

STATEMENT
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NATIONS
ON
PROTECTION OF PERSONS IN THE EVENT OF DISASTERS
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Mr. Chair,

Thank you for giving us the floor to speak on this important issue with a cross-cutting effect that calls for a mutually agreed approach, based on common shared principle. We also want to express our appreciation for the work of the International Law Commission on this agenda item.

2. The recommendation for the ILC draft articles on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters to be elaborated in a convention is timely, especially with the recent increase in disasters such as flood, landslides and mudslides, wildfires, and hurricanes just to mention a few. To this end, we call on Member States to consider establishing an *Ad Hoc* Committee, open to all States Members and Specialised Agencies, to examine the draft articles and to consider further, the recommendation by the Commission.

3. As we are all aware, countries have been faced with one form of natural disaster or the other. Recently, hurricane Ida has reminded us that floods are among the most devastating disasters in the world, claiming lives and bringing destruction. These disasters have brought about increase in poverty, insecurity, and health challenges.

Mr. Chair,

4. In order to protect persons in the event of disasters, the establishment of concrete structures and measures guided by an international legally binding instrument is key to assisting persons and communities affected.

5. The African Union Convention on the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa of 2009, known as the Kampala Convention, which is the first regional treaty that reflects Africa's commitment in addressing the protection of persons in the event of disasters. Although, the treaty

addresses mainly IDPs, Nigeria believes that this is a positive step forward in having a comprehensive discussion on this agenda item.

Mr. Chair,

6. Nigeria has been faced with natural disasters, the most recurring being floods. In 2021 for example, over 2.3 million people were affected by floods. In this regard, Nigeria established the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) in 1999 to manage disasters and coordinate efforts and resources towards efficient and effective disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation, and response.

7. NEMA actively seeks collaborations with other relevant agencies that can provide support to its mission. For example, it has provided the Nigerian Hydrological Services Agency (NIHSA) with three automated Weather Observation Stations to strengthen collaborations in disaster risk identification, analysis, and mitigation. The

stations are also useful for training students in related fields.

Mr. Chair,

8. As part of this year's flood management, the Government of Nigeria is ensuring that all Nigerian States and communities that are vulnerable to flood, receive timely warnings through community engagement and sensitization with emphasis on clearing the waterways and flood paths, as well as maintaining proper water disposal management practices to curtail the ravages of the impending flood.

9. Emergencies have significant impact on affected persons, communities, and their neighbours. Given this, a well-coordinated response is important, especially for recovery that necessitates international cooperation.

Mr. Chair,

10. My delegation takes note of the current experience of many African countries in relation to

not only hurricanes, but locust invasions of farmlands which has reached dangerous levels. According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) "Locusts multiply by a factor of 20 per generation". Several parts of Africa are currently facing food crises driven in part, by the surge in swarms of locusts. Not only do locust have the great capacity to reproduce rapidly, but they also have the capacity to migrate across regions. Not long ago, swarms of locust have done much damage in Southern, Eastern and Central Africa. Asia and the Middle East had also been hit.

11. The need to give special attention to the vulnerable and integrating gender perspective in managing disasters will promote and advance inclusivity that could help contribute to the achievement of various Sustainable Development Goals.

Mr. Chair,

12. During this global pandemic, many countries and international organisations find it difficult to focus on other risks beyond Covid-19. The pandemic has further underscored the need to pursue multilateral approaches in addressing global disasters. We are in a more challenging period. The Covid-19 pandemic is primarily a health crisis, adding natural disasters, to it brings even more displacements and hardships to those affected. To this end, there is an urgent need to establish a common set of criteria for disasters management comprising of different entities with focused responsibilities, varied resources and capabilities for prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, continuity, and recovery.

Mr. Chair,

13. Even with divergence in views regarding this issue, my delegation observes, with satisfaction, that there has been a growing awareness and greater

attention from Member States, International Organisations and Donors for the need for international law to strengthen efforts at prevention, response, and recovery.

14. Protection of people in disaster situations is not limited to securing the survival and physical security of those affected, but also encompasses all relevant guarantees including civil and political rights, as well as economic, social, and cultural rights within international law. Let us remind ourselves of the shared responsibilities in protecting the people we represent and serve.

15. In conclusion Mr. Chair, my delegation will continue to support the elaboration of a convention based on the draft articles which will serve as a base framework for cooperation in the face of disasters, natural or others.

16. I thank you Mr. Chair.

