## Remarks by Dr. Jennifer Welsh Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Responsibility to Protect

Security Council Arria Formula Meeting
"The Responsibility to Protect and non-State actors"
4:00 pm, Conference Room 1, 14 December 2015

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by thanking Chile and Spain for their leadership in advancing the responsibility to protect. While the Security Council has referenced the responsibility to protect in numerous resolutions and Presidential Statements, this meeting marks the first time that it has devoted such focused attention to the principle. It is particularly fitting that our meeting today coincides with the tenth anniversary of the 2005 World Summit and comes at a time when discussion among Member States is turning from conceptual debate about the principle to how it can best be implemented.

The topic before us today is broad, challenging, and urgent. The responsibility to protect represents a fundamental political commitment by Member States to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, to assist each other in upholding this responsibility, and to take collective action in accordance with the United Nations Charter and international law when national authorities manifestly fail.

While State responsibilities remain the core of the principle, experience during the past decade demonstrates that other actors can also make a significant contribution. Indeed, Paragraph 139 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome speaks of the international community's need to share in the responsibility to protect. Non-governmental organizations have helped to draw attention to emerging risks and build national resilience to the acts specified by the principle of responsibility to protect. Community and religious leaders have proven an important bulwark against rising intolerance. Civil society actors have provided humanitarian assistance to those suffering or fleeing from horrific violence, borne witness to serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, and helped to establish the conditions necessary for holding perpetrators to account. As the Secretary General has consistently maintained in his annual reports, the full realization of the responsibility to protect requires determined action by a diverse array of actors in all corners of the world.

Unfortunately, and tragically, today's headlines are dominated by a very different kind of non-State actor. Although the commission of horrific acts by non-State armed groups is not a new phenomenon, the actions of ISIL, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab and others represent a qualitative break from the past. The public perpetration of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and acts that could constitute genocide has become a conscious part their political strategy.

A long-term, comprehensive, and coherent strategy is needed to counteract the systematic violence perpetrated by such groups and its surrounding narratives of hate and confrontation.

This approach must be both proportionate to the threat and embedded within wider efforts to resolve relevant pol

illicit profits, some arise in situations of conflict in order to protect victimized communities, and some pursue violent forms of extremism. Some groups can be encouraged to modify their goals and conduct, as witnessed by the painstaking work of organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and Geneva Call. But determining which groups are susceptible to external political and economic pressure, which can be brought into a peace process, and which must be directly countered through military means depends on a situation-specific analysis.

Fifth, there is a clear and pressing need to adapt existing tools, given the landscape of systematic violence we face. Better casualty recording, for example, could

As the spread of ISIL into Libya and the wider regional consequences of its instability clearly demonstrate, the Security Council must also be prepared to devote more sustained attention to societies in the aftermath of atrocities