

**Explanation of Vote
by**

**Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin
Permanent Representative**

On the
Inclusion of the Agenda Item
“The Responsibility to Protect and the Prevention of
Genocide, War Crimes,
Ethnic Cleansing and Crimes Against Humanity”

at the
**73rd Session of the
United Nations General Assembly**

21 September 2018

Madam President,

India, like other delegations, would like to warmly congratulate you on your assumption of office as the President of this August Assembly and wish you success in fulfilling your important responsibilities.

Madam President,

I take the floor to explain India’s Vote on the recommendation of the General Committee to include the agenda item, “The Responsibility to Protect and the Prevention of Genocide, War Crimes, Ethnic Cleansing and Crimes Against Humanity” in the 73rd Session of the General Assembly.

Madam President,

Today, very early in the 73rd session, we are faced with the need to decide by a vote on a voted recommendation of the General Committee. A vote in the General Committee, which was a rarity, is now becoming common. This represents a growing lack of consensus even on the issues to be discussed by the General Assembly. Even by standards of lack of consensus, rare is

the occasion when the same item is required to be voted upon both in the General Committee and the General Assembly, year after year. This, unfortunately, is the situation we are facing today in the case of the item which is now under discussion.

Madam President,

India was one of the delegations that last year had voted in favour of the inclusion of this item on the agenda of the 72nd session.

We did so, as we went by the assurance provided then that the intention was to have a one-off formal discussion to understand the broad positions of Member States on R2P as such formal debate had not been undertaken for a decade. Following that outcome, as we are all aware, the General Assembly held two plenary meetings on 25 June and 2 July 2018 to hear 80 statements outlining positions during the debate.

We recall that many of these statements called for caution and stressed that the international community should define the understanding, applications, implementation and effects on States on both international and internal dimensions of the concept of Responsibility to Protect (R2P).

This showed that there exists a division amongst Member States on the further continuation of discussion in that format.

Now that we have had a formal discussion on the concept of R2P and have seen the existence of serious differences, as recently as the session that has just concluded, an effort must be made to bridge the gaps in understanding the concept. Dialogue and discussion are not associated only with formal debates. Opportunities for convergence can perhaps also grow from informal and interactive consideration. Hence, trying to push through processes for formal consideration when there is no clear consensus may not be the best way forward.

Madam President,

In view of these reasons, my delegation is constrained to change our vote from supporting the inclusion of the item during the last session to an abstention this time.

We do so with the belief that we can continue our discussion on the concept of R2P in various formats in a spirit of collaborative diplomacy, rather than moving along, on the basis of a formal process that is being contested repeatedly and does not provide scope for convergence.

Thank you, Madam President.