



SIXTH COMMITTEE

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Statement by

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Protection of persons in the event of disasters

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Protection of persons in the event of disasters

Madame Chair,

The Government of Israel appreciates the significant work of the International Law Commission, and is thankful to the Secretary General for taking into consideration this important topic. Israel continues to support wholeheartedly the efforts of the General Assembly to protect persons affected by disasters.

Israeli teams have been at the forefront of countless relief missions around the world, as part of our tradition and commitment to mutual assistance and cooperation in times of crisis.

Just recently, in August 2021, Israel sent a team of firefighters to Greece in order to assist in fighting the severe fires that ravaged the country. Earlier this year, Israel sent an aid delegation to Miami that helped lead rescue efforts following the tragic collapse of a residential building.

In 2020, Israel sent a relief delegation to Honduras, after the country was struck by two devastating hurricanes. The delegation worked hand in hand with local volunteers in the affected areas to deliver much needed aid to the victims of this natural disaster, and also and to provide training to Honduran emergency relief teams.

Israel strongly believes that regional and international cooperation in times of disaster builds and deepens ties between nations and peoples. In this context, we are grateful for the assistance Israel received from the Palestinian Authority in battling the massive wildfires in the Judean hills in the western outskirts of Jerusalem this past August.

Madame Chair,

The recent natural disasters that I have just described are merely a few illustrations of the considerable challenges posed by climate change. Climate-related challenges and large-scale disasters such as droughts, floods and heatwaves are becoming increasingly frequent and intense, and this worrying trend is – unfortunately -- not expected to end any time soon. Thus, cooperation and assistance on all levels in this regard is vital in order to save lives and protect homes and property.

Having said that, and alongside Israel's firm commitment to improving the protection of persons affected by disasters, Israel reiterates its view that engaging in disaster relief missions should **not** be considered in terms of legal rights and duties. Rather, the draft articles should remain as guidelines or guiding principles for international cooperation efforts undertaken on a voluntary - rather than a binding - basis. This approach allows for the necessary flexibility required in the framework of effective disaster relief that takes into account the particular circumstances and local needs.

Thank you Madame Chair.