

Human Rights Council – 44th session

Explanation of Vote

HRC44 Resolution on the 15th Anniversary of the Responsibility to Protect

17 July 2020

Australia thanks the core group for its work on Resolution L.12 and its efforts to accommodate a range of proposals from delegations.

As we approach the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the Responsibility to Protect principle by all Member States, this resolution affirms our global commitment to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

We are reminded of our undertaking as individual states, and as part of the collective international community, to protect humanity from mass atrocity crimes.

Responsibility to Protect does not undermine sovereignty but instead reminds us that sovereignty comes with a fundamental responsibility to protect one's population from human rights abuses and violations, and from mass atrocities.

Responsibility extends to the global community — through the United Nations and its organs— as guided by pillars two and three of the Responsibility to Protect principle.

Australia urges all parties to consider this resolution in the spirit that the Responsibility to Protect was first conceived and adopted — a collective international commitment to do our utmost to prevent the horrors of mass atrocities, such as we saw in Srebrenica and Rwanda, from occurring again.

As the first resolution tabled in the Human Rights Council to focus specifically on support for the Responsibility to Protect, it offers an opportunity to reinforce the indivisible connection between our responsibility to protect and the international human rights framework.

This includes the very practical opportunity to explore how the Human Rights Council's mandate, including prevention, technical assistance and capacity building and the Universal Periodic Review can help strengthen implementation of the Responsibility to Protect at the earliest stages of concern.

This resolution enables convening of an intersessional panel to commemorate the 15th anniversary by sharing best practices for implementing the Responsibility to Protect, including with civil society and national human rights institutions.

There is significant value in ongoing dialogue on implementation.

We encourage all parties to pragmatically consider lessons learned on how to improve early warning, build human rights frameworks and institutions, and join up intersecting agendas as part of the Responsibility to Protect.

Australia looks forward to co-sponsoring Resolution L.12.

Australia will vote in favour of Resolution L.12 and strongly urges all other members to do so.