

9

THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN STRENGTHENING THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT NETWORK

This chapter derives from a United Nations Association in Canada (UNA-Canada) roundtable, held on March 12th, 2007 in Ottawa, to mark the 50th Anniversary of UN Peacekeeping. The event was a closed experts' roundtable. Participants of the closed experts' roundtable discussed Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and the role of Canadian civil society. Lessons from other existing networks on R2P (such as the UN-focused network in New York) were discussed. Participants considered Canadian civil society efforts to solidify the normative understanding of R2P through awareness-raising, campaigning and research initiatives, with the objective of helping to propel Canada as an international leader on R2P. With this goal in mind, the prospect of forming a concerted R2P network in Canada was discussed. This roundtable was linked to the Ottawa Conference held November 23, 2006, which was a public dialogue on Responsibility to Protect and Darfur, featuring Jan Pronk, former Special Representative to the Secretary-General for the United Nations in Sudan, Wendy Gilmour, Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and Carolyn McAskie, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support. The opinions expressed in this chapter and the recommendations are derived from UNA-Canada's consultation process and are not necessarily the views of the organization. In addition, the recommendations do not represent agreement by consensus among the participants, and may not include all views outside of this limited consultation process.

The closed roundtable featured **Nicole Deller**, World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy (via telephone); **Dr. Don Hubert**, Human Security Policy Division, Foreign Affairs and International Trade; **Bill Janzen**, Mennonite Central Committee; **Peter Jones**, Senior Fellow, Queen's Centre for International Relations; **Paul Larose-Edwards**, Executive Director, CANADEM; **Dr. Richard Price**, Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Political Science, University of British Columbia; **Shane Roberts**, Board Member of UNA-Canada; **Natalie Senst**, Director Internal Communications, STAND Canada; **Sara Siebert**, IHL Awareness Committee, Canadian Red Cross, Ottawa Branch; **Susan Thomson, PhD** candidate at Dalhousie and Fellow, Canadian Consortium on Human Security & Int'l Development Research Centre,

¹ Lloyd Axworthy, *Navigating a New World: Canada's Global Future* (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2003), 45.

² Statement by Jan Egeland, the former UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, to the UNSC (28 June 2006).

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Patricia Taft and Jason Ladnier, *Building the Capacity to Protect: The Role of Civil Society* (Washington, DC: Fund for Peace, July 2005), 2.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

2006-07; **Kathy Vandergrift**, Children and Armed Conflict Forum, Canadian Peacebuilding Coordinating Committee; **Kathryn White**, Executive Director, UNA-Canada; and **Yasemin Ugursal**, Gender and Peacebuilding Working Group, Canadian Peacebuilding Coordinating Committee. **Emily Schroeder**, UNA-Canada, was the event’s moderator.

This chapter in particular was largely drawn from a paper written by Maria Banda, entitled “The Responsibility to Protect: Moving the Agenda Forward.” Whereas the other chapters in this report look closely at the intersection of various stakeholders related to peacekeeping, this chapter focuses primarily on the role of civil society in moving the R2P agenda forward. The operational challenges related to R2P and UN peacekeeping were not discussed at length in this roundtable, however this topic is covered extensively in Maria Banda’s paper, available on the UNA-Canada website.

BACKGROUND: RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT AND THE CRISIS OF PROTECTION

R2P is the present-day response to a problem every bit as big, and urgent, as peacekeeping was 50 years ago. The debate over R2P “is not some abstract, academic exercise of hypothetical simulations,” Lloyd Axworthy observed to a university audience, “this is real, because the issue of intervention — of how, when and who goes in to influence the affairs of another state — is probably the most critical and difficult conundrum...in this new century of ours.”¹ We are now facing a surging demand for peacekeeping, peace-enforcement, and peace-building missions, yet our collective record on intervention is far from encouraging. “Concerted, coherent, and systematic international action,” coupled with “positive political engagement” by parties to a conflict, has achieved “significant progress” in many regions.² “The world is, indeed, a safer place for most of us,” the UN Security Council (UNSC) was told in a briefing, “but it is still a death trap for too many defenceless civilians.”³ The ongoing violence in Afghanistan, the DRC, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, and elsewhere serves as a poignant reminder that our current international protection regime is still too weak and too limited to provide security for all. The UN has too often failed “to act quickly and effectively,”⁴ while coalition and regional initiatives (which have emerged as a possible alternative to UN-led — and, even, UN-authorized — operations) have caused serious concerns about their capacity, accountability, and legitimacy to intervene. The global war on terrorism has further “complicated efforts to harmonize and rationalize action for human security,” with many nations less willing to send armed forces into a sovereign country.⁵

R2P: NORMATIVE, LEGAL, AND OPERATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

The emergence of the protection regime is wrapped up with the challenges, failures, and lessons of humanitarian intervention in the 1990s — such as Rwanda (1994), Bosnia (1995), and Kosovo (1999) which helped set in motion a reform of the UN’s intervention framework, launched the broader “protection of civilians” (POC) agenda, and ultimately facilitated the endorsement of R2P. The basic tenets of what we now understand as “R2P” were developed in stages, starting with the UNSC, whose three thematic resolutions on the POC in armed conflict confirmed that the meaning of “threats to international peace and security” had

already been sufficiently redefined by the UNSC in practice to include violence against civilians.⁶ The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) — an independent body set up by the Canadian government to build the foundations of a new consensus on humanitarian intervention — articulated a threefold concept of R2P.⁷ The immediate impact of the ICISS Report was muted in an environment dominated by 9/11, but lobbying by R2P advocates, ongoing practice of protection by the UNSC and regional bodies, as well as two important endorsements by the High-Level Panel⁸ and the Secretary-General⁹ significantly improved R2P's prospects. The 2005 World Summit (WS) provided the decisive endorsement. Intense negotiations in the 59th General Assembly brought out the old arguments against intervention from a handful of states, but also revealed considerable cross-regional support for the norm of protection. While the adoption of R2P in the WS Declaration was a triumph for the human rights community, ongoing disagreements about the meaning of the R2P paragraphs underline a continued need to advocate, refine, and implement the norm that will truly meet the objective of protection.

The protection of civilians has become a standard feature of peacekeeping since 1999, but the UNSC has never provided an interpretation of these terms for the troops in the field. The outcome has been confusion about the scope of protection, unclear lines of responsibility between the various actors in the field, and, in some cases, a failure to protect. Including R2P in the mission mandate cannot protect civilians if the force in the field does not understand the mandate — or does not implement it. It is clear that evolving the R2P agenda will have clear implications for the development of future UN Peacekeeping.

A Short R2P Timeline	
11/2001	POC is identified as a “humanitarian imperative” by the Secretary-General's report on Africa ¹⁰
1999-2000	POC is institutionalized in a UNSC presidential statement and two resolutions on POC: SCR 1265 (1999) and 1296 (2000)
11/2001	ICISS releases its report entitled <i>The Responsibility to Protect</i>
12/2004	UN High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (HLP) endorses “the emerging norm that there is a collective international responsibility to protect.”
03/2005	The UNSG reaffirms the Panel's endorsement in his framing document for the “Millennium+5” Summit, <i>In Larger Freedom</i>
09/2005	UN World Summit Declaration embraces R2P
04/2006	SCR 1674 (2006) on POC reaffirms the World Summit commitment to R2P

⁶ SCR 1265 (1999), 1296 (2000), and 1674 (2006). The Council also approved six statements on POC and passed related resolutions on Women and Children and Armed Conflict, Peace and Security, and Conflict Prevention. The UNGA Millennium Declaration recognized POC (A/RES/55/2). Between 1999 and 2007, the UNSC included the POC provision in the mandates of all UN-led (or UN-delegated) peacekeeping missions.

⁷ The Canadian government was responding to a challenge by the then UNSG, Kofi Annan, to reconcile sovereignty and protection: “[If] humanitarian intervention is, indeed, an unacceptable assault on sovereignty, how should we respond to a Rwanda, to a Srebrenica — to gross and systematic violations of human rights that offend every precept of our common humanity?” (A/54/2000, 48).

CANADIAN CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT ON R2P

Since the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) in 2001 released the report *Responsibility to Protect*, some Canadian NGOs have explored the implications of this doctrine for policy, advocacy, programs, projects and research. Momentum has been building since the United Nations World Summit (WS) in 2005 where R2P was adopted in the WS declaration. The UNA-Canada roundtable built on several other meetings of civil society to advance the R2P agenda.

In December 2005, the Conflict Prevention Working Group and the Peace Operations Working Group of the Canadian Peacebuilding Coordinating Committee (CPEC) sponsored an NGO-Government Dialogue to address “Next Steps to Advance the Responsibility to Protect.”¹² It was suggested at that meeting that R2P advocates continue to build a normative consensus around R2P, as well as elaborate an operational basis to implement R2P principles.

In terms of norm-building, incremental steps were thought to be useful, such as the incorporation of R2P language in United Nations (UN) resolutions. In terms of operationalization, the discussion explored the work of the Stimson Centre work on R2P and military doctrine, training and mission preparation. In terms of campaigning, the meeting emphasized the R2P tool kit, which is a guide to understand R2P and to raise awareness, produced by the World Federalist Movement (WFM), and includes education tools, a brochure about the 2005 World Summit, ideas for how civil society can participate, frequently asked questions about R2P, a summary of the ICISS report and selected articles on R2P.

At the March 12th meeting, some members of Canadian civil society discussed their work towards solidifying a normative understanding of R2P domestically through awareness-raising, campaigning and research initiatives with the objective of helping propel Canada as an international leader on R2P. Others discussed how there has been a step away from some R2P work as a result of possible contradictions with conflict prevention and anti-militarization positions.

CANADIAN GOVERNMENT WORK ON R2P: A BRIEFING

Don Hubert from Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada gave a briefing of DFAIT’s current approach to the R2P agenda. Changing positions on R2P in global policy development is a slow and uneven process. Most successes are driven by specific and focused actions. As a follow-up on the 2005 United Nations World Summit and April 2006 Security Council Resolution on Protection of Civilians, DFAIT is pursuing three main tracks:

⁸ The 16-member Panel was established by the UNSG to help the UN develop a new consensus on collective security. The Panel also sought to operationalize the norm by recommending criteria on the use of force and asking the P5 to refrain from exercising their veto power.

⁹ “I believe we must embrace the responsibility to protect, and, when necessary, we must act on it” (emphasis in the original) (A/59/565).

¹⁰ See Report of the Secretary-General on Causes of Conflicts and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa of 13 April 1998 (S/1998/318-A/52/871).

1. STRENGTHENING THE NORMATIVE AGENDA

DFAIT's strategy is to work with countries that are committed to R2P and not necessarily pursue those that are opposed. The main focus is currently on Africa where R2P principles are already part of law, which provide a platform. It is hard to dismiss when African countries themselves say that there are limits to sovereignty. The region is also likely to need protection the most. The intent is to assist Ghana through formal diplomatic means to formulate a normative statement on R2P leading into the African Union (AU) Summit.

Diplomatic efforts also continue in Europe, where there is willingness to support multinational forces to intervene in a crisis. The best kind of intervention would be short, sharp military operations of about 6 months with about 5,000 troops followed by more general peacekeeping operations. This would involve few countries but they need to be well resourced.

Diplomatic efforts are complemented by research at the Institute for Security Studies in South Africa and the Institute of Public Policy Research in London, as well as collaboration with civil society.

2. FIELD-LEVEL MONITORING AND TARGETED ACTION

Some normative, legal and institutional mechanisms have been put in place. The challenge now is to monitor, report and enforce. Darfur may loom large, but the key is to persist and focus on some early successes, such as coercive protection in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The focus is on institutional capacity and the office Juan Mendez, the United Nation's special adviser on the prevention of genocide. To compliment the efforts of the UN, it is advisable to have an independent voice on R2P, one that does not have to make political considerations and can be effective and clearly targeted.

3. MILITARY OPERATIONAL PREPAREDNESS

Somewhere between multinational forces and robust peacekeeping is a role for military intervention. This may be a controversial idea, but large-scale atrocities against civilian populations take time to organize. The model for military operations in these situations would be a short, hard hit that stops the killing and makes way for a multi-dimensional peace-support operation.

¹¹ S/PRST/1999/6.

¹² See report at <http://www.peacebuild.ca/working/powg/R2Pnextsteps.pdf>.

¹³ The core of this group of NGOs in New York are WFM, Human Rights Watch, International Crisis Group and Amnesty International.

These kinds of missions require rigorous preparation and training of the military, which is desirable for two reasons: if troops are sent, they will be able to do a good job; and if political leaders believe that their troops have planned and trained for these kinds of missions, they are more likely to send them.

Following Mr. Hubert's presentation, participants discussed some of the points raised. Regarding the best return on civil society's investments, there was no agreement on whether the focus should be on "allies" vs. "opponents" of R2P. Mr. Hubert suggested that it may be best to reach out to countries that are still on the fence. Regarding the military operational preparedness, there is no agreement on the best approach to this issue in terms of civil society advocacy, as it is still unclear what the implications of an "R2P military intervention" would look like. Some members of civil society are cautious not to allow R2P to be used as an excuse by some countries for interventions that are not, in fact, what R2P was originally conceived to address.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM A UN-FOCUSED R2P NETWORK IN NEW YORK

Nicole Deller of WFM addressed the group via telephone from New York. She shared lessons learned from coordinating a civil society network on R2P in New York as well as regionally and internationally.

A network around R2P coalesced at the UN World Summit in September 2005, with many human rights and social movement groups joining in, both from the North and the South. The momentum had been building since the prevention of armed conflict conference at the UN in July 2005 where R2P became one of the agenda items and was incorporated into the platform on conflict prevention as a result of a strong civil society presence in favor of R2P, led by WFM.

She commented that since that time, most governments have been unsure what the next steps for R2P agenda should be, now that it has been signed into an affirmation. And even though there is significant unity among NGOs to support R2P, or at least not to come out against it, WFM has recognized that more awareness-raising is required.

The primary goal has remained branding: for those who do not know R2P well, it still represents the codification of a use of force doctrine, instead of a spectrum of activity with the use of force as a last resort. The emphasis is on government responsibility with the understanding that sovereignty has to yield at a high threshold of crimes.

She pointed out that awareness-raising to build public support for R2P needs to clarify that R2P does not constitute the unilateral use of force, but rather is a framework for the UN and particularly regional organizations to respond more effectively in prevention and early reaction of atrocities against civilian populations. As part of awareness-raising, WFM explains how to create advocacy campaigns at conferences all over the world, at workshops, and during presentations and consultations.

A separate awareness-raising initiative that is led by a few New York groups¹³ is more about reaching out to civil society NGOs on how they can take R2P forward in their own campaigns. The focus is on operational issues and how to ensure that the UN incorporates and implements R2P.

The New York group has been meeting fairly regularly since mid-2006. The group's first main initiative is to advocate on the UN Security Council resolution on the protection of civilians. The second focus is to develop a business model for a comprehensive R2P campaign directed at the UN. And the third, most recent development is to establish NGO recommendations or a request for greater consultation on the possibility that the UN Secretary General may change the office special adviser on the prevention of genocide, a position now held by Juan Mendez, to special adviser on R2P.

CANADIAN CIVIL SOCIETY: IS A COMMON POSITION ON R2P POSSIBLE?

Following the discussion with Ms. Deller, the possibility of Canadian civil society negotiating a common position on R2P was discussed. It was expressed that drafting common language may be too difficult at this stage, as there are too many disagreements. It was thought that it may be best to coordinate around talking points and for an organization to take the lead to play a convener role to develop common messages and advocacy norms.

It was recognized that the danger of attempting to wage a narrow campaign is that attention can be shifted away from other things. NGOs are learning that political choices to include/exclude certain issues in agenda can lead to unintended consequences (i.e., Human Security campaigns focused less on development and poverty, and more on security implications). Yet, it was acknowledged that the existence of well-organized domestic groups linking up with transnational activities is indispensable (i.e., the landmine campaign), implying that an R2P network needs to establish strong links with like-minded domestic civil society organizations. The question is: are civil society actors willing to form strategic alliances with other groups who would promote robust military postures? This presents a dilemma: if Canada does not have the military capacity to carry out R2P interventions, the norm will not be taken particularly seriously by other governments. This is an issue that Canadian civil society is still working through, and therefore it was thought unwise to force the negotiation of a common position at this stage. While Canadian civil society sees the value to come together around R2P, more discussion is required.

POTENTIAL DOMESTIC & INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MOVING THE R2P AGENDA FORWARD

To realize the promise of protection, Maria Banda's paper identifies the need for an R2P program domestically and an R2P regime internationally. Since the international responsibility to protect rests not only with state governments, but also with civil society and international organizations, she suggests that taking R2P forward will require the establishment of an informal transnational network.

DEVELOPING AN R2P PROGRAM AT HOME

Governments could make R2P a fundamental part of their foreign policy agenda, while acknowledging its inherent costs and risks.

a. *Locate/Allocate institutional responsibility for R2P in the national system*

Governments could identify the relevant departments and allocate individual tasks for the articulation, coordination, and implementation of the R2P program. High-level support from the Executive branch is particularly important in the early stages of advocacy, as is securing a sustainable source of funding from the Legislative branch. The important thing to remember is that the basic structure is already in place: the R2P process can build on, and can feed off of the earlier projects on human security.

b. *Expand the domestic support-base for R2P*

It is equally important to get the public message right. Public endorsements of R2P by politicians, civil servants, and parliamentarians are a good way to increase the principle's visibility. Throughout this process, governments should engage civil society and support the work of think-tanks, research institutes, and NGOs working on R2P-related areas.¹⁴ It was mentioned by some participants that sometimes governments use the R2P incorrectly, to justify actions such as Afghanistan and Iraq. It was suggested that civil society should respond to these incorrect statements that will only confuse progress on R2P advocacy.

c. *Secure support for R2P in practice*

Getting the public to accept R2P as a principle is one thing; garnering its support for an actual intervention is quite another. Governments should understand the reservations of any opposing groups and address their concerns with arguments in favour of early prevention, reaction to violence, and post-conflict rebuilding. But they should also recognize — and capitalize on — the strength and the resonance of R2P with the general public. Opinion polls show that R2P policies are well-received in the West and in Africa, even at the height of the war on terror and Iraq. This is a highly significant finding, which should be brought to the policymakers' attention. However, the level of public interest in humanitarian crises is still too low to affect a government's policy choices. The media has a role to play in this regard, as popular attitudes toward intervention are influenced by awareness of a given crisis through media exposure and education.

¹⁴ E.g. The Fund for Peace (FfP), the Stimson Centre, or the Responsibility to Protect-Engaging Civil Society project (R2P-CS), among others.

ADVANCING THE R2P AGENDA AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

Ms. Banda's paper also discussed how a parallel project in the international arena will require the same kind of political mobilization, consensus-building, and campaigning as the R2P program at home:

STRENGTHENING A NETWORK ON R2P, BEYOND CIVIL SOCIETY

1. *Build an R2P network*

The overarching structures of the protection regime should be laid down through *interstate* cooperation, starting within the UN, but also in consultation with other relevant stakeholders.

- **Governments:** Those states with the reputation or credibility as good international citizens have a particular responsibility to promote R2P. Canada, the main sponsor of the norm, should continue spearheading R2P-initiatives and engaging other likeminded governments and partners.
- **Institutions:** The UN is the main institutional agent with the capacity and the authority to oversee the construction of the R2P regime, but other intergovernmental bodies should also be engaged.
- **International Figures:** The new UNSG should be urged to continue his predecessor's efforts on R2P. A number of other individuals — advocates of human security, political leaders, Nobel Laureates, etc. — would be an asset to the growing R2P coalition.
- **Civil Society:** Civil society is central to sustaining the R2P agenda from advocacy through to implementation. Civil society groups should use the Summit R2P commitment to hold governments accountable for their actions in Darfur and beyond.

2. *Defuse the opposition*

The opposition to R2P can be neither coerced nor wished away; but, it can be engaged, gradually persuaded, and eventually socialized into the protection regime. The opposition, though vocal and tenacious, is remarkably small, while its arguments are less about R2P than other grievances, such as the war in Iraq or neo-colonialism.

¹⁵ NGOs, including Human Rights Watch (HRW), the ICG, Refugees International, and Oxfam, now regularly cite R2P.

¹⁶ The UK House of Commons International Development Committee, for instance, condemned inaction in Darfur and urged the UK government and the international community to exercise their "responsibility to protect." See Darfur, Sudan: The responsibility to protect (2005). A US congressional task force on UN reform, co-chaired by Newt Gingrich and George Mitchell, endorsed R2P and urged the US administration to adopt — and apply — the doctrine (See the Task Force Report, "American Interests and UN Reform").

LAY DOWN THE REGIME FOUNDATIONS

The success of the R2P agenda will depend on more than the civil society how much progress we are able to make in four interrelated areas — norm-setting, institutionalization, codification, and practice on the ground:

1. *Norm-setting*

“R2P” should become a part of the *international vocabulary* and the *international agenda*. This includes bilateral contacts among governments; multilateral forums (e.g. the G8, G20, or APEC); as well as regional or international organizations (e.g. ECOWAS, OSCE, or NATO). Within the UN, the UNGA and the UNSC are two key arenas to mainstream R2P. The international civil society, especially the human rights community, has done much to raise the profile of R2P by accepting — and advocating — both the R2P concept and terminology.¹⁵ The norm has also attracted the attention of some national legislatures.¹⁶ All of these actors should aim to make R2P a standard referent point in their statements and country reports.

2. *Institutionalizing R2P*

It is essential to make further progress on POC at the UN, starting with the Secretariat. The new UNSG should place R2P at the center of his mission and agenda and ensure that his Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide (SAPG) is given sufficient political support and resources to carry out his mandate. The language of R2P should be also incorporated into all UNSC thematic and country resolutions. The Council could set up its consultative or monitoring committee on R2P, as it has done with children in armed conflict. The 15 members of the UNSC have a clear duty to keep implementing POC and R2P — in line with their past decisions and the WS Declaration. But other UN member-states are also responsible for bringing situations to the Council’s attention.¹⁷ R2P’s backers must lead by example: i.e. they must find the political will, and the resources, to implement their share of the humanitarian agenda.

Since the concept of R2P spans four pillars of the UN’s operations — humanitarian, human rights, security, and development — a number of other technical agencies are entrusted with furthering R2P’s objectives.¹⁸ All of these institutions should integrate the relevant dimensions of R2P into their mission statements and operations. There is significant scope for inter-agency cooperation to oversee the application of R2P, possibly through a “Working-” or “Advisory Group on R2P.”¹⁹ But it is important to remember that having a home-base is not enough in itself: institutionalization has to be accompanied by parallel efforts in the realm of advocacy and implementation.

¹⁷ They can promote the cause of protection by: they can promote the cause of protection by backing the efforts to have the principle of R2P endorsed within the UNSC; encouraging the Council presidency to hold open debates on topics relating to R2P in which they can participate; and, submitting policy proposals with actionable recommendations whose contents should be made public and shared with such UN watchdogs as the Security Council Report.

3. Codifying R2P

R2P's status under international law must be strengthened and clarified. R2P is already grounded in a large and growing body of international law, which has been significantly enhanced since 1999, namely with the 2005 WS Declaration and the Council's three POC resolutions.²⁰ The most recent POC resolution, SCR 1674 (2006), sought to update the international POC framework to better reflect the new challenges of protection and enhance the UN's capacity to respond. SCR 1674 also contains an explicit reference to R2P. While this is a significant achievement, the norm will gain credibility and long-term legal significance only if the Council's pronouncements are implemented in practice. At this stage, however, "serious gaps remain in the implementation of the legal framework," including prevention, protection, humanitarian access, and impunity.²¹

4. Practice

The last, and indispensable, element in the regime construction is consistent practice on the ground. We consider in some detail R2P's operational dimensions and challenges in the next section.

These four areas serve as talking points from which to build on and develop advocacy strategies on R2P among Canadian civil society. The questions regarding "how" to move these issues forward and through which mechanisms are still under discussion. To date, there is no clear R2P "movement" taking place in Canada.

As Richard Price noted, coalitions need common positions and this will see groups split at various times. If no core group exists before the common position, it will emerge naturally afterwards. The humanitarian community is deeply divided on R2P, because it cannot advocate war. Civil society actors therefore have tough choices to make in terms of how to move forward on the R2P agenda.

¹⁸ Namely, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO); Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA); Department of Political Affairs (DPA); the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); and, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The newly established Human Rights Council (HRC) and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) represent another venue to embed R2P.

¹⁹ The Group could act as the primary point of dissemination of information on R2P; liaison with government, regional groups, and humanitarian NGOs; and, depository of best practices/lessons learned.

SUGGESTIONS FOR POTENTIAL COALITION BUILDING ON R2P IN THE CURRENT CLIMATE

Building on Ms. Banda's paper, several suggestions were raised by the participants at the March 12th event on ways forward for Canadian civil society on R2P in the current political climate. These are presented below:

INFORMATION SHARING

1. The R2P agenda can be pursued without pushing for a common position that may see some organizations walk away. A few times a year, civil society can meet to brief each other on conceptual frameworks and activities related to R2P;
2. It is useful for civil society to regularly convene with Foreign Affairs to share information on activities. In addition, discussions could take place regarding ways in which civil society and DFAIT can support each other's efforts in a complementary fashion, despite the fact that there may be issues of disagreement. The more these issues are discussed, the clearer it will become as to how to approach them in a sensitive and effective manner.

COALITION BUILDING AND DEFINING THE AGENDA

1. A narrow definition of R2P would be useful in order to distinguish it from human security in general. While a broad definition would get more support, it would fail to force us to focus on sharply defined questions. Civil society may be able to raise awareness with a "popular" simple broad definition of R2P, and how it is different from general human security and protection of civilians.
2. Clear language on R2P within civil society would be useful, and caution should be heeded that a broad definition may achieve more buy-in and that specific language constitutes a long-term agenda.

²⁰ The WS was a formative moment for R2P: even though the Declaration is non-binding, it has the potential to develop into a rule of customary international law, which is binding on states — as several landmark UNGA resolutions have in the past.

²¹ See Fifth Report of the Secretary-General on the protection of civilians in armed conflict (S/2005/740) and UK statement to the UNSC in S/PV/5319r.1 (9 Dec 2005).