



MISIÓN PERMANENTE DE EL SALVADOR
ANTE LA ORGANIZACIÓN DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS

AGENDA ITEM NO. 86

“PROTECTION OF PERSONS IN CASE OF DISASTERS”

**REPUBLIC OF EL SALVADOR ON BEHALF OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN INTEGRATION SYSTEM
(SICA)**

SIXTH COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS 78TH SESSION

NEW YORK, 4 OCTOBER 2023

*Speaker: H.E. Egriselda López, Ambassador and
Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the United Nations*

Mr. President:

I have the honor of delivering this statement on behalf of the eight Member States of the Central American Integration System (SICA): Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, the Dominican Republic, and my own country, El Salvador.

The Member States comprising the Central American Integration System recognize how our countries have a great wealth of ecosystems and biodiversity. However, we are exposed to multiple risks and devastating impacts caused and exacerbated by the adverse effects of climate change and natural disasters which threaten the lives and livelihoods of our populations.

For this reason, SICA prioritizes the discussion of the current agenda item and welcomes with satisfaction Resolution 76/119 adopted by the Sixth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, which, among other aspects, decides to establish a working group to examine the recommendation of the International Law Commission for the elaboration of a convention by the General Assembly or by an international conference of plenipotentiaries on the basis of the draft articles, or any other potential course of action with respect to the draft articles.

Mr. President,

We acknowledge that our region is highly vulnerable, as a large part of it is located in the Central American Dry Corridor, in addition to the increased frequency of extreme weather events,

such as forest fires, floods, droughts, tropical storms and hurricanes, as well as volcanic eruptions and earthquakes, which are becoming more intense every year.

In 2022, Hurricanes Eta and Iota were the most severe natural phenomena that impacted our region, affecting 7 million people directly, resulting in losses and damages exceeding \$2.6 billion, and causing over 200 deaths.

These disasters have an impact on structural poverty indices, population growth, economic development, rapid and uncontrolled urbanization, environmental degradation.

Mr. President,

Now more than ever, SICA members reaffirm the importance of promoting efforts based on principles of solidarity and cooperation for disaster prevention, mitigation, and risk reduction, as well as the provision of adequate humanitarian responses. The priority is to serve and protect the people of our nations, placing the protection of their human dignity and well-being at the core of all cooperative measures and humanitarian assistance.

At the regional level, the Central American Integration System has the Coordination Center for the Prevention of Disasters in Central America and the Dominican Republic (CEPREDENAC), which has the mandate to promote activities, projects and programs that lead to the reduction of risks of disasters that cause human and economic losses caused by socio-natural factors.

In addition to some multilateral agreements and a larger number of bilateral treaties on mutual assistance and disaster protection, the protection of individuals in the event of disasters is mostly composed of non-binding instruments developed at the intergovernmental level, as well as by private institutions and entities.

In this regard, our countries recognize the urgent need for an international legal framework that provides greater legal certainty regarding the protection of individuals whose lives, well-being, and property are affected by disasters.

All of this should be done with a focus on facilitating a response and reducing disaster risk, effectively and adequately meeting the essential needs of affected individuals while fully respecting their rights and human dignity. This approach should fully implement the principles of humanity, neutrality, and impartiality, which are fundamental for humanitarian assistance and the applicable regulatory frameworks for disaster relief efforts while also respecting the ability of affected States to shape how such relief is provided in order to best serve the situation at hand.

The consideration of these draft articles and their eventual implementation in the field of cooperation in disaster response should be accompanied by commitments made in other intergovernmental forums that are the main reference for disaster prevention, mitigation, and reduction of risk, such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. We express our concern about the uneven and insufficient pace of its implementation.

Given the growing global interdependence, a timely and sufficient humanitarian assistance is required, as well as adequate means of implementation to stimulate and contribute to data generation and acquisition, capacity building, exchange of best practices, strengthening of early warning systems, and technology transfer to achieve comprehensive disaster risk reduction at all levels, with a special emphasis on building resilience in developing countries.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, the Member States of the Central American Integration System will remain vigilant about the developments in the discussions that will take place within the newly established Working Group in this Committee. We welcome additional discussion during the upcoming Working Group meetings on the topic of disaster risk reduction. We encourage maintaining a spirit of shared responsibility and solidarity in the context of negotiations, while never forgetting that the protection of the human person and their dignity must be at the core of any proposal. The challenges we face are enormous, and it is only through collective efforts that we can hope to overcome them.

I thank you.

