



SIXTH COMMITTEE

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

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Statement by

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Law of Transboundary Aquifers

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Mr. Chairperson,

The State of Israel ascribes great importance to the issue of transboundary aquifers. Freshwater scarcity is, and has always been, a reality in Israel since our establishment, and now threatens not only our region, but the entire globe as well, given the negative trends of desertification and climate change. It is therefore critical that we work collaboratively on the legal and technical fronts to improve water management locally, regionally and internationally, and also generate new water sources by employing relevant technologies.

In this context, we wish to commend the international efforts being undertaken in this field, including the extensive work of the United Nations with respect to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, and, in particular, SDG number six, "Clean Water and Sanitation". As detailed in our Voluntary National Review, presented here at the United Nations in July 2019, Israel is fully committed to implementing the SDGs, including SDG 6. Israel, as a leader in developing groundbreaking desalination and water-saving agricultural technologies, hopes to make a positive contribution in this domain, by sharing our best practices and cutting-edge technologies in the areas of water and sanitation.

Mr. Chairperson,

As stated in both 2013 and 2016, the State of Israel wishes to express its appreciation of the work of the ILC on the Draft Articles on the law of transboundary aquifers, and notes that this body of work – which, *inter alia*, enshrines the principles of equitable and reasonable utilization of transboundary aquifers and the obligation not to cause significant harm to them -- can serve as useful guidelines for negotiating bilateral or regional agreements in this discipline.

That said, we remain of the view that codification of these draft articles into a formal international convention would not be appropriate given the very nature of transboundary aquifers. Negotiations regarding transboundary aquifers are highly case-specific, and must take into account a variety of factors, including: geophysical conditions and hydrological characteristics of a given structure; present and future uses; climate conditions; economic and social considerations; political realities and

inter-State dynamics; as well as emerging technologies, which are often a game-changer in this particular field. Hence, we see an advantage in allowing for a more flexible and pragmatic approach that certainly takes the principles of the draft articles into account, but is not overly dogmatic or rigid. The State of Israel is of the view that this type of practical approach strikes the proper and desired balance and thus, there is no need at present to move beyond the draft articles.

I thank you Mr. Chairperson.