



HEADQUARTERS | SIEGE | NEW YORK, NY 10017
TEL.: + 212 963 1234 | OSAPG@UN.ORG

George Okoth-Obbo, Special Adviser to the United Nations Secretary General on the Responsibility to Protect

Introduction remarks for discussion on collaboration between ASEAN and the United Nations on R2P.

Meeting of ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) on the Responsibility to Protect, at the Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect & Centre for Strategic and International Studies

Jakarta, Indonesia, Monday 27 February 2023

I am incredibly grateful indeed to be joining you once again in this crucial discussion to explore ways in which the Responsibility to Protect can be rooted and flourished operationally in the ASEAN region. In these remarks to introduce the discussion of how ASEAN and the United Nations can collaborate in that objective, I will put on the table six main propositions. Because the uptake of R2P in ASEAN has been problematized in particular with respect to the mandate, activities, and accountabilities of AICHR, those propositions will speak particularly to AICHR. However, it will also be highlighted how this question unavoidably goes beyond AICHR and invokes the highest political levels of accountability of ASEAN and its Member States.

For my first proposition, **R2P has to be up taken, grounded and given operational expression first within ASEAN itself at both institutional regional level and in the countries of the Organization.** R2P was elaborated and adopted as a collective global concept and imperative. At the same time, its primordial national rooting was plainly underscored. The approach thus cannot be that R2P is or will be an external provenance to be implanted in the ASEAN country and regional spaces as an external international

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attempt here to elaborate how this engagement can or should be facilitated which we can also come back to in the discussions. For now, I limit myself to highlighting the statement of principle and approach.

Finally, **what does all this entail in terms of the collaboration with the United Nations.** What does that collaboration entail? What are some of the key touch points? I will highlight the following three:

To begin with, **on the ground in the ASEAN regional and national contexts, every advantage has to continue to be taken of the pertinent particular and overall collaborations between ASEAN and its Member States and the UN specifically on HR and related agendas.** Of particular importance in this respect, as highlighted by the 12th ASEAN-UN Summit which took place in Cambodia in November last year, is the UN-ASEAN Plan of Action. **An essential element of the work of taking R2P forward will thus also entail prodding the ways in which that framework and related agendas - Children, Youth, Gender, SDGs, Climate Change, Mediation, Peace and Security, refugees and forced migration can be leveraged and maximized accordingly.**

Then, as ASEAN would work to build and firm up its convergence on the respective R2P issues, **it can continue to count in every way on the partnership, collaboration and support of the Joint United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect.** In particular on what? As just said in unpacking, building, and firming up a commonly – shared understanding of R2P and how unique national and regional characteristics can be considered in concretizing it operationally. And in institutionalizing and giving implementation to R2PR, including knowledge dissemination, risk analysis, early warning, prevention and other lines of action of course, capacity building and other fronts.

Thirdly, **I would like most strongly to urge the ASEAN Member States and ASEAN institutionally speaking to up their participation in the settings/dialogues in which R2P is played out globally in either its form or in its outcome/secondary nature.** Of particular importance in this regard are: (i) The General Assembly Annual debate of the Secretary-General's report on R2P; (ii) The Group of Member States Friends of the Responsibility to Protect in both New York and Geneva; (iii) the Human Rights Council and its thematic and situation specific agendas; and (iv) other related or aligned agendas: the Common Agenda; CAAC; WPS; YPS; SGDs etc.

I recognize that each of my reckonings above give rise to a corollary set of particular or broad questions that would require further elaboration and discussion. I will welcome in the discussions that will follow this introduction for these questions to be brought into that discussion and, indeed, as we continue forward in the project.

I thank you very much to listening to me.