

**Statement on Sea-Level Rise in Relation to International Law  
delivered by Ms. Elvira Cupika-Mavrina, legal advisor of the  
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Latvia  
23 October**

Mr. Chair,

Latvia thanks the International Law Commission (ILC) for the ILC 2023 report and the additional paper. We truly value the progress and contributions made by the Study Group and the respected co-chairs on sea-level rise in relation to international law.

We are among those Member States, who find sea-level rise issue to be cross-regional and that it deserves immediate global reaction in order to collectively seek the most appropriate solution for all, but most importantly for the most affected countries.

We agree with the conclusion of the Study Group that *sea-level rise would have a large impact on people in a broad range of areas and that it was of direct relevance to the question of peace and security.*

We already see that climate change will induce competition for vital resources continuously and will fuel tensions in some regions. Sea-level rise will impact coastal communities - their access to essential resources, particularly water security, agriculture production, infrastructure and services for social development.

Climate change induced sea level rise has the potential to transform surface of the planet, a clear threat for global peace and security. The risks are more pressing and existential for the low-lying and small island developing states.

On the topic of *sui generis*, we acknowledge the importance of the question raised regarding the potential loss of territory to sea-level rise. Truly, sea-level rise is fully human-caused issue and the largest contributors to this issue have not yet felt the consequences of their actions.

The voice of those, most affected low-lying and small island developing states, needs to be considered in order to find the best solution for the potential loss of territory, because while such a situation might be an eventuality, it is clear that loss of territory is preceded by the loss of habitat and livelihoods.

With respect to the legal implications of sea level rise, we believe that international courts and tribunals play an important role in clarifying the applicable rules that guide the conduct of States and other actors in dealing with the causes and implications of climate crisis. Thus, we express our appreciation for the historical General Assembly Resolution initiated by Vanuatu to request an advisory opinion on climate change from the International Court of Justice as well as the request for an advisory opinion submitted to the ITLOS by the Commission of Small Island States on climate change and international law.

On 15 September 2023, for the first time Latvia presented its oral observations before the ITLOS in the Case No. 31, Request for an Advisory Opinion submitted by the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law. It is important for us as a coastal state and as a state that values rules-based order to give an opinion on important and topical issues of international law in the context of climate change mitigation.

Lastly, Latvia intends to submit its written statement for the historical Advisory Opinion on Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change currently pending before the ICJ on a request adopted by consensus by the General Assembly in Resolution 77/276.

I thank you!