

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

at the

**General Assembly,
Seventy-sixth Session**

Sixth Committee

Agenda item 87:

Protection of persons in the event of disasters

United Nations, New York

18 October 2021

Madame/Mr Chair,

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

The Nordic Countries recognise the importance of further strengthening the international cooperation, disaster relief and the humanitarian assistance system. We continue to hold the view that this agenda item is a highly topical area of international law, and we welcome further discussion on the draft articles in the Sixth committee.

At its 71st, 73rd and 75th sessions, this Committee considered the recommendation of the International Law Commission that the General Assembly elaborate a convention based on the draft articles. At all these sessions, the Nordic Countries expressed openness for discussions about this recommendation.

Our view has not changed. We remain ready to engage with members to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the recommendation of the Commission to elaborate an international convention on the basis of the draft articles. As previously stated, we want to underline that the draft articles strike an adequate balance between the rights and obligations of the affected state and those of assisting actors. By providing that external assistance in general requires the consent of the affected state – but that such external assistance shall not be withheld arbitrarily – the draft articles reflect the dual nature of sovereignty as entailing both rights and obligations.

The Nordic Countries would further like to highlight that we are promoting efforts to reduce the risk of disasters and respond to them in a way that takes into account the needs of those disproportionately affected. In this context, the Nordic Countries would, once again, like to 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. It ensures effective and impartial humanitarian assistance and strengthens protection of individuals during times of natural disasters.

Finally, the Nordic Countries would further like to highlight the importance of prevention and in this regard welcome draft article 9. This provision reflects the obligations of States to reduce the risk of disasters by taking appropriate measures, including through legislation and regulations, to prevent, mitigate, and prepare for disasters. We note that related issues may be necessary to consider within the context of the Commission's work on sea-level rise in relation to international law.

Thank you, Madame/Mr Chair.