

2 October Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters

Cluster 2 draft intervention

Thank you Mr facilitator and congratulations on your appointment. You can count on our full support. Thank you also to all of the speakers who have taken the floor so far in this debate, and I join others in welcoming this opportunity to engage in substantive discussions on this very timely issue.

Overall on this cluster – we recognise the fundamental importance of the responsibility to reduce the risk of disasters. We are also supportive of the framing of the draft articles regarding the recognition of the need to respect and protect human rights and human dignity, and to respond to disasters in a way which is consistent with humanitarian principles.

I will first make a few comments on the duty to reduce the risk of disasters in article 9 of the Draft Articles.

New Zealand values the inclusion of the reference in article 9(1) to appropriate “legislation and regulations” as a means of promoting disaster risk reduction.

We recognise the importance of bilateral, regional and multilateral frameworks and instruments concerned with disaster risk reduction, which we see the Draft Articles as largely aligned with.

In particular, we support and embrace the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction as the core global guiding document to manage disaster risk, and we strongly support a ‘whole of society’ approach in its implementation. We also highlight the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific.

Regarding the text of Article 9(1), New Zealand is of the view that greater clarity may be useful in respect of the nature and scope of the duty. What is meant by a duty to reduce the risk of “disasters”? Is the obligation one to reduce the risk of disasters in all instances or to manage the risks by being prepared? The commentaries point to the latter. To make this clearer, we’d see value in aligning the language of draft article 9(1) and/or 3(a), to the terminology in the commentaries and the Sendai Framework, which refer to **reducing the risk** that a natural or man-made **hazard** will result in harm or a **disaster**.

We see value in the sixth committee continuing to engage with our humanitarian colleagues on this topic.

With regards to draft article 6, we join others in supporting the inclusion of the principle of “independence”. This is a well-established humanitarian principle as set out in GA resolution 58/114.

Thank you.