



Predsednica Republike Slovenije

NATAŠA PIRC MUSAR

**Speech of the President of the Republic of Slovenia
Nataša Pirc Musar
at the 6th Biennale Academic Conference
»Responsibility to Protect in Theory and Practice«**

Ljubljana, 11 May 2023

Check against delivery.

Excellencies,

*Special Adviser of the UN Secretary General on the Responsibility to Protect,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I am glad to observe that Slovenia has been and has every intention to continue to be a reliable and credible member of the UN family. We believe in the importance and strength of multilateral diplomacy as we depend on it for our safety, well-being and respect for the sovereign equality of States.

Not only has Slovenia always been a strong supporter of the Responsibility to Protect, my country was also co-creating this important principle almost twenty years ago. It was the least likely idea to succeed at the World Leaders Summit back in 2005, yet it saw the light of day and against all odds was practically universally endorsed. Since its inception, the R2P has continued to strive for global understanding and acceptance.

So, it is my distinct pleasure to address this – already sixth – "R2P in Theory and Practice" conference, ten years after the practice of holding such R2P conferences started in our country. I sincerely congratulate the organisers and particularly Prof Dr Vasilka Sancin and her team for successfully carrying on with the tradition of bringing

together distinguished academics, practitioners and all other participants from every corner of the world interested in the promotion of the R2P principle.

At the very core of the R2P is the recognition that the promotion and protection of human rights do not stop at national borders. While States have a primary responsibility to protect the population on their territory, the international community holds a shared responsibility to protect vulnerable groups from the worst violations of their universal human rights.

We, the political leaders, have a moral obligation and responsibility to do everything within our abilities and political influence to prevent conflicts and violence and to protect populations from mass atrocity crimes. I strongly believe that preventive action is the best and by far most cost-effective response. The best investment that we can make is in our national human rights systems and effective early-warning mechanisms.

When a State, however, manifestly fails to protect its population, the international community has a responsibility to act and protect the victims. Victims of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity demand our human solidarity and support. Victims have the right to know, the right to justice and effective remedies, the right to full reparation and a guarantee of the non-recurrence thereof.

Yet, we know that many, or in fact most, post-conflict situations relapse into conflict. The number of armed conflicts worldwide is staggering. And increasingly, climate change is becoming not only an aggravating factor as regards instability and war, but an insecurity trigger in itself.

It is therefore worth remembering that so-called 'eco-crime' was among the very first crimes proposed for inclusion in the Statute of the International Criminal Court when it was being conceptualised. However, very early on in the preparatory process it was thought to be too difficult a crime to negotiate among States and was hence soon abandoned from the list of crimes to be dealt with by the future world criminal court.

Meanwhile, the concept of climate justice has been gaining traction in the past few years. Slovenia put forward its candidature for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Trusting in the wider recognition of the benefit Slovenia could bring to the Council, we have every intention of continuing to work on climate security, if elected to this august UN body. In doing so, and always rooted in human rights law, we in particular wish to strengthen the nexus between peace-making and peace-building, climate action and women.

Women, as well as marginalised groups, children and youth, are the true actors for both peace and climate action. They depend on peace and nature for the survival of their families and for their future. It is utterly unreasonable to exclude half of the population from decision-making in attempting to ensure peace. Time and again, we learn that peace-building without the meaningful inclusion of women and important social groups will just not hold. There will simply be no peace and no well-being without women.

The principle of the Responsibility to Protect has come a long way since its endorsement in the World Summit Outcome Document in 2005; nevertheless, there is no lack of challenges, which it is facing on many fronts. The insights and recommendations presented at conferences such as the present one are an important contribution to informed debate also among decision-makers addressing the outstanding challenges in search of solutions with real potential to effectively prevent mass atrocities and protect affected populations.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Guests,

I wish you a very successful conference and a pleasant stay in our country.

Thank you.