



PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

828 SECOND AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017 • TEL. (212) 953-9130 • FAX (212) 697\*1970

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**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**GLORIA L. DAKWAK, PH. D  
MINISTER  
PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED  
NATIONS**

**ON**

**“PROTECTION OF PERSONS IN THE EVENT OF  
DISASTERS” AGENDA ITEM 86**

**4<sup>th</sup> October, 2024**

Mr. Chair,

Thank you for your leadership in chairing this meeting. My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Uganda on behalf of the African Group and the statement by the Group State on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disaster.

Mr. Chair

2. The unfolding threats of disasters extends beyond all borders, affecting almost all regions. In the last half of this year countries across West and Central Africa: Chad, , Mali and Niger and my country Nigeria experienced the most devastating flooding in decades. The flooding killed more than one thousand people, displaced hundreds of thousands, and left widespread destruction across vulnerable communities. In East Africa at least 1.6million people were affected with over 400 deaths and more than 400,000 displaced with severe humanitarian situation in addition to the complex emergencies and crises. That is a more than threefold increase from the total number of people affected by flooding in the region last year. We are still monitoring events as it unfolds on the devastating situation caused by Hurricane Helene with more than 200 deaths. The Caribbean has its share of re-occurring massive flooding and active hurricane. This is the reality that confronts us.

3. We commiserate with families who suffered losses and affected by disasters which has brought about an increase in poverty, insecurity, and health challenges, especially in the African region and the less developed regions. The economic costs of climate-related

disasters are similarly immense and cannot be understated. The destruction of farmland not only affects food supply, but also disrupts the economy and exacerbates food crisis. We thank all donors of humanitarian assistance especially those donors who acted quickly to support flood-affected communities. However, My delegation continue to reiterate and urge that humanitarian assistance or aid should not be politicized.

### My Chair

4. My delegation welcomes the decision of the General Assembly in Resolution 76/119 to engage more in substantive discussion with a Working Group on the elaboration of a convention for the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters that was adopted in 2016. Disasters, whether natural or man-made, remain a major challenge to achieving global sustainability. Climate change has already modified the frequency and intensity of many weather-related hazards. It has also increased the vulnerability, and eroding the resilience, of exposed populations that depend on arable land, access to water, and stable rainfall. There is the need to advance policies and practices to reduce the risk of disasters and one way to reduce such risks is to put in place laws and to ensure effective integration of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) policies in disaster management processes. The establishment of concrete structures and measures guided by an international legally binding instrument is key to assisting persons and communities affected by disasters.

5. The impact of disasters in Africa, further exacerbated by climate change with deaths, loss of livelihood and displacement. The

African Union Convention on the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa of 2009, the Kampala Convention, reflects Africa's commitment to the protection of persons during disasters. Nigeria faces disasters, the most recurring being floods, destructive storms, desertification and drought. Many small-scale disasters occur in the country each year due to flooding and landslides, but which are not widely reported, their impact is damaging as large disasters, causing deaths, injuries, and loss of livelihoods. Nigeria established the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) in 1999 to manage disasters and coordinate efforts and resources towards efficient and effective disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation, and response. The Act vested the authority of managing disasters through enabling law and to formulate policy, co-ordinate plans and programmes for efficient and effective response to disasters at national level as well as monitor the state of preparedness.

6. In line with Global Standards on Disaster risk reduction, building resilience in communities is an essential strategy in tackling floods and other disasters. To prevent deathly disasters, investment in infrastructure that can withstand natural disasters is important so is education on preparedness on how to evacuate safely, how to stockpile emergency supplies, and how to communicate with each other during disasters.

7. Emergencies have a significant impact on affected persons, communities, and their neighbours. Given this, a well-coordinated response is important, especially for recovery that necessitates

international cooperation. Disaster management laws must be effective and comprehensive to enable this to be achieved. To this end, there is an urgent need to establish a common set of criteria for disasters management comprising of different entities with focused responsibilities, varied resources and capabilities for prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, continuity, and recovery. We commend the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) on Humanitarian International assistance, while urging for more clarity on supplies of emergency relief materials during complex emergencies and natural disasters. The activities of NGO's should be streamlined especially on disasters management and external assistance to avoid complexity, respect for sovereignty and in accordance with the principle of non-interference in internal affairs.

Mr. Chair,

8. Although with divergence of views regarding this issue, my delegation observes, with satisfaction, that there has been a growing awareness and greater attention from Member States, International Organisations and Donors for the need for international law to strengthen efforts at prevention, response, and recovery. Protection of persons in disaster situations is not limited to securing the survival and physical security of those affected, but also encompasses all relevant guarantees including civil and political rights, as well as economic, social, and cultural rights within international law. States should have the right to seek assistance and all intervention should be with the consent of the affected state in line with existing national legal instruments for effective response.

9. In conclusion, Mr. Chair, my delegation will continue to support the elaboration of a convention based on the draft articles which will serve as a base framework for cooperation in the face of disasters, be it natural or other

I thank you.