



CROATIA

Statement by

Kristijan Papac
Legal Adviser

Permanent Mission of the Republic of Croatia to the United Nations

at the

78th Session of the General Assembly
Sixth Committee

Agenda Item 86
“Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters”
- Plenary debate -

4 October 2023

- Check against delivery -

Thank you, Mr. President

First, allow me to convey our congratulations to you and the other members of the Bureau on your election and to assure you of my country's full support in the performance of your important functions.

For its part, Croatia aligns itself with the intervention delivered by the EU and its Member states, as well as with the statement delivered by Colombia on behalf of the group of States.

Mr. President,

Croatia commends the work of International Law Commission undertaken to develop the Draft Articles on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters, as well as the accompanying commentaries.

We find that the ILC's rationale of "...increased frequency and severity" of natural, as well as human-made disasters, and their short-term and long-term damaging impact, as stressed in the Draft Articles' Preamble, calls for action to create a universal legal framework. Our view is that the existing body of numerous bilateral, regional and some multilateral agreements in this field is still fragmented and, in some elements, even contradictory. For that reason, we find that the existing legal framework is not sufficient to facilitate international cooperation in every case of disaster.

We are confident that the universal legal framework would not only fill the *lacuna* in international

disaster law, but also contribute to further development and future legal instruments on international cooperation in every region of the world.

Furthermore, Croatia recognizes that the Draft Articles succeeded in maintaining a delicate balance between the principles of State sovereignty and non-intervention principles; and confirmed the primary responsibility of the affected state. We also recognize that the Draft Articles envisage the protection of persons for all stages of disaster's *ratione temporis*; they don't focus just on immediate post-disaster response, but also extend to disaster prevention and mitigation efforts, asserting the rights and obligations not only of the affected states, but also those of third states and the involved non-governmental or intergovernmental organizations.

Mr. President,

As much as it is understandable, natural and above all, human need of many of the delegations here to highlight the last disastrous event, especially if it happened in our country or region, and caused victims and human sufferings that touched us personally, it is necessary to remind ourselves that we are here today at the 6th committee to see the bigger picture. We are all equally vulnerable, every country in every corner of the Globe is affected by disasters in some respect, the only real difference is to which concrete form or manifestation of natural, human-made or combination of both we are confronted with at the moment.

In conclusion, for all the above reasons Croatia supports the ILC's recommendation to elaborate a Convention on the basis of the said Draft Articles on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters.

In that regard, we invite all the delegations to engage and help that our work in the Sixth Committee this year and at the following session bring significant progress in our efforts to create a universal legal framework on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters.

I thank you.