



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
SIERRA LEONE TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

STATEMENT

BY

DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION.

TO THE SIXTH COMMITTEE OF THE
UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY SEVENTY-EIGHT SESSION

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

NEW YORK, 4TH OCTOBER 2024

[Please Check Against Delivery]

Chair,

1. The **Sierra Leone delegation** aligns this statement with the statement delivered by the Distinguished Representative of the **Republic of Uganda** on behalf of the **African Group**.
2. As Sierra Leone continues to note the particular significance of the topic: “Protection of persons in the event of disasters,” we commend the Sixth Committee for continuing consideration of the topic, including the recommendation of the International Law Commission (ILC) contained in paragraph 46 of its report (A/71/10) on the work of its 68th session – to elaborate “a convention based on the draft articles”; as well as taking the vital step of acting and addressing the gap in facilitating international cooperation to protect persons in the event of disasters.

3. We continue to welcome and support the establishment and work of the **Working Group on Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters**, and we take important note of its provisional programme of work and upcoming debate. We note the oral report and summary of the Chair of the working group, **H.E. Amb. Antonio Lagdameo, Permanent Representative of the Philippines**, submitted it in November 2023. Thank him for his outstanding efforts and commitment. We are pleased with the number of meetings held, the high-level discussions, and the rich contribution from relevant partners and hope it bears fruit in the bid to make progress on the ILC recommendation.

4. My delegation looks forward to actively participating in the Working Group's upcoming deliberations and continuing to exchange views and insights on the 5 clusters and ILC

recommendations postulated from the draft articles.

5. Therefore, we repeat our call for strong international cooperation at all levels to address the enormous humanitarian, economic, and social impacts caused, especially in vulnerable communities. The adverse effects of Climate Change and its security risks have exacerbated fragilities and should serve as the basis and priority for constructive global dialogue on this important issue.

Chair,

6. At the national level, we are pleased to convey that Sierra Leone enacted the National Disaster Management Agency Act of 2020 (Act No. 3 of 2020) to establish an institutional framework for managing disasters and emergencies at all levels of

the country. This law creates the National Disaster Management Agency (**NDMA**), which oversees reducing risks, enhancing disaster preparedness, strengthening emergency responses, and aiding recovery efforts.

7. The Act defines the clear roles and duties of all relevant stakeholders, such as government bodies, local authorities, and communities. It also establishes the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction as the governing body overseeing the agency's management and supervision. The focus is on integrating disaster risk reduction into development strategies, implementing early warning systems, and public awareness campaigns to enhance community resilience.

8. We continue to engage with our regional and international partners to ensure that all people,

regardless of their circumstances, have access to safety, support, and essential resources during and after such events.

9. We restate our appreciation of the draft articles, and we do see merit in pursuing the recommendation by the ILC. This Committee states that responses to disasters must be embedded in the principles of sovereign independence, neutrality, impartiality, and humanity. On this basis, Sierra Leone supports the recommendation of the ILC for the elaboration of a convention based on the draft articles, noting that States can further strengthen the text to build broad consensus and universality.

10. Furthermore, the promotion of human dignity and the protection of human rights under international law, with due regard to women, children, and the most vulnerable groups in affected communities, is

equally important and should continue to cut across our consideration and in all disaster management or response mechanism as already emphasized by the ILC draft articles. Therefore, our approach must be inclusive and equitable, addressing the specific needs of these groups.

Chair,

11. My delegation is gravely concerned with the increasing and worsening trend of natural and man-made disasters worldwide today. Disasters, whether natural or man-made, pose significant risks to life, health, and well-being. Therefore, our collective responsibility is to ensure that every person is safeguarded and their rights are upheld during such crises.

12. We urge and strongly recommend the strengthening of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), investing in comprehensive disaster risk reduction strategies, including hazard mapping, land-use planning, and infrastructure resilience, developing and improving Early Warning Systems that reach all communities, especially those at high risk, enhancing emergency response capabilities, strengthening international partnerships to share knowledge, resources, and best practices in disaster management and an overall robust approach in disaster prevention.

13. To conclude, we believe that by adhering to these principles and recommendations, we can significantly improve the protection of individuals during disasters and build more resilient communities, a commitment to human rights and preparedness, and foster international cooperation,

which is essential for safeguarding lives and livelihoods in the face of emerging challenges.

14. I thank you.