

**Statement by Sweden on behalf of the Nordic Countries
(Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden)**

at the

**General Assembly,
Seventy-fifth Session**

Sixth Committee

**Agenda item 89:
Protection of persons in the event of disasters**

United Nations, New York

23 October 2020

Madame/Mr Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the five Nordic Countries Denmark, Norway, Finland, Island and my own country Sweden.

The increasing frequency of natural and human-made disasters make this agenda item a highly topical area of international law, and the Nordic Countries welcome further discussion on the draft articles in the Sixth committee.

In challenging times like these, co-operation between States in preparing for and responding to disasters is crucial. Therefore, it is a matter of foremost concern to further strengthen international co-operation on disaster relief and humanitarian assistance systems.

The ILC draft articles constitute a framework for the reduction of risks of disasters, including through risk assessments and protection of persons, and set out a duty of the affected State to ensure protection, as well as the role of external assistance in this respect. Moreover, the draft articles reflect human rights obligations and the principles of human dignity, humanity, neutrality and independence. In this context, the Nordic Countries would like to, once again, recall the importance of gender equality, and integrating a gender perspective in humanitarian assistance in order for the assistance to reach all parts of the population. A gender perspective enables the protection of all individuals during times of natural disasters, through the recognition that women, men, girls and boys may have different needs and may be exposed to different vulnerabilities.

The Nordic Countries would further like to highlight draft article 9 that deals with the duty of States to reduce the risk of disasters by taking appropriate measures, including through legislation and regulations, to prevent, mitigate and prepare for disasters. In this aspect the work of the ILC on the protection of persons in the event of disasters may contribute to reaching Sustainable Development Goal no. 13 – *Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries*.

The Nordic Countries recognise the importance of further strengthening the international co-operation, disaster relief and the humanitarian assistance system. This is all the more important in the light of the additional challenges humanitarian work is facing after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Nordic Countries are open to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the recommendation of the ILC to elaborate an international convention on the basis of the draft articles.

Thank you, Madame/Mr Chair.