



Permanent Mission of Hungary to the United Nations

Statement by Hungary
78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
Sixth Committee Working Group – Item 86: Working Group on Protection of persons in
the event of disasters
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Check against delivery!

Thank you, Mr Chair,

At the outset, allow me to start by congratulating you on your election and wish you a successful work. Hungary did not take the floor during the plenary debate, however, it fully aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union on behalf of the EU and the 27 Member States.

We followed the plenary discussions with great interest and, in order to contribute to the deliberations in the Working Group in a constructive spirit, we share the following short reflections.

During the plenary debate, many statements touched upon the existence of a gap in the field of disaster law. The way we see it, this gap may not be understood as a ‘hiatus’, rather a lack of coherence among a scattered and heterogeneous collection of instruments. The prevention and response to disasters do not exist in a legal vacuum, even binding agreements may be identified in this field. The impact of these agreements is however qualified by an often lower number of ratifications, and by the fact that they are often target one specific aspect of disasters. Further, in some cases, these agreements cover only an exchange of good practices and information. Therefore, we see merit in the approach applied by the ILC that tries to systematize this fragmented field of law. Against this backdrop, we welcome that the draft articles extend to both natural and human-made disasters, as indicated in the preamble. This approach is not only of technical nature. This approach recognises how the reasons behind disasters, especially behind slow-onset events, are complex and are often a combination of human activity and natural phenomena, as explained in the commentary to Article 3.

We also welcome the comprehensive approach so that the scope of the draft articles *ratione temporis* includes not only the post-disaster recovery and reconstruction, but disaster risk reduction, prevention and mitigation activities, too.

Concerning Article 3, subparagraph (a), we point out that the definition of disasters refers to, among others, large-scale material or environmental damage. The commentary of this article explains that the ILC recognized that a wide-scale damage to property, livelihoods, or economic, physical, social and cultural assets, as well as the environment, may result in the disruption of the functioning of society. In this context, Hungary wishes to highlight that the destruction of cultural heritage, be it tangible or intangible, can severely impact and endanger social cohesion and peaceful coexistence of peoples. In some cases, they may even lead to an escalation of conflicts. It renders communities vulnerable as they are deprived of an important part of their identity and the relationship to their past, which can reinforce divisions within communities. For this reason, we see merit in considering that this connection is reflected in the draft articles.

Thank you for your attention.