



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE
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**STATEMENT BY MR SCOTT TAN, DELEGATE TO THE 78TH SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, ON AGENDA ITEM
86, PROTECTION OF PERSONS IN THE EVENT OF DISASTERS,
SIXTH COMMITTEE
4 OCTOBER 2023**

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Mr Chair,

1 Singapore thanks the Secretary-General for his past reports on this agenda item.

2 The protection of persons in the event of disasters is an important issue for the world. Southeast Asia is frequently affected by typhoons, floods, earthquakes, and other disasters. In August 2023 alone, over 70 disaster events were reported in the ASEAN region. The recent COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated how other factors could slow down disaster response and the deployment of aid to affected areas. Singapore stands in solidarity with countries that have been affected by such disasters and will endeavour to respond when called upon to do so.

3 We note the divergence of views concerning future action on the Draft Articles and have taken note of the comments by other delegations on whether a convention should be elaborated on the basis of the Draft Articles. As we progress in our deliberations on the potential courses of action, Singapore highlights the following considerations that should underline our discussions.

4 First, regardless of the course of action taken, the Draft Articles should continue to reflect the diversity of State practice. This would ensure coherence between the Draft Articles and the principles that currently inform States' contributions to support relief efforts in other countries affected by disasters. For example, Draft Article 12, paragraph 2 provides that requested entities should expeditiously give due consideration and reply to the affected State. This reflects the corresponding article in the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and

Emergency Response, which has informed Singapore's contributions to disaster relief efforts in our region.

5 Second, the principles of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity. As a starting point, even in times of disaster, States should have the right to determine whether to provide, seek, or receive assistance; and to determine the necessary measures to take to reduce the risk of disasters. In this regard, we note that Draft Article 13, paragraph 1 states that the provision of external assistance requires the consent of the affected State. This again accords with the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response, which explicitly recognises that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Parties shall be respected.

Mr. Chair,

6 The Draft Articles represent an important contribution to international law on response to disasters. They can serve as a useful guide for States and others engaged in disaster relief. We look forward to fruitful discussions within the working group in the coming days.

7. Thank you.

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