

 Permanent Mission
of Austria to the
United Nations in New York

**79th Session of the General Assembly
Sixth Committee**

**Agenda item 86: Protection of persons in the event of disasters
Working Group: ILC Recommendation**

**Statement by Mr. Maximilian Gorke
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New York, 9 October 2024

Thank you, Mme. Chair,

First of all, let me congratulate you on your reappointment as Chair of this Working Group.

We are well aware that climate change leads also to the increased occurrence of natural disasters and the growing need for a solid legal framework for international cooperation regarding disaster relief. Only this September, Austria was hit by a flood disaster resulting in severe destruction and even several deaths. Other European countries were also affected very badly. Therefore, we consider the protection of persons in the event of disasters a common challenge. The draft articles could fill a gap in this important area.

Bearing in mind the objective to create a legal framework for the conduct of international disaster relief activities, which clarifies core legal principles and concepts, we commend the International Law Commission for its work on the draft articles. It is noteworthy to recall that the ILC recommended the elaboration of a convention to the General Assembly. Although the Commission did not recommend to first undertake a period of reflection before further action, the Assembly, respectively the 6th Committee, has taken its time to deliberate this issue, including in the framework of a working group over the last two years. Austria was among those States proposing to defer the discussion on the elaboration of a convention on the basis of the draft articles. But States now had time to familiarize themselves with the draft articles.

In light of the importance of the issue as well as in order to ensure an appropriate follow-up to the valuable work of the ILC, Austria would support a common decision to move this process to a negotiation phase and act upon the recommendation of the ILC. Thank you.