

Statement Core Group PPEd (The Bahamas, Colombia, Croatia, Italy, Jamaica, Nigeria and Thailand)

I have the honour to speak on behalf of The Bahamas, Colombia, Croatia, Italy, Jamaica, Thailand and my own country, Nigeria. In opening the 78th session of the General Assembly last year, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, recalled the disaster in Derna, Libya, characterizing it as “many of the world’s challenges coalesce[ing] in an awful landscape”. Last week, in opening the 79th session, he has reminded us that “we are in a climate meltdown. Extreme temperatures, raging fires, droughts, and epic floods are not natural disasters. They are human disasters – increasingly fueled by fossil fuels. No country is spared. But the poorest and most vulnerable are hardest hit. Climate hazards are blowing a hole through the budgets of many African countries, costing up to five per cent of GDP – every year”. The increasing number of disasters around the world, with their destructive consequences, felt especially in developing countries, is the result of complex emergencies and crises, where it is humanity that is bearing the brunt. Only in the first half of 2024 natural catastrophes – from floods in Brazil and in the Arabian Peninsula to extreme weather events in the United States – produced over 120 billion US dollars in losses and over 4,000 deaths.

2. In the second half of the year between June and September 2024, in a devastating situation in decades, countries across East, West and Central Africa were hit by the most severe flooding and Cyclones killing more than 1500 people and leaving over 5million people in urgent need of humanitarian aids. Our Caribbean brothers and sisters have suffered from massive coastal flooding and this year due to storm

surges of 6-9 feet above tide levels and still this active hurricane season remains a looming threat.

3. It is against this backdrop that we gather today and that we will gather in the next weeks to discuss the merits and future of the ILC's draft articles on the protection of persons in the event of disaster, in line with the mandate and timeline agreed in 2021 through resolution 76/119. We are encouraged by the level of participation in the deliberations on this agenda item during the 78th session, which saw the engagement of more than 140 States. We note that the oral report prepared by the Chair of the Working Group, Amb. Lagdameo, signaled the support of many delegations for the opening of negotiations on a legally binding instrument based on the draft articles. We trust that the same, if not higher, level of support will be expressed today and next week in the context of the Working Group.

4. As the legal committee of the General Assembly, representing the whole international community, we will have the possibility of examining one more time the draft articles, one by one, and of discussing the recommendation of the ILC to elaborate a convention on the basis of the draft articles. As expected, there will be different views and perspectives on the draft articles and their specific content. However, such different views and perspectives should not prevent us from working towards establishing an open and inclusive process where those differences can be discussed and bridged in the context of textual negotiations over a future treaty text. The draft articles may constitute the foundations, but we should not lose sight that it is for us, the States, to build a solid house and to make it comfortable for everyone.

And ultimately the key question that we will have to answer as the legal committee of the General Assembly is the following: are we doing enough to make sure that Member States, the UN and relevant actors are well prepared from a legal perspective to address the dire humanitarian consequences of a disaster-prone world, with more inequalities and more prone to extreme weather events? The answer depends on us.

5. In the view of our countries - coming from all regions of the world - launching the process of negotiating a convention on the protection of persons in the event of disaster will be instrumental to filling a legal gap deriving from the lack of a global and legally binding instrument in this area. It will be complementary to and in line with the political commitments made last year during the Mid Term Review of the Sendai Framework, including the commitment to establish sound regulatory and legal frameworks at all levels. It will also be a logical consequence of our commitment to international law, as the backbone of international cooperation in addressing the most serious challenges of today's world.

6. In conclusion Mr Chair/Madam Chair, our Group will work tirelessly towards this end and we hope that many delegations will join us in this endeavor.

The time to act is now.

I thank you.