



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THAILAND
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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Statement

by

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**before the Sixth Committee
of the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
Agenda Item 86: Protection of persons in the event of disasters**

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Mr. Chair,

1. As this is the first time my delegation takes the floor in the Sixth Committee, allow me to begin by congratulating you along with other members of your Bureau on the election. Please be assured of Thailand's support.
2. Thailand aligns itself with the statement delivered by Nigeria on behalf of a group of States.
3. On 26 December 2004, nearly 20 years ago, Southeast Asia and the world woke up to a disastrous tsunami that took nearly 240,000 lives and left the region and the world years to recover from devastating loss and damage. Thailand was among the countries that took the hardest hit in the deadliest natural disaster of the 21st century. It was **in the wake of the Indian Ocean Tsunami that the ILC draft articles on the protection of persons in the event of disasters were conceived.**
4. What we witness today is even more alarming. **Disasters are occurring at increasing frequency and intensity.** Typhoon Yagi, which swept across Southeast Asia last month, affected millions, including their access to clean water. We in this room are only a distance away from Hurricane Helene and other storms that hit this side of the world earlier in the year. Slow onset disasters, including **sea-level rise**, will also have devastating effects, sparing no nation. Above all else, those that stand **the highest chance of losing are the poorest and most vulnerable communities**, with their livelihood and development gains being repeatedly impeded, if not reversed.
5. Drawing on our experience at the regional level, the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response, concluded in 2005 as a consequence of the deadly tsunami, contributes to a more resilient ASEAN community . The Agreement, together with the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) and the ASEAN Standard Operating Procedure for Regional Standby Arrangements

and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations (SASOP), formed the tripod of disaster response instruments that strengthens ASEAN capacity against disasters in all phases, from prevention and mitigation to response and recovery.

6. It is against this backdrop that Thailand, a member of the Core Group on a future UN convention on the protection of persons in the event of disasters, is **fully convinced that a global convention on this topic is necessary, and it is necessary now more than ever**. In this light, allow me to highlight the following three points.
7. **First**, Thailand acknowledges that there exist myriad non-legally binding instruments on this subject matter. In fact, we are proud to play a part in the development of a number of these instruments such as the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. However, **efforts to counter and respond to disasters are still fragmented**. It is in this context that Thailand believes that it is high time to take the next step — **creating a global legally-binding instrument to fill a lacuna in international disaster law**.
8. **Second**, and following my previous point, a convention on the protection of persons in the event of disasters would also address **human rights** and aims to protect the **inherent dignity of persons in the context of disasters**. A convention would, at its core, be a reminder that human rights and humanitarian principles are relevant, and do not cease to exist during disasters.
9. **Third**, Thailand believes that the **International Law Commission's draft articles on the protection of persons in the event of disasters could be a starting point for the elaboration of such a convention**. The draft articles provide a sufficiently broad framework that covers the various stages of a disaster cycle, and takes on the aforementioned issues. In our view, it strikes **a balance between upholding the principle of State sovereignty and protecting human rights** in the context of disasters. In this regard, we **welcome the re-convening of**

the Working Group on the protection of persons in the event of disasters chaired by Ambassador Antonio Lagdamaeo (ลักดามเอย) of the Philippines, and look forward to the discussion within the framework of the Working Group next week.

Mr. Chair,

10. Beyond this Trusteeship Council Chamber, countless lives remain at risk from disasters, with many threatened daily. We **cannot afford another disaster to take a collective, international law-making action**, for the protection of persons in the event of disasters. Thailand stands ready to work with each and every Member State in this endeavor during this Sixth Committee session and we **hope others will join us in our call for a convention on this very important topic.**
11. Thank you.

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