

Mr. President

Landmark decisions have been taken by this body over the past few years, in particular resolutions 1265 and 1325. The Ten-Point Platform for Action by the Secretary-General offers the Council and other players a good basis to carry out the necessary work to effectively ensure such protection. Full implementation of all these texts combined would go a long way in achieving this goal.

Mr. President

Prevention is the key aspect in the protection of civilians. It must be made clear that abuses against civilian populations, often carried out against their most vulnerable members, in particular women and children, are violations of international law that will not go unpunished. The States concerned have primary responsibility for holding the perpetrators of such crimes accountable, but at the same time crimes such as genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity are of concern to the international community as a whole and thus to the Security Council which represents the international community in matters of international peace and security. An unequivocal and credible message that there will not be impunity in any situation for such crimes would have a strong deterrent effect and thus serve as a very useful tool of prevention. It is worth recalling that the Council has the authority, under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, to refer situations to the Court, even in situations where the State concerned has not subscribed to the Statute. We hope that the adoption of the relationship agreement between the United Nations and the International Criminal Court earlier this year will lead to effective and practical cooperation between the two organizations and welcome the emphasis that the High-Level Panel of the Secretary-General has placed on the role of the Court in general as well as on the Council's referral power in particular.

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Mr. President

We also welcome the appointment of a Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide which will serve as an early-warning instrument and thus assist us in fulfilling our obligation to prevent genocide. A regular formal and informal working relationship between the Special Adviser and the relevant intergovernmental bodies, i.e. the Council, the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights, as well as with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights will allow for the optimal use of this new position within the United Nations system. Regular briefings by the High Commissioner for Human Rights and by the special procedures established by the Commission on Human Rights could greatly contribute to the capacity of the Council both to effectively prevent abuses of civilian populations as well as to monitor the implementation of the relevant provisions of resolutions it has adopted.

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Mr. President

The concept of the responsibility to protect has been endorsed by the High-Level Panel as an “emerging norm” in the area of collective international responsibility. We welcome the emphasis given to this concept which has rightfully been playing an increasing role in the international discourse and look forward to further discussions thereon. The protection and well-being of civilian populations must remain the primary responsibility of the State concerned. However, where inability or unwillingness of a State lead to massive and large-scale violations of international humanitarian and human rights law with all their devastating human, social and economic consequences and their effects on international peace and security, the Security Council must become active in order to live up to its responsibility under the United Nations Charter.

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Mr. President

While all perpetrators of abuses and violations against civilians must be held accountable, such abuses are especially appalling when they are committed by those who have the task to ensure the very protection of a civilian population.

Reports on abuses committed by peace-keeping personnel are therefore most disturbing and need to be thoroughly investigated. Such incidents gravely jeopardize the United Nations' work in this area as well as in more general terms, and we therefore trust that the necessary steps will be taken to bring perpetrators to justice and to restore full credibility of the organization in this respect.

I thank you.