

Statement Core Group PPED
(Colombia, Croatia, Italy, Jamaica, Nigeria and Thailand)

I have the honour to speak on behalf of Croatia, Italy, Jamaica, Nigeria, Thailand and my own country, Colombia.

In opening the 78th session of the General Assembly, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres recalled - at the very beginning of his speech - the humanitarian disaster that unfolded in Derna, Libya, less than a month ago. As the Secretary-General put it, it was “many of the world’s challenges coalesce[ing] in an awful landscape”.

The increasing number of disasters around the world, with their destructive consequences, felt especially - but not only - in developing countries, is the result of complex emergencies and crises, where the human factor is pushing nature to its limits; such as in the case of Derna, where the skies unleashed 100 times the monthly rainfall in 24 hours and where years of neglect, conflict and instability exacerbated the conditions for a humanitarian disaster of apocalyptic proportions.

It is against this backdrop that we gather today and that we will gather from tomorrow to the 10th of October to discuss the merits and future of the ILC’s draft articles on the protection of persons in the event of disaster. We welcome the focused and structured program of work prepared by the newly elected Chair of the Working Group, Amb. Lagdameo, with the assistance of the Secretariat. As the legal committee of the General Assembly, representing the whole international community, we will have the possibility of examining the draft articles, one by one, and of discussing the recommendation of the ILC to elaborate a convention on the basis of the draft articles.

As expected, there will be different views expressed and different perspectives on the future of the draft articles emanating from representative and deliberative organs. Those different views and perspectives did not prevent us in 2021 from establishing an innovative and outcome-oriented process with a clear timeline through resolution 76/119. And we did it in a consensual manner.

But ultimately the key question that we will have to answer as the legal committee of the General Assembly is the following: are we doing enough to make sure that Member States, the UN and relevant actors are well prepared from a legal perspective to address the dire humanitarian consequences of a disaster-prone world, with more inequalities and more prone to extreme weather events?

The answer depends on us and will be provided in 13 months. In the view of our countries - coming from all regions of the world - launching the process of negotiating a convention on the protection of persons in the event of disaster will be complementary to and in line with the political commitments made just a few months ago during the Mid Term Review of the Sendai Framework, including the commitment to establish sound regulatory and legal frameworks at all levels. It will also be a logical consequence of our commitment to international law, as the backbone of international cooperation in addressing the most serious challenges of today's world.

We will continue to engage with all delegations during this year's session, during the intersessional period and during the 79th session, trusting that the sense of responsibility towards our fragile world and its future generations will prevail over other agendas.

I thank you.