

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

AMBASSADOR TERJE RØD-LARSEN
President, International Peace Institute

On behalf of the International Peace Institute (IPI), it is my great honor to welcome you to this year's Vienna Seminar entitled "The UN Security Council and The Responsibility to Protect: Policy, Process and Practice." We are very pleased to be back in Vienna together with our Austrian partners, the National Defence Academy, the Diplomatic Academy, the Ministry of European and International Affairs and the Ministry of Defence and Sports, to convene this thirty-ninth annual seminar and to continue our long-standing cooperation with the Government of Austria. Indeed, next year will mark a very special occasion – the fortieth anniversary of IPI as well as our fortieth year of collaboration with our Austrian partners. I very much look forward to this very special occasion, and to continuing the tradition of the annual IPI Vienna Seminar.

We meet today at a particularly important juncture when the United Nations and the international community has a significant opportunity to deliver on the promise to put an end to genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, and to prevent another Rwanda and Darfur from ever taking place again. Indeed, almost four years ago, at the 2005 World Summit, Heads of States and Governments gathered to decide on bold steps to revitalize the work of the United Nations. They did not agree on many things. However, they did manage to unanimously adopt two detailed paragraphs, number 138 and 139, outlining the concept of the "Responsibility to Protect."

Since the 2005 consensus, the Responsibility to Protect has emerged on top of the agenda of the international community, and it has become a key priority for the UN and the Secretary-General. Indeed, it has been the subject of countless speeches, debates, and academic initiatives across the globe. It has even acquired the ultimate emblem of importance at the UN: its own distinct acronym - "RtoP."

In February 2008, the Secretary-General appointed Professor Edward Luck as his Special Adviser, in which capacity he primarily focuses on the implementation of the concept of RtoP. As you know, Ed is also the Senior Vice President for Research and Programs at IPI. And since his appointment, IPI has become somewhat of an institutional home for the concept, and a venue for the UN community to come together to discuss both the political and institutional dimensions of the concept.

While we have come far since the 2005 World Summit, there is a long way to go in order to implement the concept of RtoP. Indeed, little was done in 2006 and 2007 to turn the words of RtoP into doctrine, policy or practise.

This year's Vienna Seminar will therefore consider how to best move forward the RtoP agenda, and what steps the UN and the international community must take to effectively implement the concept. As you have seen from the agenda and the concept note, the Seminar will focus specifically on the role of the UN Security Council, and on the

instruments the Council has at its disposal for preventing RtoP crimes and for protecting populations from their ravages. We will explore this central question through a series of panels focusing on issues such as the Council's role in early engagement and preventive diplomacy, ways to strengthen early warning and assessment mechanisms, and steps to make United Nations peace operations more effective in protecting civilians. In order not to consider these challenges only in the abstract, we will look at them through the lens of two case studies, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the role of MONUC, and the Central African Republic and Chad and the roles of MINURCAT and EUFOR.

We very much hope that our discussion on these challenges will be constructive and dynamic, and that it will assist in developing specific recommendations on how to develop the role of the Security Council in implementing RtoP. I very much look forward to engaging in a rich dialogue and to hearing the views and suggestions of all participants.

Let me finally take the opportunity to once again express my sincere gratitude to the staff of the National Defence Academy, the Diplomatic Academy, the Ministry of European and International Affairs, the Ministry of Defence and Sports, and IPI, for all their efforts in organizing this event. Let me also say a special word of thanks to General Raimund Schittenhelm, Ambassador Hans Winkler, and Ambassador Thomas Mayr-Harting, for their warm hospitality and for their valuable efforts in arranging this event. I would also like to seize this occasion to welcome and thank all our seminar experts in advance for their contributions, and to finally wish this seminar a great success. Thank you.



Amb. Terje Rød-Larsen