

EGYPT



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The Permanent Mission of Egypt
to the United Nations
New York

بعثة مصر الدائمة
لدى الأمم المتحدة
نيويورك

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اللجنة السادسة للجمعية العامة للأمم المتحدة
(الدورة ٨٧)

Statement on Agenda Item 87:

بيان حول البند ٨٧:

“Protection of persons in the event of
disasters”

“حماية الأشخاص في حالات الكوارث”

Ahmed Abdelaziz, Ph.D.

Legal Advisor

د. أحمد عبد العزيز

المستشار القانوني

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١٨ أكتوبر ٢٠٢١

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يُرجى المراجعة عند الإلقاء

Madam Chair,

Egypt expresses its appreciation to the Secretary General for his report included in document number A/75/214 on the ILC “Draft articles on the protection of persons in the event of disasters”.

My delegation was pleased to take part in last session’s debate on this important agenda item. Therefore, I would like to refer to Egypt’s statement delivered during last session, while emphasizing the following few points today:

- 1– Disasters can result from natural occurrences or man-made/human-made actions. Defined by the ILC in the in Article 1(a) of the draft articles as “*a calamitous event or series of events resulting in widespread loss of life, great human suffering and distress, mass displacement, or large-scale material or environmental damage, thereby seriously disrupting the functioning of society*”, the definition clearly encompasses both natural and man-made/human-made disasters. This was also reflected in the preamble of the draft articles, which reads “*Considering the frequency and severity of natural and human-made disasters and their short-term and long-term damaging impact*”.
- 2– It is essential to enhance international cooperation in preventing and managing all phases of natural and man-made/human-made disasters, in a manner that prevents their occurrence, mitigates their short and long-term impacts, and protects persons affected by them.
- 3– Article 9 of the draft articles on the reduction of the risk of disasters is a key provision of the draft articles, since it emphasizes the obligation of Member States to “*reduce the risk of disasters by taking appropriate measures, including through legislation and regulations, to prevent, mitigate, and prepare for disasters*”. It elaborates further by providing that “*Disaster risk reduction measures include the conduct of risk*



assessments, the collection and dissemination of risk and past loss information, and the installation and operation of early warning systems”.

- 4- Egypt is of the view that draft Article 9 has a particular significance to man-made/human-made disasters, where failure by states to carry out their obligation to take the necessary risk reduction measures threatens to have dire and large scale humanitarian consequences, particularly in the context of transboundary megaprojects such as dams where the obligation to *“to prevent, mitigate, and prepare for disasters ... and conduct of risk assessments”* is translated in the form of Transboundary Environmental and Socioeconomic Impact Assessments studies, known as TESIA studies.
- 5- In this juncture, Egypt has previously expressed its concerns regarding the adverse impacts of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on the two down-stream countries and called for the conclusion of proper TESIA studies to guide the filling and operation of the dam, in order to avoid any potential disaster emanating from the dam. Regrettably, after 10 years of negotiations and while the dam started already impounding water, Ethiopia continues to block the conclusion of the necessary studies.
- 6- The continuation of the unilateral construction and filling of this colossal megaproject, threatens the livelihoods of more than 150 million citizens in Egypt and the Sudan. The absence of studies on the structural safety, economic and environmental impacts of the dam, is a major concern to us from a disaster risk-reduction perspective. Ethiopia has a special legal obligation to prevent any potential man-made/human-made disasters resulting from this project. Private companies involved in the project are also under obligation not to contribute to such potential man-made/human-made disasters.

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7- Egypt welcomes the Presidential Statement issued by the Security Council on Sept 15th, 2021, on the GERD issue under agenda item “Peace and Security in Africa”, and calls upon Ethiopia to cooperate in good faith with the aim of finalizing expeditiously the text of mutually acceptable and binding agreement on the filling and operation of the GERD, within a reasonable time frame.

Thank you Madam Chair.