

Statement by Ms. ISHIBASHI Misaki,
Advisor, Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations,
at the Meeting of the Sixth Committee on Protection of persons in the
event of disasters (Agenda item 90)

Thank you, Mr.Chairperson.

At the outset, my delegation wishes to express our gratitude to our fellow Member States for their active contributions to the Draft Articles on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters. We also appreciate the efforts of the International Law Commission (ILC) toward the codification of the law in this field, as well as the efforts of the Special Rapporteur.

Mr.Chairperson,

This agenda item has particular significance for Japan. We are a disaster-affected state, having learned firsthand lessons from past disasters such as the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011 and the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995. Japan has also contributed as an assisting state, providing both emergency humanitarian aid and technical support to build resilience and promotes international cooperation in this field in an active manner.

Protecting people from disasters is a key concern for all countries, particularly as climate change increases the number and severity of many disasters. Disaster risk reduction is also an important element of the Sustainable Development Goals. For example, SDG Target 1.5 highlights the necessity of building resilience and reducing exposure and vulnerability to disasters¹, and SDG Target 11.5 aims to significantly

¹ 1.5 by 2030 build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations, and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters

reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected by disasters.²

Mr.Chairperson,

As mentioned in Article 9 of the draft articles, it is necessary to take proactive measures to reduce the risk of disasters and minimize their damages. Japan supports the principles of “a broader and more people-centred preventive approach” and “Build Back Better” as described in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which was adopted at the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. Japan has also promoted international cooperation in the field of disaster risk reduction on the Sendai Cooperation Initiative for Disaster Risk Phase 2.

Turning to the draft articles, Japan believes they should be a pragmatic legal framework that can be effective and efficient for both disaster-affected states and assisting states and can be applicable to real-life, on-the-ground international cooperation efforts.

Japan finds that the draft articles in their current form commendably balance the roles and duties of affected and assisting states while giving consideration to state sovereignty and humanitarian needs. At the same time, we believe they can be further enriched by including opinions and comments from a broader range of countries and experts, and Japan looks forward to continued discussions to that end.

Mr.Chairperson,

Lastly, COVID-19 has introduced new aspects to disaster risk reduction efforts, as it has to nearly everything else. For example, how can social

² 11.5 By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations

distancing be maintained in evacuation centers? Natural disasters will not wait until the pandemic is over. We must continue to improve our preparedness for cases where a natural disaster and a public health emergency collide.

I thank you.