago, our Heads of States and Governments adopted unanimously and irrevocably the principle of the responsibility to protect. By so doing, we offered a **promise of hope** to humanity: the promise of a future in which the words genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity would be confined to history books. In order to reach this better future, we promised to assume fully our responsibilities. And we promised to offer each others a helping hand and to work constructively and in solidarity. Today, I would like to reflect on these promises.

Victims of crimes, whether in Cambodia, in Rwanda or in Ex-Yugoslavia, remind us that no region, no culture, is safe from the horror engendered by hate and violence. The promise of hope that was made at the highest level created expectations for the populations that suffered from these crimes, and the credibility of our organization depends on our capacity to answer these expectations.

Mr. President,

Answering this promise, and I now move to my second point, is the very goal of the debate we are holding today. The answer lies in the implementation of what our leaders decided in 2005. By adopting paragraphs 138 and 139 of the World Summit Outcome Document, we indeed all pledged to fully assume our responsibility both at national level, and collectively.

As underlined by the Secretary General in his report, the implementation of the responsibility to protect requires first and foremost national action. The individual **responsibility of States** is paramount. There lies the meaning of the concept of sovereignty as responsibility and of the first pillar. Rather than weakening sovereignty, the responsibility to protect reinforces it by turning it into responsible sovereignty.

Mr. President,

If a State lacks the means to assume its responsibility on its own - and this constitutes my third point -, the international community can, the international community must offer assistance. This **solidarity effort** is at the heart of the very principles of the United Nations. It is all the more important in the face of the various crises - financial and others - which we must currently face together. This responsibility too is impending upon the international community. International and regional assistance are essential and must promote the "consolidation" of States fully responsible for their citizens. As underlined by the

Secretary General, we must allow national capacities to thrive and take root rather than support them temporarily and artificially.

Regrettably, every now and then, a particular State proves unable or unwilling to protect its population against the worst crimes. In such circumstances, we cannot forfeit our collective responsibility. On the contrary, we have to display our **solidarity with civilian populations**. In such circumstances, the international community must use all means at its disposal to react, including, but as a last resort, coercive measures. The collective exercise of responsibility is one of the promises we made to the victims in 2005 and which we cannot disown today.

This leads me to my fourth and last point, Mr. President: **implementation**. Implementation lies at the center of today's debate, not the principle of the responsibility to protect itself. Belgium will not accept any backtracking on the unanimous agreement of 2005. As the Secretary General rightly stated during the presentation of his report, "it is high time to turn the promise of responsibility to protect into practice". Belgium would like to join the other delegations in thanking the Secretary General for his commitment and for the excellent report which we are considering today. Most of the activities proposed by the report are known to us and are already pursued in some form in full respect of the Charter, whether in the field of mediation, conflict prevention, peacekeeping or peace building. Whether they relate to the first, the second or the third pillar, they form much of the daily work of the United Nations. Other proposals, as that to develop our early warning and prevention capacity deserve to be rapidly implemented. More than ever, we must undertake this task with determination and conviction. We promised it to the victims of odious crimes.

Mr. President,

This was the message that Belgium wanted to convey on the occasion of this debate in addition to the statement made by Sweden on behalf of the European Union, statement to which we fully subscribe.

Thank you.