

“Social and economic measures to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity”

Special Meeting

ECOSOC Chamber, 24 January 2023

Concept Note

At the 2005 World Summit, all Heads of State and Government affirmed the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. The responsibility to protect (commonly referred to as ‘RtoP’) rests upon three pillars of equal standing: the responsibility of each State to protect its populations (pillar I); the responsibility of the international community to assist States in protecting their populations (pillar II); and the responsibility of the international community to protect when a State is manifestly failing to protect its populations (pillar III).

Given the current range and intensity of crises around the world, including conflicts, food and energy crises as well as deepening inequalities and tensions within and between States, exacerbated by consequences of COVID-19 and climate change, there is a range of situations today where populations are at risk of the RtoP crimes, or where such crimes are ongoing. These crises are taking place against a backdrop of retreating multilateralism and the role of the UN, as well as diminishing respect for international humanitarian and human rights law.

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has a role to play especially in addressing the second pillar of RtoP, namely the responsibility of the international community to assist States in protecting their populations.

The emphasis of the special meeting of ECOSOC would be on the potential of social and economic factors and measures aimed at development, equality within and between states, rule of law, leaving no one behind, prevention of structural discrimination, as well as implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development which clearly states that “there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development”. In short, it would focus on measures for preventing conflicts and atrocity crimes through addressing their root causes.

The meeting will also link activities of ECOSOC, General Assembly, Security Council, Human Rights Council, Peacebuilding Commission with the Secretary-General’s emphasis on prevention, also reflected in Our Common Agenda, with a view to promoting integrated approaches. It will also feature good practices utilized by United Nations entities to prevent genocide, war crimes and related crimes.

The meeting, which was proposed by a member state and agreed to by the 2022 Bureau of ECOSOC, is to be organized as a half-day informal meeting. It will consist of an opening and closing and an interactive panel discussion envisaging participation of Member States and observers, UN system entities and relevant stakeholders.

DRAFT PROGRAMME

- 10:00-10:30** **Opening**
- 10:30 - 11:00** **Fireside Chat: Addressing socio-economic causes to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity**
- 11:00 - 11:30** **Respondents: Measures to prevent conflict and atrocity crimes: Good Practices (5 minutes each)**
- 11:30 – 12:55** **Member States Interventions (3 minutes each)**
- 12:55 - 13:00** **Closing**