

**PERMANENT MISSION OF THAILAND
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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Statement

by

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**before the Sixth Committee
of the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
Agenda Item 86: Protection of persons in the event of disasters**

New York, 4 October 2023

Mr. Chair,

1. Thailand aligns itself with the statement delivered by Colombia on behalf of a group of States.

2. As a member of the Core Group on a future UN Convention on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters, Thailand is fully convinced that such **a convention is necessary, and it is necessary now more than ever.** In this light, allow me to highlight the following five points.

3. **First**, disasters, **whether human-made or natural**, are occurring at increasing frequency and intensity. Slow onset disasters, including **sea-level rise**, will also have devastating effects, sparing no nation. Above all else, **those that stand the highest chance of losing are the poorest and most vulnerable communities**, with their livelihood and development gains being repeatedly impeded, if not reversed, by disasters. **International cooperation to facilitate an adequate and effective reduction of the risk of and response to disasters is thus necessary**, especially with the threats and impacts of climate change intensifying.

4. **Second**, Thailand acknowledges that there exist myriad non-legally binding instruments on this subject matter. In fact, we are proud to play a part in the development of a number of these instruments such as the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030. However, efforts to counter and respond to disasters are still fragmented. It is against this backdrop that we believe that **it is time to take the next step – creating a global legally-binding instrument – to fill a lacuna in international disaster law for a more adequate and effective reduction of the risk of and response to disasters, and hence a greater protection of our peoples and communities.**

5. **Third**, and following from my previous point, a Convention on Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters would also address

human rights and aims to **protect the inherent dignity of persons** in the context of disasters. Indeed, a convention would, at its core, be a reminder that human rights and humanitarian principles are relevant, and do not cease to exist during disasters.

6. **Fourth**, it is against this background that Thailand believes that the International Law Commission's draft articles on the Protection of persons in the event of disasters could form a basis for the elaboration of such a convention. The draft articles provide a **sufficiently broad framework** that **covers the various stages of a disaster cycle**, and takes on the aforementioned issues. It also strikes a **balance between upholding the principle of State sovereignty and protecting human rights in the context of disasters**. In this regard, we welcome the establishment of the Working Group pursuant to General Assembly resolution 76/119 to be chaired by Ambassador Antonio Lagdamao (แลกแดเมโย) of the Philippines, and look forward to further deliberations of the draft articles at the Working Group during the next few days.

7. **Fifth**, allow me to share the efforts we have accomplished at the regional level. Prior to 2005, the regional landscape relating to disasters within the ASEAN region was not much different from the international landscape today, but there were limited frameworks and instruments to deal with them. With the increasing frequency and scale of disasters in the region, most notably the disastrous tsunami of 2004, ASEAN shifted into high gear following a critical meeting in Thailand and developed a legally-binding instrument on disaster to promote effective and timely regional response to disasters. **The ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response** was rapidly concluded by 2005. This Agreement, together with **the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre)** and **the ASEAN Standard Operating Procedure for Regional Standby Arrangements and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations (SASOP)**, formed the tripod of disaster response instruments that today contribute to a resilient ASEAN community against disasters in all stages, from prevention and mitigation to response and recovery.

Mr. Chair,

8. The time for international solidarity is now. The streets of this city, close to these very halls, suffered through flash flooding last week, and with climate change, it could only get worse. Let us not wait for another disaster to heed the call for cooperation. Just as we do not need another pandemic to draft the pandemic convention, let us not **wait for another disaster to take a collective, international law-making action.**

Thank you.
