



R2P Constituency Building in the Philippines  
(Workshop Report)  
25-26 June 2009  
Edsa Shangri-la-Hotel Manila  
Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila  
The Philippines

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## 1. Summary

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The Philippine Programme of the Asia-Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (APR2P) held a workshop in Manila on 25-26 June 2009 at the Edsa Shangri-la Hotel, Manila, with some 50 participants from government, academe, civil society, and media sectors in the Philippines. It was the first in a series of workshops on R2P constituency building that attempt to bring together public intellectuals, government and military officials in their private capacities, retired diplomats, civil society

organization representatives, and people from academe and research institutes that have an interest in understanding, debating, and/or advocating the R2P principle in the Philippines.

The two-day workshop was organized into three plenary sessions and a breakout session in the afternoon of the second day. The latter provided an opportunity for participants to further brainstorm on specific strategies to promote R2P in the Philippines. Specifically, they were divided into three sector-based breakout groups, namely, government, civil society, and academe/research organizations. Thereafter, they reconvened in a plenary where they presented a summary of how their respective sectors could help promote R2P constituency building in the Philippines based on: 1) concrete contributions that they could make; 2) their priorities and goals; and 3) their role and partnerships with other sectors.

This report provides the highlights of the two-day workshop and some specific recommendations for the future direction of the Philippine programme on R2P constituency building. The key recommendations generated by the participants themselves were:

### For government:

1. Evaluate the state of R2P awareness and understanding in government.
2. The judicial branch should give priority to training and capacity building to deepen understanding of International Humanitarian Law.
3. The security sector should give priority to increasing the level of R2P awareness among personnel.
4. The foreign affairs department should initiate a regional debate on R2P by proposing to include R2P on the agenda of the ASEAN Regional Forum.

### For civil society

Civil society groups could contribute to promotion and constituency building by:

1. Coalition building.
2. Generating resources to promote and implement R2P.
3. Capacity building.
4. Developing indicators for prevention measures.

5. Contributing to the implementation of R2P.

For academe and research organizations:

1. Incorporate R2P in 'people-to-people' interactions such as inter-faith dialogue or inter-civilization dialogue.
  
2. Conduct policy-oriented research on R2P and related norms, principles, and issues.
  
3. Support comparative studies to promote region-to-region learning on measures to implement R2P.
  
4. Identify focal points willing to commit themselves to promoting R2P.

The next step for the Philippine national program is to develop a Plan of Action to implement these recommendations. A draft Plan will be issued shortly and will form the basis for a second round of consultations.

*This workshop report is based on the views expressed by participants and except where stated does not reflect the views of the Asia-Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect.*



## 2. Highlights of the Workshop

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The following are the highlights of the workshop based on the three plenary sessions:

### A. Session One – The State of R2P Debate and Importance of National and Regional Constituencies



Speakers in this session underscored the following: 1) R2P should be seen as an ally of sovereignty rather than an enemy; 2) R2P is not synonymous with unilateral humanitarian/military intervention; and 3) the government of the Philippines, notwithstanding some controversies over the concept, has been supportive of R2P and could make an important contribution to promoting the

idea at the domestic, regional, and international levels. In the region, for example, the Philippines can and should take a lead in advancing the concept in institutional arrangements such as ASEAN Plus Three, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), and most especially in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) where R2P is relevant not only in confidence building, but also in conflict resolution and preventive diplomacy.

For their part, discussants recognized that the Philippine government prioritizes its solidarity with other ASEAN states, some of whom remain skeptical of the R2P principle. However, as speakers noted, concern over the adverse effect and potential political spillover of situations where the four R2P crimes occur or are forewarned may provide an opening for R2P dialogue in the region. The Philippine government has shown leadership in promoting peace and security in the region and further afield through, for example, participating in peacekeeping operations and campaigning against the use of landmines. This represents indirect support for efforts to implement R2P. Discussants also emphasized the importance of adopting a gender-sensitive perspective in understanding and implementing R2P, and drew attention to the role that non-state actors can play in deepening domestic and regional norms and reshaping international politics.

Among the important points raised during the open forum in this session were:

- The workshop organizers recognized that there remains some political discomfort over R2P and clarified that there is nothing in the 2005 World Summit Agreement on R2P that goes beyond the scope of the UN Charter. The R2P agreement calls for the political will and operational capacity to prevent mass atrocities and to act in a timely and decisive manner when a state is manifestly failing to protect its populations from war crimes, genocide, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. On that note, the organizers emphasized that the focus of the workshop was on: 1) the preventive aspect of R2P and how to build capacity in this respect; 2) strategies to marshal the international community's capacity to respond to humanitarian crisis situations appropriately, where there is a manifest failure to protect; and 3) contributions the Philippines can make in articulating and advancing R2P domestically and in the region.
- A suggestion was made that R2P could be made more understandable if it is articulated within the context of prevention, reaction, and rebuilding rather than getting caught up in the debate on issues of sovereignty and intervention. Moreover, it should be seen as an effort to act on the consensus that a situation similar to the Rwandan genocide must not happen again.
- Groups and individuals in the Philippines should be able to spell out activities that could generate an engaged constituency that seeks to develop a policy agenda for advancing R2P. It is important to inject R2P and associated policies into existing networks rather than to interpret taking ownership of implementing R2P as an additional burden.
- The Philippines has a deep understanding of the positive role of civil society in peace and security. However, other overarching priorities and pressing issues might overshadow the government's support for implementing R2P. Civil society must therefore be politically attuned, and determine how to move forward mindful of the constraints faced by government officials. Civil society representatives should look for appropriate avenues for engaging officials, and discern where their advocacy resonates with the government's agenda. For example, if R2P is seen as preventive in nature, it could generate more support. In this regard, identifying key areas where R2P could be operationalized is critical. For example, in the realms of development and human rights. Participants noted that persistence is essential, and a starting point could be establishing a credible base/core group of engaged representatives who take lessons from successful cases of civil society advocacy such as the Convention on Landmines.
- Some participants noted that R2P is a problematic idea when more interventionist options are adopted. There is no agreement on how to determine when a situation warrants invoking R2P response mechanisms or on the meaning of 'manifest failure', despite wide recognition that it is crucial to respond quickly with appropriate measures from the international community's collective crisis management toolbox. It should also be recognized that a military response may not be the appropriate mitigating strategy even in R2P crisis situations. The UN Charter should guide decisions, and responses should assume a multi-tiered approach that usually involves diplomatic and humanitarian means spearheaded by the United

Nations and regional bodies based on their respective arrangements.

- The media can play a role in articulating R2P. Some participants were of the opinion that the media played a crucial role in moving ASEAN to act after cyclone Nargis hit Myanmar in May 2008. Some participants, however, were doubtful that public opinion could help in building constituency for R2P at present.

B. Session Two – R2P Promotion and Constituency Building in the Philippines: Perspectives from Stakeholders

Speakers in this session underscored the following: 1) the norms and principles undergirding R2P are already existing in various instruments and practices, and these can be connected and applied by civil society groups in their own work; 2) the challenge for civil society groups is to address the confusion over R2P's scope and operationalization; 3) there are various initiatives of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Department of National Defence that may be linked to the promotion of R2P in the Philippines, such as the creation of a human rights office within the military and the inclusion of human rights courses in military schools; and 4) the displacement of civilians in Mindanao, according to a journalist on the panel, is a humanitarian crisis situation in the making.

The discussant in this session conveyed the following: 1) the domestic context of armed conflicts in the Philippines provides a useful entry point for the R2P framework; 2) given the differences in positions of ASEAN member states on R2P, there is also a regional context where the principle could be debated; and 3) both domestic and regional issues could significantly affect the R2P agenda in the Philippines.

Among the important points raised during the open forum in this session were:

- Constituency building in relation to R2P may be difficult given different perspectives. For instance, some participants asserted that the protection of peoples should not be viewed from the military perspective alone, and noted that other conditions of insecurity that people face, such as hunger, homelessness, unemployment, etc., must also be addressed.
- Citizens need to claim R2P for themselves. They need to “capture” the concept for their advocacy and not leave the work of implementing R2P to governments.
- Civil society groups can strengthen the human rights system by advocating that state authorities adhere to their commitment to prevent mass atrocities rather than waiting for humanitarian crisis situations to occur. While it is the primary function of the state to protect its citizens, civil society groups should determine how they could apply and invoke the principle of R2P and guard against the use and abuse of its application in specific situations.
- The state has a significant role to play in implementing R2P. Local government units (LGUs) can also contribute to promoting R2P. In order to

do so, LGUs must be “energized” and informed and work toward communicating R2P in a manner that can be understood and appreciated by local leaders and citizens at the community level.

- In general, military personnel in the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) lack advanced tactical and operational education in relation to R2P. R2P-relevant training—such as courses on international humanitarian and human rights law and best practices for civilian protection—could help foster a much-needed paradigm shift that views conflict management beyond the traditional metrics of body count, the number of arms collected and the AFP’s ability to successfully fight rebellion and insurgency in the Philippines.
- In Mindanao, most journalists lack training in reporting on human rights abuses and in writing news reports in general. Some journalists are proud to be identified with the military and even use the military headquarters as their newsroom. As news reports can serve as an early indicator of escalating conflict, it is important to accurately portray situations. This is particularly true in Mindanao, where some participants from the region noted that news reports are often inaccurate or even distorted. Some initiatives have been undertaken to train journalists, such as programs spearheaded by Mindanews and the National Union of Journalists throughout the country in 2007. Mindanews has also sent journalists to Australia for training in peace reporting.

### C. Session Three – R2P Promotion and Constituency-Building in the Philippines: The Role of Stakeholders

Speakers in this session underscored the following: 1) R2P as a concept resonates clearly within the Muslim community in the Philippines as it reinterprets the concept of state sovereignty to include the primary responsibility of the state to protect its own people; 2) there are two ways to build an R2P constituency in the Philippines: first, to focus on like-minded individuals and sectors; and second, to pursue a broader community and identify a common agenda in order to bring diverse sectors together; 3) some states in the region are hesitant to support the R2P principle as they deem it to contravene sovereignty; 4) support for R2P is further complicated by certain constraints and challenges faced by states, such as weak social, economic, and political institutions; 5) a viable and vibrant democracy will help build an R2P constituency; 6) in building an R2P constituency in the Philippines, parliamentarians, people’s organizations, academe, and other stakeholders must be effectively engaged and there must be intensified and proactive efforts to include perspectives of people from various sectors especially those outside the government; and 7) the importance of localization for mainstreaming R2P cannot be overemphasized, and there should be concerted effort to involve local level stakeholders.





The discussant in this session pointed out the following issues: 1) current governance norms of the state tend to skew policies of the national government to favor the Christian majority; 2) although state security agencies traditionally feel they have the primary responsibility to protect people, citizens should have the opportunity to participate in determining who must fulfill that role and how they will be protected; 3) in order to arrive at norms that are viable and unifying, it is important to build the Philippine state and society without discrediting marginalized perspectives, and to learn more open and more creative ways to manage difficult situations from social conflicts .

Among the important points raised during the open forum in this session were:

- Effective R2P constituency building must include all stakeholders.
- The security sector should use non-violent means and uphold the rule of law and government leaders must eschew corruption and promote integrity and accountability in governance.
- In order to build a significant R2P constituency especially in conflict areas within southern Philippines, the prevailing discourse must move beyond divisive identity politics. Policies that are perceived to threaten in particular Muslim identity must be examined and eradicated if there is hope for developing a more unified community identity beyond traditionally divisive markers of 'being Christians and Muslims'. Community leaders must proactively support youth education to direct young people along a less divisive path than religious fundamentalism.
- Those who hold that the Mindanao conflict is not primarily religious in nature conveyed that community traditions, both past and present, represent a mixing of religious symbols, and noted that religion does not have to divide a given community. The imaging of the conflict as one rooted in religion happened after 9/11 when there was a widespread vilification of Islam by the media. As a result, more and more Muslims turned to faith as a form of political leverage and extremist groups exploited the volatile situation by using religion to bring in new recruits. Both sides of the conflict recognize that fostering opportunities for interfaith dialogue is integral to finding peaceful solutions from the importance of being very diligent in interfaith dialogue.
- An ASEAN-wide R2P constituency building initiative is only viable if there is significant change in views within all branches of governments. Especially in these initial stages, pioneering individuals ('norm entrepreneurs') willing to speak up about their own beliefs positions, which are oftentimes in conflict with the majority of their counterparts in the legislative and executive branches, must be encouraged and supported. The same is true for members of civil society who also face difficulties when they promote new concepts such as R2P.

The next section of this report provides a summary of issues discussed in the breakout session of the workshop and recommendations by participants from different sectors regarding R2P promotion and constituency building in the Philippines.



### 3. R2P Promotion and Constituency-Building in the Philippines: Breakout Group Discussions and Recommendations

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The breakout session in the second day of the workshop provided an opportunity for participants to brainstorm on relevant issues pertaining to the promotion of R2P in the Philippines. What follows are issues and recommendations that emerged from these discussions, focusing mainly on the potential contributions of various sectors in (1) promoting R2P, (2) building R2P constituencies, and (3) understanding their respective roles in this regard.



#### *Highlights of Breakout Group Discussions*

##### Government

Representatives from various government agencies acknowledged that there is currently a very low level of awareness and knowledge about R2P, and many are of the opinion that it would be quite challenging to build R2P constituencies within the government sector.

Some of the important concerns raised in the course of discussions were as follows:

- On the question of undertaking in-house discussions, studies, or workshops on R2P, participants expressed practical concerns, such as R2P activities competing with other government priorities and for scarce government resources. They also voiced concern over which office/department has the mandate to discuss R2P and what appropriate mechanisms should be set up

for undertaking such activities.

- Although some participants acknowledged the importance of holding in-house seminars on R2P and agreed that the government should engage on the issue, they suggested that certain realities must also be taken into consideration, to wit:
  - Resource and operational limitations of the bureaucracy;
  - Lack of political direction, which consequently leads to agenda setting problems;
  - It appears that there is no clear and justifiable pretext to make R2P a priority in the policy agenda of the government;
- The national government is still uncomfortable with the idea of *intervention*, which makes it difficult to incorporate R2P principles into government policies and programs.

Notwithstanding all of the above, participants agreed that there is a need to engage policy-makers in dialogue so that R2P may be included in their agenda setting, which could then help R2P principles to manifest in policy and, importantly, in programs and activities.





## 4. Civil Society

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Civil society participants acknowledged that the current level of awareness on R2P is very low. The concept is relatively new, and few participants encountered the principle in the day-to-day functioning of civil society groups. From a human rights perspective, the specific phrase “responsibility to protect” has not yet seeped through, although some of the ideas behind it are already well entrenched.

In general, participants all agreed that sustained discussions, studies and/or workshops on R2P must be undertaken, and that providing space for such interactions is a key step in engaging groups in deepening consensus on and working toward implementing R2P.

Even so, as it is presently interpreted, R2P raises significant issues and concerns among civil society groups, most notably:

- There are lingering concerns over the sovereignty issues that R2P engenders. Many still see R2P as a pretext for intervention. R2P can be a double-edged sword: on one hand, it can serve as a framework to hold the government accountable; on the other hand, it can also be used by the state as pretext for intervention.
- R2P principles are already well entrenched in current discourses in the Philippines, but the actual phrase “responsibility to protect” is relatively new and often breeds misconceptions. Hence, the concept needs new “packaging.”
- The R2P concept that the state must protect civil interests is unbelievable for some sectors. This can be a bit of a ‘hard sell’, especially for Muslim communities in conflict areas in Mindanao. These communities traditionally see local government units (LGUs) as corrupt, but relatively harmless.
- R2P, just like any other concept, changes as it is localized. Thus, the present discourse on ‘responsibility to protect’ must clarify whom it is for. From a national security perspective, the state has the right to protect itself. But protecting its people does not necessarily follow from this. The concept needs further clarification, and R2P advocates must emphasize that the object of state responsibility is not primarily to itself but to its constituency.
- With regard to the narrow definition of what constitutes a R2P crisis situation, some participants pointed out that:

- Prevention should not be limited only to the four atrocities stipulated in the R2P World Summit endorsement. The narrow focus could hinder efforts to effectively prevent or react to mass suffering if states are caught up in arguing whether or not they are guilty of committing any of the four atrocities.
- The list of egregious crimes is too limited as there is no mention of aggression. Thus, it should be part of the advocacy agenda of civil society organizations to expand the list of crimes, which could be agreed upon by member states in the United Nations.

Overall, participants from civil society organizations agreed that the R2P framework is both universal and enduring, rather than selective and temporal. They also recognize that states and the international community have for the most part reached consensus in the acceptance of the R2P principle.

### Academic and Research Organizations

There was consensus among participants in this group that there is very low level of awareness or knowledge about R2P in general among academic and research organizations in the Philippines. In fact, there are very few academics in the country that know about R2P and many have only learned about it because of their research interests in security issues, international humanitarian law, and humanitarian intervention. In this context, there is also a need to increase the level of awareness of R2P among academic institutions and research organizations in the country.

By this assessment, this sector requires materials, exercises in ‘training the trainers’, as well as logistical and faculty development support. More specifically, people from the academic sector would be able to contribute to increasing the level of awareness of R2P by incorporating the concept in class lectures and discussions on Philippine government and politics and international relations. Another entry point could be introducing R2P as an agenda item in the regular meetings of academic and professional associations and extramural programs, as well as disseminating research outputs. The participants agreed that the R2P principle can not only be taught at the university level, but also in high schools.

Among the key issues and concerns of participants from this group are the following:

- There is a need to clarify what R2P means so that it can be accepted, appreciated, and not resisted.
- Given its origin, R2P could potentially be misunderstood as a pretext to justify Western intervention in the internal affairs of other countries.
- In this regard, a teachers’ training program would help educators to explain the concept to their students and provide an opportunity to discuss different approaches to teaching R2P and its principles in the Philippines.
- It is likely that promoting R2P in schools may be constrained by other institutional priorities and other limitations, such as the scant number of faculty members that are committed to teaching R2P in their course offerings.

What follows are specific recommendations that emerged from discussions of the three breakout groups during the workshop. Specifically, these recommendations focus on the contributions, priorities and goals, as well as the corresponding role of each sector in building a R2P constituency in the Philippines.



## 5. Recommendations

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Participants in all three groups identified a series of recommendations for advancing R2P in the Philippines. Bearing these recommendations in mind, the Asia-Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect has undertaken to draft a Plan of Action.

### Government

#### *Implementation and Constituency Building*

1. In general, it was agreed that there is a need for a study that takes stock of the state of R2P awareness and understanding in the Philippines. Government agencies should encourage interactions and exchanges with epistemic communities in the country about R2P as part of constituency building.
2. The judicial branch could help promote R2P in the country through education in international humanitarian law (IHL). Specifically, it should give priority to training and capacity building to deepen understanding of IHL. It is also important to involve legal scholars as part of R2P constituency building in the Philippines.
3. For the security sector, authorities should give priority to increasing the level of R2P awareness among personnel by conducting seminars on preventing mass atrocities. Specifically, the government could inject R2P into security sector training to ensure that military and police are attuned to early warning signs of mass violence, are prepared to respond through appropriate and legitimate means and have established procedural safeguards to hold personnel accountable if they are implicated in committing crimes against humanity.
4. For its part, the foreign affairs department could initiate a debate on R2P in the context of ASEAN by, for example, proposing to include R2P on the agenda of the ASEAN Regional Forum. It could also reiterate official statements of the Philippines on R2P in various regional and international fora.

#### *Role and Partnership with Other Sectors*

Participants acknowledged that the government also has an important role to play in implementing R2P and constituency building in partnership with other sectors, namely:

1. In general, government agencies that are involved in the continuing education of personnel should coordinate their efforts, and seek to promulgate R2P principles through seminars and training programs. An inter-agency structure should be established for government agencies and local government units (LGUs) to better coordinate efforts to deal with conflict situations and prevent violence from escalating.

2. Government officials should also be open to dialogue with academe and civil society groups about promoting and implementing R2P principles.
3. The judiciary could take the lead in illuminating legal issues relevant to implementing R2P. It could work in partnership with other government agencies and experts from, for example, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the academe to promote understanding of IHL in relation to R2P.
4. The military has a direct role in preventing mass atrocities especially in conflict areas in the Philippines and could work in partnership with other sectors and agencies at the community level. The military and defense establishment should have mechanisms in place to ensure that soldiers do not commit crimes against humanity.
5. For its part, foreign affairs officials and policy makers could contribute by being consensus-builders in ASEAN on R2P principles.

## Civil Society

### *Implementation and Constituency Building*

In general, participants in this group agreed that civil society groups could contribute to implementation and constituency building in many ways through:

1. R2P-coalition building.
2. Campaigning for generating resources to promote and implement R2P.
3. Capacity building.
4. Developing indicators for prevention measures.
5. Consolidating efforts and initiatives of civil society groups based on their experiences in constituency building that are directly or indirectly linked to R2P.

With specific regard to the preventive aspects of R2P, civil society participants were in agreement about the importance of:

- Raising the level of awareness of R2P.
- Consolidating efforts and building coalitions among civil society organizations.
- Working towards the institutionalization of mechanisms that make states more accountable.
- Disseminating information and conducting education campaigns, especially in conflict areas in the Philippines (e.g., Bangsamoro in Mindanao).
- Pursuing legislative advocacy, where civil society organizations must be active in articulating R2P principles and provisions.
- Linking R2P advocacy to other ratified instruments of international law.
- Incorporating gender and women's issues and perspectives into R2P advocacy
- Pursuing opportunities for people-to-people R2P.



Civil society participants pointed to the following as the main priorities in relation to the timely and decisive response to genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity:

- Building capacity for effective prosecution of perpetrators of egregious crimes
- Ensuring the protection of civilians, non-combatants, and other vulnerable communities.
- Upholding human rights protection and international humanitarian law.
- Pushing for direct access to international bodies that have capacities to respond immediately (e.g. special rapporteurs, etc.).
- Ensuring that any action taken is planned in a gender sensitive manner with due consideration for its potential impact on women.

Civil society participants also called for a focus on rebuilding societies after crises and agreed to the following priorities and goals:

- Ensuring transparency and local participation in the rebuilding process.
- Identifying critical rebuilding measures and ensuring that they reach intended sectors.
- Addressing legitimate grievances.
- Prioritizing consultation and full-partnership in the rebuilding process.
- Closing the loop, or understanding that rebuilding should be geared at capacity building in key sectors to prevent renewed conflict.

#### *Role and Partnership with Other Sectors*

Civil society participants also identified the various roles of civil society organizations and potential avenues for partnership with other sectors. This includes the following:

- Advocating peace, human rights, and human security in relation to R2P.
- Identifying key personalities, champions, and icons who are prominent and credible proponents of R2P.
- Developing a 'constituency-in-waiting' (e.g. high school and college students and young people).
- Involving key sectors and stakeholders in the discourse on R2P.
- Partnering with local government officials, the military and other members of the security sector.

#### Academic and Research Organizations

Participants from this sector focused mainly on the responsibility to prevent. Their recommendations are as follows:

#### *Implementation and Constituency Building*

Participants in this group recommended undertaking the following for promoting R2P in the academe and research organizations in the Philippines:

- Incorporating R2P in 'people-to-people' interactions such as inter-faith dialogue or inter-civilizational dialogue

- Conducting policy-oriented research on R2P and related norms, principles, and issues
- Supporting comparative studies between organizations like ASEAN and the EU, as well as international organizations like the UN, particularly regarding their respective roles in promoting R2P, and measures for region-to-region learning on, for example, standards and strategies for conflict resolution
- Identifying focal point persons within academic and research institutions in the Philippines who would be willing to commit themselves to promoting R2P in the country.

#### *Role and Partnership with Other Sectors*

Participants were in agreement that in building a constituency for R2P in the Philippines, the academic community composed of teachers and students should partner with civil society organizations, government agencies, and other relevant sectors to undertake various activities to increase the level of awareness of R2P.

## 6. Conclusions

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The first workshop on R2P constituency building in the Philippines organized by the Asia-Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect's Philippine Programme clearly indicated that there is much work to be done in the area of increasing the level of awareness and knowledge about R2P in the Philippines. Participants in the workshop, while eager to know more about the principle, also have a number of concerns about its application in the Philippine context. They are also wary of the 'intervention' aspect of the concept, a view especially espoused by participants from the government sector. Civil society participants also raised some concerns about intervention but overall are supportive of R2P and emphasize the importance of making states more accountable to their people.

As a country that is increasingly opening democratic space but that is continually plagued by violent internal conflicts and social problems, R2P resonated very well with participants in the workshop, particularly as it relates to the *prevention* of mass atrocities. The plenary sessions in fact provided an opportunity for representatives from all three sectors to exchange ideas, debate on issues, and examine R2P's relevance not just in the domestic level but also in relation to the role of the Philippines in promoting the principle in the Southeast Asian region. As evidenced by the degree of openness of public intellectuals, the policy elite, and leaders of civil society groups to engage in the discussions noted in this report, there is no question that there are great opportunities for further advancing R2P in the Philippines. To some extent, various participants also demonstrated a willingness to have a sense of 'ownership' by adopting R2P principles in the local context, at the very least through engaging in a healthy debate over strategies for implementing R2P and injecting it in their various tasks and advocacies. The biggest challenge therefore is how to sustain the interests of these critical sectors through delineating and supporting concrete strategies for translating R2P from words to deeds in the Philippine context. The next step for the Philippine national program is to develop a Plan of Action to implement these recommendations. A draft Plan will be issued shortly and will form the basis for a second round of consultations.



**WORKSHOP ON R2P CONSTITUENCY BUILDING IN THE PHILIPPINES**  
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