



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
SIERRA LEONE TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

STATEMENT

BY

MS. HAWANATU KEBE
FIRST SECRETARY

TO THE SIXTH COMMITTEE OF THE
UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY SEVENTY-EIGHT SESSION

AGENDA ITEM 86:
“PROTECTION OF PERSONS IN THE EVENT OF DISASTERS”

NEW YORK, 4TH OCTOBER 2023

[Please Check Against Delivery]

Chair,

1. The delegation of **Sierra Leone** aligns this statement with the statement delivered by the Distinguished Representative of the **Republic of Uganda** on behalf of the **African Group**.
2. The delegation of Sierra Leone continues to notes the particular significance of the topic: "**Protection of persons in the event of disasters**", and the Sixth Committee's continued consideration of this agenda item, including the recommendation of the International Law Commission (ILC) contained in paragraph 46 of its report (**A/71/10**) on the work of its 68th session – to elaborate "*a convention on the basis of the draft articles*".
3. Accordingly, we also continue to acknowledge the significant contribution of the ILC to the progressive development of international law and its codification.
4. We welcome the General Assembly's noting "*that the subject of the protection of persons in the event of disasters is of major importance in the relations of States*" in its resolution **71/141**.

Chair,

5. My delegation continues to note the regrettable worrying occurrence of increasing number of disasters with concerning intensity and impact on affected populations. In just this year alone, **Türkiye**, **Morocco** and **Libya** have experienced devastating disasters in a large scale with huge loss of lives, destruction of properties and displacement of persons affected.

6. We therefore repeat our call for strong international cooperation at all levels to address the huge humanitarian, economic and social impacts caused, especially in already fragile communities. The adverse effects of Climate Change and its security risks have heightened fragilities and should serve as the basis and priority for constructive global dialogue on this important issue.

7. The consideration to creates the platform for in-depth analysis of the legal aspects of disaster risk reduction and humanitarian response to disasters is therefore highly welcomed. The promotion of human dignity and the protection of human rights in accordance with

international law, with due regard to women, children and the most vulnerable groups in affected communities, should cut across our consideration, and in all disaster management or response mechanism. We therefore welcome the emphasis on human rights and human dignity in the adopted draft articles by the ILC.

8. In General Assembly resolution 76/119, the Assembly agreed to:

[E]xamine the draft articles and to consider further the recommendation of the Commission for the elaboration of a convention by the General Assembly or by an international conference of plenipotentiaries on the basis of the draft articles, or any other potential course of action with respect to the draft articles, also in the light of the views and comments expressed in the debates of the Sixth Committee, as well as the comments and observations received from Governments, within the framework of a working group of the Committee, to be convened [...] at the seventy-

eighth and seventy-ninth sessions of the Assembly".

9. We welcome therefore the establishment of the **Working Group on Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters**, and we take important note of its provisional programme of work. Sierra Leone commends the hard work and consistent dedication of the core group of States that led our work to this significant procedural outcome, as part of efforts to ensure that people are adequately protected in the event of disasters. My delegation looks forward to actively engage in the Working Group.
10. Let me conclude, **Chair**, by commending the Sixth Committee on taking the important step to act and address the lacuna in facilitating international cooperation to protect persons in the event of disasters.
11. On our part, we have already welcomed the draft articles and we do see merit in pursuing the recommendation by the ILC. As my delegation and other member States has said in this Committee before, responses to disasters must be embedded in the principles of sovereign independence, neutrality, impartiality, and

humanity. It is on this basis that Sierra Leone expresses support for the recommendation of the ILC for the elaboration of a convention based on the draft articles, noting that States can further strengthen the text to build broad consensus and universality.

12. **I thank you.**