



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
B U L G A R I A
T O T H E U N I T E D N A T I O N S**

11 East 84th Street, New York, NY 10028, Tel: (212) 737 4790, Fax: (212) 472 9865, e-mail:
bulgaria@un.int

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**Report of the International Law Commission on the
Work of its 73rd Session**

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Check against delivery!

Mr. Chairperson,

On the subject of the annual report of the Commission, today I would like to address the topic of “***Sea-level rise in relation to international law***”.

Mr. Chairperson,

Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union. I will now make some remarks in our national capacity.

Sea-level rise is particularly challenging for coastal communities and island nations but it also poses a clear risk to peace and security and climate change worldwide. Therefore, I would like to express Bulgaria’s deepest appreciation to the members of the Study Group for their excellent work and specifically to the Co-Chairs of the Group for the preparation of the two Issues Papers on the topic.

In line with what other Member States have stated before me, I would like to reaffirm Bulgaria’s position that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is the “*Constitution of the oceans*”, which together with its implementing agreements, sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Convention is regarded by the international community as the most significant achievement in the evolution of the Law of the Sea and the fundamental pillar of ocean governance. In this regard, it is Bulgaria’s position that the process of deriving legal conclusions on the topic “*Sea-level rise in relation to international law*” should be undertaken only on the basis and with full respect of the integrity and the relevant principles and provisions of the Convention.

It is Bulgaria’s understanding that the Convention enshrines a very delicate balance between states’ rights and obligations. Consequently, when the Commission is reviewing state and regional practice or *opinion juris* on the topic in order to formulate conclusions it should take into account only the practice, which is in line with the relevant principles and provisions of UNCLOS.

In addition, it should be noted that the Convention does not contain a legal obligation for state parties to regularly review and update their baselines and the borders of their maritime zones, established in accordance with the applicable rules of UNCLOS. Conclusions that suggest that a periodic review should be carried out by States could potentially have a negative impact on the relations between coastal States and may affect the stability in different regions of the world, especially in cases of already established maritime delimitations.

In this regard, it is Bulgaria's understanding that the Commission should adopt a very careful approach and exercise high level of caution when considering complex legal questions, such as statehood for example, other issues related to foundational premises of international law and the particular aspects of the topic "sea level rise in relation to international law".

Mr. Chairperson,

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate once again our appreciation to the work of the Study Group on sea-level rise in relation to international law and express our continuous support for the work of the International Law Commission.

Thank you for your attention!