

**Statement by Denmark on behalf of the Nordic Countries (Denmark,
Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden)**

at the

**General Assembly,
Seventy-eight Session**

Sixth Committee

**Agenda item 86:
Protection of persons in the event of disasters**

United Nations, New York

4 October 2023

Madame/Mr Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the five Nordic countries Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country Denmark.

The increasing frequency of natural and human-made disasters – extreme weather, viruses, and other hazards – makes this agenda item a highly topical area of international law. It is a matter of utmost concern to further strengthen international co-operation on disaster relief, humanitarian assistance and protection.

The ILC draft articles constitute a framework for disaster risk reduction and for international co-operation in disaster response. As previously stated, the Nordic countries consider that the draft articles strike an adequate balance between the rights and obligations of the affected state and those of assisting actors. By providing that external assistance in principle requires the consent of the affected state – but that such external assistance shall not be withheld arbitrarily – the draft articles reflect the dual nature of sovereignty as entailing both rights and obligations.

The draft articles reflect the centrality of the principle of human dignity and recall the duty of States to respect, protect and fulfil human rights. They also underline that disaster response shall be undertaken in accordance with the humanitarian principles to meet the needs of those most in need. In this context, the Nordic countries would, once again, like to emphasise the importance of integrating a gender and vulnerability perspective to ensure access to assistance and protection by affected people without discrimination.

The importance of prevention cannot be overstated. In this regard the Nordic countries would like to especially underline draft article 9 which reflects the obligations of States to reduce risks by taking appropriate measures, including through legislation and regulations, to prevent, mitigate, and prepare for disasters.

Since the International Law Commission completed its work on the draft articles and commentary on this important topic, the Nordic countries have expressed openness to discuss the recommendation of the Commission to elaborate a convention based on the draft articles. We remain ready to further consider this recommendation and look forward to the discussions in the more focused format of a working group in the coming days.

Thank you, Madame/Mr Chair