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## 71<sup>st</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly

Briefing

### Informal interactive dialogue on the Responsibility to Protect

New York, 6 September 2017

Statement by Switzerland

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Mr. President,

Thank you for convening this Informal Interactive Dialogue.

My delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his Report on *The Responsibility to Protect: Accountability for Prevention*, particularly **for two reasons**: Firstly, for **using a highly inclusive process** for the preparation of this report, allowing us to provide written contributions as well as to participate at the preparatory panels in New York and in Geneva. Secondly, we would like to thank the Secretary-General for his choice to place a specific **focus on the accountability and prevention nexus**. We fully share the Secretary-General's view that accountability for atrocity crimes and the fight against impunity in general are amongst the most effective ways of **preventing their recurrence**. It is to contribute to **operationalizing this nexus**, that Switzerland has a thematic unit focusing on **transitional justice and prevention of atrocities** within its foreign affairs ministry.

Mr. President,

When looking at the **root causes** of atrocity crimes, a careful **analysis of the Human Rights situation** can be very useful. We encourage to further explore **potential links between the existing Human Rights instruments and mechanisms, such as the UPR, and the Security Council**. Also, as the Secretary-General's Report usefully highlights, the **UN Economic and Social Council** also has an important role to play in supporting atrocity prevention and strengthening accountability.

Prevention of atrocity crimes is essential to achieving the SDG; and on the other hand a **successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda** will contribute to reduce the risk of atrocity crimes.

In our view, the establishment of **effective national prevention architectures**, even where the potential for the occurrence of atrocity crimes is not immediate, is key to prevention. The **Global Action Against Mass Atrocity Crimes**, an informal cooperation and exchange platform, aims at supporting societies with the development of such national mechanisms and policies.

Once atrocity crimes are visibly imminent and where there is a real risk of these crimes being committed, the **Security Council** of course has a **unique role** to play to respond in a **timely and appropriate manner**. We therefore call on all Members of the United Nations to ensure that the Council meets its responsibilities, noting in this context the crucial importance of the **ACT Code of Conduct on veto restraint**.

Mr. President,

My delegation believes that in order to **close the gap** between our commitment to the responsibility to protect and the daily reality confronted by the populations, we must **not only analyze and address the root causes** of atrocity crimes, but also **prevent recurrence** of such crimes by establishing mechanisms to **promote truth and justice and holding perpetrators accountable** for the harm they have caused.

Thank you for placing atrocity prevention at the heart of your overall prevention agenda.