



World Federalist Movement – Institute for Global Policy

To: WFM Council
From: WFM International Secretariat
Date: October 23-24, 2004
Re: Responsibility to Protect – Engaging Civil Society Project

I. Introduction

Inaction by the international community in the face of large scale humanitarian crises has left unconscionable results. Only ten years ago, the world stood by while over 800,000 Rwandans died in 100 days. Despite the collective shame and regret expressed over the genocides in Rwanda and Srebrenica and other such atrocities, gross violations of human rights, and mass killings continue. It is a failure of governments, international organizations and the Security Council to commit the political will and develop the necessary instruments to protect the world's citizens.

WFM seeks to engage civil society in moving governments and the international community to recognize that they have a "Responsibility to Protect" the world's citizens. The phrase "Responsibility to Protect" means that in those instances when states fail to rescue their populations from grave threats, the international community has a responsibility to take action to protect those in danger.

The "Responsibility to Protect" principles were introduced in the report of the Canadian-sponsored Independent International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), *The Responsibility to Protect*. ICISS was charged with confronting the dilemma of so-called humanitarian interventions, which is that the norm of non-intervention codified in the UN charter and based on the right of state sovereignty is used to justify inaction in the face of gross violations of human rights.

The ICISS report found a way forward by shifting the question away from the issue of state sovereignty, and putting the emphasis on the point of view of those seeking or needing support. That is, is the state fulfilling its "Responsibility to Protect" its citizens, and, if not, is the international community prepared to react?

The "Responsibility to Protect" is not only a matter of reacting to crises, it is also the responsibility to prevent internal conflicts and other man-made crises and the responsibility to rebuild by providing full assistance with recovery, reconstruction and reconciliation. Although the ICISS report goes on to propose principles for military intervention, it stresses that military intervention should always be a last resort, using the least intrusive and coercive means possible. The Responsibility to Protect is not intended to justify unilateral or otherwise illegitimate military actions. Indeed, some perceive the development of such principles as useful in limiting the number of military interventions that could be justified.

The past and future work of WFM-IGP on this project is dedicated to engaging civil society in these issues, so that they may work collectively toward preventing future atrocities such as that which occurred in Rwanda, and that which is ongoing in Sudan.

II. History of the R2P-CS Project

During first phase of the Responsibility to Protect-Engaging Civil Society (R2P-CS) project, WFM conducted preliminary consultations with civil society organizations from all regions to discuss the ICISS report and the potential role of civil society in its promotion and/or operationalization. The response to the *Responsibility to Protect*, described in WFM's final report of the consultation process, appears overall to be very positive. Civil society groups are interested in promoting some of its key concepts, and more importantly to work towards the implementation of its

recommendations. In particular, there is a strong desire to ensure that governments take seriously the responsibility to respond to emerging crises, and that they do so at an early stage when non-military options are available.

The primary focus of the R2P-CS project has been fostering awareness and support among non-governmental organizations of global civil society for the report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) and its recommendations. R2P-CS has built a solid foundation of outreach and advocacy that will form the basis of this next phase of our work. In the last year, we have greatly enhanced our capacities with the creation of the R2P-CS section of the WFM-IGP website, the establishment of a listserv, and creation of an 8-page project brochure and other outreach materials. Through meetings, conferences and targeted outreach, we have already reached hundreds, perhaps thousands, of new civil society organizations with R2P information and materials in order to raise awareness of the ICISS report and its recommendations, to seek their advice about the most effective ways to move these recommendations forward, and to solicit their endorsements either formally or informally.

While WFM-IGP has worked to advance awareness and support among civil society, there is also increased awareness among governments, the public and the United Nations. In this phase of activity, WFM-IGP will work in partnership with NGOs and governments to increase vocal support of R2P, as evidenced by the inclusion of R2P language in policy statements, UN resolutions and other documents.

WFM is now launching launch phase 2.1 of this project. This phase will inaugurate key enhancements to our project, building on the solid foundation established over two years of work. The following is a description of the goals and activities of this project in the coming year.

III. Strategy for Phase 2 of R2P-CS Project

Development of an R2P-CS Network and Strategic Partnerships

During this next phase of the project, WFM-IGP will conduct its outreach and advocacy in two tiers. R2P-CS will continue to raise awareness about and support for R2P among many sectors of civil society while at the same time developing strategic partnerships with key NGOs in order to advance normative development.

Broad Outreach to Raise Awareness of and Support for R2P Principles

This next phase of the project will include raising awareness among sectors and regions of civil society to gain their familiarity with and support of R2P principles. This outreach will rely heavily on our outreach materials, website and listserv. Through this broad outreach, we will solidify a broad network of NGOs that:

- **Endorse R2P principles** within the framework that R2P-CS has cast them. Specifically, we seek endorsement of the following principles:
 - With sovereignty comes the responsibility to protect the state's population from large-scale loss of life.
 - When a state is unable or unwilling to avert serious harm to its population, the responsibility to protect these individuals must be borne by the international community.
 - The "Responsibility to Protect" encompasses **the Responsibility to Prevent** the root and direct causes of armed conflict and other crises that put populations at risk; **the Responsibility to React** to humanitarian crises with appropriate measures; and **the Responsibility to Rebuild** by providing full assistance with recovery, reconstruction and reconciliation.
- **Are committed to sharing information** on how governments, international organizations and/or regional organizations respond to large scale threats against civilians; and
- **Seek to promote earlier and more effective responses** to emerging crises such as ethnic cleansing and genocide.

We expect several outcomes from this level of engagement with civil society. First is to continue creating greater awareness of the ICISS report and the Responsibility to Protect. Second is increasing the number of civil society voices that expressly support R2P principles. Third is to incorporate use of R2P language, particularly "sovereignty as responsibility," into the advocacy of many sectors of civil society. This level of advocacy is focused on sectors of civil society beyond those that address issues of intervention and protection from large-scale humanitarian crises. This

will include NGOs from the human security campaigns, international justice groups and organizations engaged in conflict prevention and mediation. There is also a regional component to R2P-CS outreach, which will be particularly focused on NGOs that interact with governments or regional security organizations.

Development of Strategic Partnerships to Support and Coordinate Norm-building Efforts

A significant portion of the work of this next phase of the R2P-CS project will be directed at furthering our engagement with NGOs that are interested in advocating for the development of relevant norms within governments and at the United Nations. The NGOs we will seek to engage with on this level are those whose work is integrally linked to issues of protection and intervention and that have experience in advancing norms relating to human protection. We believe that many of these groups will support the promotion of R2P to governments and we will make particular efforts to gain their assistance in pressing governments to do more to advance R2P principles.

We will also build on existing relationships with organizations that conduct advocacy at the national level for stronger international institutions to address issues of justice and human rights. NGOs that conduct advocacy in key capitals will add particular value when we are seeking support of R2P language in UN resolutions and are calling for application of R2P principles in specific crises.

IV. Activities Conducted to Engage Civil Society and Advance Normative Development

Monitoring R2P-related Developments & Disseminating Information

The goal for the R2P-CS, particularly through the website and listserv, is to be a primary source of information on R2P-related developments for NGOs, academics, governments, and representatives of international organizations. This role is a key aspect of facilitating the creation of a broader network and strategic partnerships.

WFM acts as an information resource on the issues and events that fall within the responsibility to protect framework. We disseminate findings of related commissions, relevant government and UN resolutions and reports, and contributions from academics and partner organizations. We track initiatives that relate to institutional capacity building, such as the activities of the Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide, and continue to monitor debates that occur within the United Nations, governments and regional organizations about the application of responsibility to protect principles to emerging and existing crises. An example of the latter is the attention that we have devoted to the Darfur crisis since March 2004. On our listserv and website we have disseminated official documents and statements, media coverage and press releases discussing the international community's response to Darfur and its relationship to R2P.

Enhancing Print and Electronic Resources

The R2P-CS listserv and website are central to our role as the primary source of information on R2P-related developments. We are in the process of making key structural and cosmetic enhancements to the website to make it more user-friendly and dynamic. When the changes are completed, it will include a database, search engine, and will have even more extensive and up to date information on R2P-related issues.

Our broad advocacy will also require the enhancement of our outreach materials. We have already printed a 1-page R2P-CS handout and an 8-page informational brochure. We will also develop additional print tools such as a brochure proposing steps that NGOs can take to advance R2P to their governments or regional organizations. We intend to translate our key outreach documents into French and Spanish for broader outreach.

Creating a Strategy for R2P Normative Development

Working with NGO partners, we will develop a strategy to promote acceptance of R2P norms by governments as demonstrated by their expressed policy statements and their support of inclusion of R2P language in UN resolutions and other documents.

As part of this strategy and with the assistance of Foreign Affairs Canada, we will identify UN resolutions and debates that are addressing R2P-related issues. In conjunction with our strategic partners, we will appeal to governments to include R2P language in selected resolutions of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Commission on

Human Rights. Examples of resolutions that could be the focus of this strategy include those on the protection of civilians, children and armed conflict, women, peace and security, crimes against humanity, genocide and conflict prevention. These efforts will be focused on “mainstreaming” the language that with sovereignty comes responsibility and that the international community has a responsibility to act when a state is unable or unwilling to do so.

Acceptance of R2P norms will not be done by advocacy toward the acceptance of the “responsibility to protect” language. It is necessary to deepen the dialogue with NGOs and governments regarding specific crises where R2P principles may be applied so that they may be more fully engaged in the substance of R2P and what it offers. These discussions would be focused on the call for application of R2P principles and analysis of what steps can be taken to fulfill the responsibility to protect. The commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Rwandan genocide was a significant opportunity to address the responsibilities and the capacity of the international community to prevent genocide. Tragically, the Darfur situation is generating new lessons for the international community. WFM-IGP can play a role in bringing the relevant parties together to advance discussions on these issues.

Another key aspect for engaging NGOs and governments in R2P issues is advocacy on initiatives aimed at building institutional capacity to fulfill the responsibility to protect. Issues of UN reform and capacity building are central to WFM-IGP’s mandate. Many initiatives that WFM-IGP has been monitoring are now more prominent in our work because of their direct relevance to R2P and the capacity to protect. One example is the appointment of the Special Advisor for the Prevention of Genocide; WFM-IGP, in conjunction with key NGO partners, can play an important role in monitoring the development of this new position and making recommendations where appropriate. Another important initiative that we expect will be a focus of this strategy is the report of the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, which we anticipate will include recommendations relating to R2P. WFM-IGP also monitors and contributes to discussions of regional and international mechanisms, such as rapid reaction forces, which have a clear relationship to the international community’s capacity to respond to crises.

WFM-IGP will work to integrate these and other relevant initiatives into the advocacy of key partners and promote their acceptance to governments.

The norm-building strategy will also consider ways to engage governments that have either expressed or demonstrated opposition to the sovereignty as responsibility norms.

Events

WFM-IGP will attend and host events to advance both broad outreach and engagement of strategic partnerships. In furtherance of our broad outreach and network building, we will attend key conferences and meetings in New York and worldwide where R2P can be made an issue on the agenda, a highly visible side event or the subject of our interventions. In some instances, we will sponsor representatives of other organizations to attend on our behalf. Introducing R2P principles at events relating to human rights, international justice, conflict prevention, peacekeeping and development has proved a cost-effective strategy of advancing awareness of R2P principles and provides opportunities for the mainstreaming of R2P into other related issues.

For more information on the WFM-IGP’s R2P-CS project, please visit <http://www.wfm.org/protect>