



PHILIPPINES

Please check against delivery

STATEMENT

Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines to the United Nations
Agenda Item - 87: Protection of persons in the event of disasters
76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
18 October 2021, Conference Rooms 1-3
UN Headquarters New York

Madam Chair.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/75/214) on the “Protection of persons in the event of disasters” in relation to the General Assembly resolution inviting Governments to submit comments concerning the recommendation made by the International Law Commission (ILC) to the Assembly to elaborate a convention on the basis of the draft articles on the protection of persons in the event of disasters adopted by the ILC in 2016.

The rationale for the draft articles, the frequency and severity of natural and human-made disasters and their impact, has a special urgency for the Philippines. Given its location along the boundary of major tectonic plates, at the center of a typhoon belt, the Philippine archipelago is regularly impacted by floods, typhoons, landslides, earthquakes, volcanoes, and droughts. We rank high for population exposure and vulnerability to hazards. Climate change and sea-level rise will only exacerbate these challenges.

The Philippines recognizes that the ILC draft articles are premised on the principle of state sovereignty and reaffirm the primary role of the state affected by the disaster in providing disaster relief assistance. Many of the articles reflect State practice. We have given specific comments with respect to articles 9,10, 11, 13, 14, 15, and 16 at the 75th session of the UN General Assembly. We would welcome further exchange of views on the dynamics of the general duty to cooperate (article 7) and the duty of the affected state to seek external assistance (article 12).

We have earlier highlighted the draft articles’ emphasis on human dignity, human rights, especially the right to life, and humanitarian principles. This is consistent with the spirit of our national law, the “Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010”. The law sets out the policy of the state to:

- Uphold the people’s constitutional rights to life and property by addressing the root causes of vulnerabilities to disasters, strengthening the country’s institutional capacity for disaster risk reduction and management and building the resilience of local communities to disasters including climate change impacts;

PHILIPPINE MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

556 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, NY 10036 • TEL. (212) 764-1300 • FAX (212) 840-8602

- Adhere to and adopt the universal norms, principles and standards of humanitarian assistance and the global effort on risk reduction as concrete expression of the country's commitment to overcome human sufferings due to recurring disasters;
- Incorporate internationally accepted principles of disaster risk management in the creation and implementation of strategies, policies, plans and budgets;
- Develop and strengthen the capacities of vulnerable and marginalized groups to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from the effects of disasters; and
- Provide maximum care, assistance and services to individuals and families affected by disaster, implement emergency rehabilitation projects to lessen the impact of disaster, and facilitate resumption of normal social and economic activities.

The Philippines supports the elaboration of a convention on the basis of the draft articles which could strengthen international cooperation in all phases of a disaster. We welcome similar views from the states that submitted their comments during the relevant period as indicated in the Secretary-General's report.

Finally, we underscore the imperative for and the urgency of a prevention-focused, forward-looking, and multilateral approach to reducing disaster risks, and urge Member States to move forward in considering a binding legal instrument based on the draft articles, including through a diplomatic conference. END.