



NEPAL

**Statement by H. E. Mr. Lok Bahadur Thapa, Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations, at 78th session of the Sixth Committee of the UN General Assembly under Agenda Item No. 86:
*Protection of persons in the event of disasters***

(New York, 4 October 2023)

Mr. Chair,

The world is grappling with multiple forms of disasters in frequency and scale. Every year, both natural and human-induced disasters devastate the life, livelihoods, and property of millions of people across the world.

Climate catastrophe is further igniting such disasters.

It ruins all our hard-won developmental gains in a few minutes and hits the poorest first and the worst.

Disaster-prone developing States, especially the LDCs and SIDS, are more vulnerable to both natural and human-induced disasters. Disaster not only hinders but also threatens to reverse the graduation of LDCs.

The increased frequency of climate-related disasters in LDCs caused displacement and homelessness of more than 8.5 million people.

Women, children, indigenous community, and older, disable, and sick people are more vulnerable to the disaster risk.

Deadliest droughts and floods cause huge loss of crop and livestock production in LDCs.

Mr. Chair,

Natural hazard cannot be prevented but its destructive power could be minimized.

Assessment of risk and adoption of appropriate preventative as well as mitigative measures would save precious human life and property from the menace of disaster. It would also reduce the cost of rescue, reconstruction, and rehabilitations in the post disaster phase.

International cooperation and various forms of external assistance is crucial to protect the life of persons and their properties in all phases of disaster – pre-disaster, disaster-proper, and post-disaster.

Multi-stakeholder platforms on disaster risk reduction established at all levels in pursuant to the agreed international legal instruments and frameworks could be utilized to bolster our collective capacity to disaster response.

Mr. Chair,

As the graduating least developed country with high vulnerability to the disaster risk, Nepal attaches greater importance to this agenda item. Looking back at our history of devastating earthquakes, floods, and glacial lake outburst, we can understand the importance of external relief assistance to the victims of disasters.

While delivering this statement, I am remembering the international solidarity and overwhelming support that we received in the immediate aftermath of the catastrophic Earthquake in 2015. Nepal wishes to reiterate its profound gratitude to all our supporters and partners for their unconditional support extended to us.

Mr. Chair,

Protection of the lives of persons affected, including their property, and environment from disaster in its territory is the primary responsibility of the State concerned. However, the affected State may request international community for humanitarian assistance, if needed, in the event of disaster.

They have the right to evaluate and give consent to the types and scale of such external assistance based on their domestic rules and regulations.

However, such assistance from abroad, we believe, should not undermine the principles such as human dignity, human rights, humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and non-discrimination, as well as sovereignty and non-intervention.

Mr. Chair,

Nepal acknowledges the instrumental contribution of the International Law Commission in producing draft articles on ‘Protection of persons in the event of disasters’ which, we believe, would pave the way for elaboration of an international legally binding instrument governing global response to disasters.

The draft article would provide a comprehensive legal framework for institutionalizing the existing practices and harmonizing the existing measures and protocols necessary to facilitate adequate and effective prevention, reduction and response to disaster risk and protection of persons.

The new convention should carefully chart out the rights and obligations of all States, whether affected or assisting, and other assisting actors.

It would further ensure the practical application of the fundamental value of solidarity in international relations to reinforce international cooperation at every stage of a disaster.

Mr. Chair,

Nepal has signed model agreement with the United Nations in connection with facilitation of movement of relief consignments and possessions of relief personnel in the event of disaster and emergencies.

Nepal is committed to fulfilling its international obligations on disaster risk reduction. We have intensified our efforts in achieving the targets of the Sendai Framework, through strengthening of the institutional and legislative mechanisms. At regional level we are equally committed to implementation of SAARC Comprehensive Framework on Disaster Management.

To this end, we have introduced several domestic legal instruments and frameworks to ensure effective prevention, mitigation, and preparation for disasters.

We have constitutional provisions on concurrent responsibility of governments at all levels to manage the risk of disasters. Both federal and provincial governments are responsible for carrying out disaster preparedness, rescue, relief, and rehabilitation.

Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act (2017) and its Regulations have been phenomenal in national disaster regime. It has incorporated a comprehensive approach to disaster cycle management – preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. The Act has provisions to promote proactive DRR towards resilience building.

Besides, we are also implementing the policy instruments such as the National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy, National Disaster Response Framework, Disaster

Risk Reduction National Strategic Action Plan, and Disaster Victim Rescue and Relief Criteria.

Nepal regularly issues early warnings of major hazards, especially floods and droughts. We are finalizing the Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems framework.

We have created a dedicated data portal to provide real-time updates on disaster events and response measures.

Provisions already implemented in a national context could also be integrated into the international legal framework.

In conclusion, **Mr. Chair**, Nepal urges Member States for their constructive contribution to early elaboration of convention based on the draft articles produced by the ILC.

Let's add another milestone in the regime of international law to govern the global response to disasters for ensuring protection of persons in the event of disaster.

I thank you