



MYANMAR

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**Statement by Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun, Permanent Representative of the
Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations at the Sixth Committee
General Debate on Agenda Item: 86 “Protection of Persons in Disasters”**

(New York, 7 October 2024)

Madam Chair,

At the outset, I wish to congratulate you and the Bureau for your elections.

The growing frequency and intensity of natural disasters is a matter of grave concern for us. The vulnerable populations always bear the greatest burden of such disasters and their impacts. Developing countries, in particular, often lack the resilience and resources necessary to effectively respond to and recover from these disasters. Their limited infrastructure and capacity leave them disproportionately exposed to the devastating impacts.

In this light, it is high time for the international community to establish a comprehensive legal framework to address the gaps in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. Such a framework would enhance global cooperation and provide much-needed support to vulnerable communities.

Madam Chair,

Myanmar is of the view that the draft articles on the protection of persons in the event of disasters, developed by the International Law Commission, represent a valuable contribution to the development of international law and address a significant gap in this area. We thank the International Law Commission for its contribution. While the current

draft articles serve as a good starting point for discussion, we believe they still need improvement in both scope and clarity. Allow me to highlight some as follows:

- **Regarding Draft Article (10)**, while it emphasizes the primary role of the affected State, it may not adequately address situations where the State is unable or unwilling to fulfill this role, particularly in cases of conflict issues. Therefore, this article could be strengthened by including provisions for international support mechanisms when the affected State is incapacitated, ensuring that aid can still reach those in need.
- **In Draft Article (15)**, mobility is a fundamental component of disaster response, and Article (15) aims to facilitate it through various measures. However, challenges related to bureaucratic processes, security, coordination and specific guidelines for facilitating access in complex emergencies can impede effective mobility. Thus, addressing these challenges is essential to ensure that relief efforts can be deployed swiftly and efficiently, ultimately improving outcomes for those affected by disasters.
- **Furthermore**, considering the draft articles before us, the profound impact of human-made disasters, particularly those that are systematic and pervasive in nature, must not be overlooked. The current draft articles primarily focus on natural disasters, which may lead to a lack of clarity regarding the response to human-made disasters, such as armed conflicts, industrial accidents, or terrorism. To enhance the framework, a clear definition of what constitutes a human-made disaster should be included to ensure comprehensive coverage. By expanding the scope of the draft articles to adequately cover human-made disasters, the framework can become more robust and effective in addressing the diverse challenges posed by both natural and human-made events.

Madam Chair,

My country, Myanmar, serves as a clear example of why human-made disasters should not be overlooked.

Since the illegal coup attempt in February 2021, we have witnessed the severe consequences of both natural and human-made disasters. The military junta has not only committed egregious human rights violations but has also caused widespread devastation, leading to untold suffering for millions of people. This situation underscores the importance of ensuring that the draft articles provide comprehensive coverage for all forms of disasters, including those caused by human actions.

Since the illegal coup attempt, due to the military junta's atrocities including aerial attacks, burning and destroying of villages and homes, over 5,700 people were brutally killed by the military junta. Over 3.4 million people are being displaced. More than 18.6 million people are in urgent need of humanitarian aids, and over half of them are women and girls. Over 15 million are suffering from food insecurity, and half of the population has fallen below the national poverty line.

During the recent Typhoon Yagi, an estimated one million people were severely affected by flooding caused by its remnants and heavy rain. Tragically, more than 360 individuals have reportedly drowned. The floods have devastated communities, submerging thousands of acres of crops, farmland, and livestock, leading to substantial losses in livelihoods. Besides infrastructures were heavily damaged and disrupted.

In fact, Myanmar was not at the epicentre of Typhoon Yagi. However, the country suffered disproportionately more than other affected countries in the region. This is largely due to the military junta's failure to take necessary preventive measures and its incompetency.

Madam Chair,

Ensuring effective delivery of lifesaving assistance to those in need in Myanmar especially in conflict affected areas is essential. The military's ill-actions and weaponization of

humanitarian assistances have always hindered humanitarian efforts, both access and delivery, leaving millions in dire need of emergency life-saving aids.

We therefore call on the international community, including the UN cooperate effectively with the National Unity Government (NUG) and Ethnic Resistance Organizations (EROs), and all relevant stakeholders working on the ground to facilitate the reach of coordinated and coherent humanitarian responses to those most affected and in need.

In conclusion, **Madam Chair**, we have persistently appealed to the international community including the UN Security Council to help protect the people of Myanmar from the military junta's atrocities. We fully agree that a state has a primary responsibility to protect its people and promote their well-being.

However, when the people cry out for help to protect them and provide necessary assistance to the people in need, if the international community can help them immediately and effectively, it would save so many lives and safeguard their future.

To enable the international community to do so, there must an international legal framework which can cover impacts of natural and human-made disasters.

I thank you.
