

**Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters**

**Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to  
the United Nations**

**On behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)**

**4 October 2023**

Mr. President,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the 33 member States of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

CELAC takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on "Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters", document A/75/214, which contains the comments sent by States about the topic.

CELAC welcomes the inclusion of the item "Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters" in the Agenda of the General Assembly's 73rd session and expresses its appreciation to the International Law Commission for developing the Draft Articles, especially Eduardo Valencia Ospina, special rapporteur on the subject. His work demonstrates the topic's relevance in a world where disasters have become more frequent and intense, creating social and economic havoc.

Comprehensive and timely disaster risk management is of importance for effective preparedness, disaster risk reduction and mitigation, as well as the provision of adequate humanitarian responses, based on the priority of serving and protecting the people of our nations, placing the protection of their human dignity and well-being at the center of all humanitarian cooperation and assistance measures. This is especially important given that, despite some multilateral agreements and a much larger number of bilateral treaties on mutual assistance, the legally relevant instruments are limited and not uniform. We express our concern that protection from disasters is comprised of soft-law, non-binding instruments elaborated at the intergovernmental level and also by private institutions and entities. In this regard, having an international legal framework becomes one of our main challenges that merits our consideration.

CELAC welcomes the adoption of the General Assembly Resolution 76/119 adopted by consensus on 9 December, 2021. In this regard, the members of CELAC recognize the valuable decision of the General Assembly to continue the consideration and study of the draft articles of the International Law Commission. We welcome the possible establishment of an international conference of plenipotentiaries to elaborate a convention on the basis of the draft articles, or any other possible course of action with respect to the draft articles, taking into account the views and observations expressed

in the debates in the Sixth Committee and the comments and observations received from Governments in the framework of a working group of the Sixth Committee, which will meet for four full consecutive days during the seventy-eighth and seventy-ninth sessions of the Assembly.

The adoption of an international legal instrument would undoubtedly make a significant contribution to the harmonization of measures and protocols for effectively addressing the underlying causes of disasters and the current high levels of vulnerability. It would also strengthen disaster risk reduction and management efforts at every stage, without prejudice to the bilateral and multilateral instruments on the matter to which States are already parties.

We hope that the Committee can have a productive dialogue during the Working Group's deliberations, the outcome of which would be reported to the Sixth Committee at the seventy-ninth session of the General Assembly, with a view to the Sixth Committee making a recommendation to the Assembly on any further action to be taken on the draft articles.

Thank you.