



## **Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters**

### ***Agenda item 86***

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We align ourselves with the statement made by the European Union and wish to make some remarks in our national capacity.

The respect for, and protection of, human dignity and human rights of persons affected by disasters is a topic of great relevance for my delegation.

As previously stated before this Committee, Portugal reiterates its belief that the *Draft Articles on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters* provide an important contribution by the International Law Commission for the progressive development of international law on this subject. Multiple natural disasters that we have unfortunately be witnessing over the past few years, as well as a global pandemic, have left countries and communities reeling with its impacts, and have shown us – with their magnitude and consequences – the urgency for establishing a sound international legal framework applicable to disasters, in the broad definition contained in Draft Article 3.

Indeed, as old and emerging challenges become ever more transnational and complex, it is likely that the world will face events that are increasingly more common as well as more severe in their effects, resulting “in widespread loss of life, great human suffering and distress” and “causing serious disruption of the functioning of society”.



Mr. Chair,

Portugal maintains that the *Draft Articles on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters* represent a solid framework, and one that reflects the human-rights-based approach taken by the Commission in the course of its work. The Draft Articles strike a sensible and delicate balance between, on the one hand, the imperatives of protecting human rights and facilitating international cooperation, and, on the other hand, the fundamental principle of State sovereignty, as well as the primary role of the affected State in providing disaster relief assistance.

Mr. Chair,

As stated before, we continue to think that this Committee should heed the recommendation, made by the Commission to the General Assembly, to elaborate a convention on the basis of the draft articles on the protection of persons in the event of disasters. Last year, the Sixth Committee thoroughly discussed the Draft Articles and advanced on its substantive consideration, with a rich exchange between delegations and plenty of pertinent comments and observations made about the provisions of the draft – that said, we can only engage in an actual negotiation of their content in the context of an intergovernmental conference – it is only then that we will be able to make any necessary adjustments and improvements to the draft.

For those reasons, Mr. Chair, and to conclude, my delegation is convinced this is the time to move ahead, and thus we are ready to support a decision to convene a diplomatic conference to elaborate a convention on this topic. Accordingly, we look forward to exchanging views with other Member States throughout this session with a view to reaching a concrete outcome in this year's deliberations.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.