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## **Responsibility to protect principle must cover all who need it, Ban says**



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

23 September 2011 –

[Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon today stressed the need to ensure that the principle of ‘responsibility to protect’ – safeguarding populations from genocide and war crimes – becomes a reality for all the peoples of the world that need it.

“This is a critical moment in the life of the Responsibility to Protect. In the six short years since its endorsement by the World Summit, this doctrine has gone from crawling to walking to running.

“Our job is to keep it moving and on track as we move from words to deeds,” Mr Ban said in remarks at a ministerial round table on the subject held on the margins of the annual general debate of the General Assembly.

“Let us do our utmost to ensure that this umbrella of protection covers all who need it,” he added.

Agreed at a summit of world leaders in 2005 and sometimes known as ‘R2P’, the principle of the responsibility to protect holds States responsible for shielding their own populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and related crimes against humanity and requires the international community to step in if this obligation is not met.

Mr. Ban noted that the principle “has arrived,” as can be seen the international community’s collective actions in Côte d’Ivoire and Libya, as well as in its diplomatic efforts.

“Our challenge now is to keep all [UN] Charter-based options open, and all of our collective tools sharp,” he told participants. “We need to strengthen ties with our regional, sub-regional and civil society partners.

“We need to share information and assessments about States under stress. Effective prevention requires early, active and sustained engagement.

“We also need to look at our development, capacity-building and peace-building programmes through the lens of atrocity prevention to be sure they are healing fissures within societies, not deepening them,” said the Secretary-General.

He added that it is a sign of progress that the debates now are about how, not whether, to implement the responsibility to protect.

“No government questions the principle. Tactics, however, will – and should – be the subject of continuing scrutiny.”

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