



Statement

by

Lebanon

at the

Sixth Committee

**Item 82: “Report of the International Law Commission on the work of its
Seventy-Second Session”**

Cluster II: “Sea-Level Rise in relation to International Law”

New York, November 1, 2021

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Madame Chair,

After its postponement last year, Lebanon is pleased to take part in the consideration of the Report of the 72nd session of the work of the International Law Commission (ILC).

In this regard, we welcome the in-person holding of International Law Week and we welcome the members of the Commission present in New York.

We wish to thank Ambassador Mahmoud Hmoud, Chair of the 72nd session of the International Law Commission for introducing the report (A/76/10). Our gratitude also extends to all members of the Commission.

The ILC has indeed managed to considerably advance its work by holding the two parts of its session this year in hybrid format. It has proven its resourcefulness and ability to adjust to the constraints caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

My delegation thanks the Government of Switzerland, the host country, for helping facilitate the convening of the session. My delegation also pays tribute to the Codification Division of the Office of Legal Affairs for the crucial assistance provided to the Commission.

We appreciate that the difficulties presented by the pandemic resulted in the Commission making much greater use of electronic means for distribution of materials to members and their assistants. In this regard we applaud the ILC's flexibility and adaptability.

At the same time, we understand that such format presented some limits, as highlighted in the report. These limits pertained to time-zones, internet connectivity, reduced hours of interpretation, clearly showing that in-person interactions are likely viewed as optimal for members to identify and bridge the gaps among differing views.

Furthermore, we continue to encourage more enhanced relation between the ILC and the sixth committee, through constant dialogue between the two. Such a relationship can result in the active and wide participation of Member States in the Commission's work.

Some interesting ideas have been expressed in this regard such as: keeping a limit on the number of ILC topics, providing executive summary of the annual report, and holding informal virtual briefings to be presented by the Special Rapporteurs of each topic ahead of the report's publication.

Madame Chair,

Sea-level rise poses a global current and future threat, and is a matter of concern to all nations, not only small island developing states.

The challenges presented by sea-level rise are multifaceted and have multiple legal implications.

Lebanon, a coastal state, supported the inclusion of the timely topic "*Sea-Level Rise in relation to International Law*" by the International Law Commission in its programme of work. We believe it is important for the ILC to address the international law implications of topics that command the attention of the international community. By clarifying the international legal framework of such topics, the Commission can help States develop "*practicable solutions to respond effectively to the issues prompted by sea-level rise*".

Madame Chair,

We commend the efforts and progress of the open-ended Study Group on this topic, co-chaired by five members on a rotating basis. While recognizing the urgent nature of this matter, we agree with the need for a cautious approach to a topic which presents complex legal issues. The substantive debates held among the members of the Study Group testify to such complexity.

We express our appreciation to the co-chairs of the Study Group, Mr. Bogdan Aurescu and Ms. Nilufer Oral, for the first issues paper which examines law of the sea aspects.

Our appreciation also goes to Professor Yacouba Cisse, for the important presentation on maritime delimitation practice of African States.

In dealing with this topic, my delegation stresses the centrality of the Convention on the Law of the Sea and the importance of preserving its integrity and the stability provided by its rules, while drawing on the practice of States when needed.

We look forward to the Study Group's second issues paper next year which will focus on the human dimension of sea-level rise, by addressing issues related to Statehood and to the protection of persons affected by sea-level rise, under the co-chairpersonship of Patrícia Galvão Teles and Juan José Ruda Santolaria.

We underline the preliminary character of these papers, as it has been made clear in the 2018 syllabus that these three issues, namely Law of the Sea, Statehood and protection of persons affected by sea-level rise are interconnected and should be collectively examined.

Madame Chair,

Lebanon has always been a staunch supporter of a multilateral system based on the promotion and respect of international law. The International Law Commission, tasked with the progressive development of international law and its codification, is instrumental in advancing the rule of law, both at the national and international levels.

It is in this spirit that Lebanon, along with the Kingdom of Bahrain, has decided to nominate Professor Nassib G. Ziade for election to the ILC, for the term 2023-2027.

A distinguished academic and practitioner of international law, Professor Ziade also embodies the values of legal and linguistic diversity, so fundamental in the work of the ILC.

We are convinced that Professor Ziade would be a strong asset to the work of the Commission.

Madame Chair,

My delegation will continue to follow with great interest the work of the Commission, and expresses its thanks to its members for their contribution.

Thank you.