

**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**BETELIHEM TAYE, THIRD SECRETARY, LEGAL AFFAIRS  
OF THE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA**

**AT**

**THE 78<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
UNDER AGENDA ITEM 86**

**“PROTECTION OF PERSONS IN THE EVENT OF DISASTER”**

**OCTOBER 2023**

**NEW YORK**

**Mr. Chairperson,**

We thank the Secretary General for his report and the ILC for the work produced; Ethiopia aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group, respectively, and would like to make the following remarks in our national capacity.

**Mr. Chairperson,**

Affected states are indeed the primary actors in protecting persons in disaster situations. They have the responsibility to uphold and enforce existing humanitarian laws to ensure the safety and well-being of their population. The protection of persons and the responsibility of states, towards the heightened protection needs, during disasters, falls within the purview of human rights, humanitarian laws, and principles of humanitarian assistance. Therefore, we view the exercise regarding the regulations for safeguarding individuals during disasters as a unifying effort to bring together various principles. In doing so, we do not expect the introduction of new concepts or a complete departure from the current international legal standards concerning this issue.

Human or man-made disasters increase the need for protection of human rights and fulfilment of basic needs, they also create a heightened risk for public health, order and national security. As a result, disasters call for effective and coordinated governance by the country concerned and adherence to the rules on the ground by humanitarian actors.

Mr. chairperson, Ethiopia agrees with the inclusive approach that encompasses both natural and man-made disasters. However, it is crucial that the definition of "disaster" is clear and specific, without allowing for broad interpretations.

we are of the position that international cooperation in the area of humanitarian assistance is a delicate matter. It is the responsibility of states to address the needs of their people during disasters. Elaboration on how, when and to whom states must plea for international support is a matter that shall be left to them and would need no hard and fast rules.

Mr. Chairperson, we believe, regional instruments that are already in place may provide inspiration as well as lesson for the international rule we are attempting to prepare. The African Union convention for the protection and assistance of internally displaced persons in Africa (also known as Kampala Convention) stands out as the only binding legal instrument on the field. The Convention establishes a legal framework for prevention and mitigation of the human toll of man-made and natural disasters. It certainly is worth consideration, for the benefit of the global drive towards a normative framework on the protection of persons in the event of disasters.

**Mr. Chairperson,**

We believe that member states' perspectives, especially the perspectives of states that are prone to disasters and rely on international cooperation to contain the ramifications must be well considered.

In conclusion, Ethiopia stands ready to work with all member states on this initiative.

**Thank You**