PERMANENT MISSION OF BELIZE
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Statement by Seidi Quetzal, First Secretary of the Permanent Mission of Belize to the United Nations delivered to the Sixth Committee on agenda item 88: United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters

Thank you, Madame Chair.

At the outset I wish to warmly congratulate you and the members of the Bureau on your well-deserved election.

Belize aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Caribbean Community, and wishes to add the following remarks in its national capacity.

We fully support the process under way to conclude a legally binding instrument on the protection of persons in the event of disasters. With the adoption of General Assembly resolutions 79/128 (2024) and 80/169 (2025), the conclusion of the work of the Preparatory Committee, and the rich contributions made throughout, we have a solid foundation for the Diplomatic Conference to be convened in Bangkok from 25 January to 12 February 2027. We thank the Government of Thailand for its generous offer to host the Conference.

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For small island and low-lying coastal developing States such as ours, climate change related disasters are occurring more frequently and with greater intensity. A single event can impact our entire population and economy, and recovery can take years. An instrument that makes the response to disasters more predictable, timely and effective is therefore of direct and practical value to us. In this regard, we wish to highlight three important contributions that the new instrument can provide.

First, coherence. International disaster law today is spread across humanitarian guidance, human rights obligations, the Sendai Framework and regional arrangements. A single universal legally binding instrument can bring these strands together, provide coherence across the whole disaster cycle – from risk reduction and preparedness to response and recovery, and provide legal certainty for the protection of persons affected by disasters.

This brings me to my second point, the protection of persons. The instrument is about people. It should keep at its centre the dignity, rights and essential needs of those affected, and give particular attention to persons in vulnerable situations. As CARICOM has stated, the value of this new instrument will be defined by how much it reflects its direct nexus with tangible protection of people – including their lives and livelihoods.

Third, balance. The sovereignty of the affected State and its primary role in directing and coordinating assistance are foundations of this text, and the consent of the affected State must remain the basis for external assistance. Sovereignty also carries responsibility towards the persons on our territory. We see no contradiction between these principles and the duty to cooperate. Cooperation is how States, particularly those with limited capacity, are better able to fulfil their responsibilities to their people.

To make that cooperation real, the instrument should take account of the differing needs, capabilities and circumstances of States, including the specific situation of small island developing States. It should address capacity-building, the facilitation of assistance to remote and logistically constrained locations, and the role of regional organisations. It should also be without prejudice to existing rights, obligations and commitments under international law.

Finally, Belize wishes to encourage contributions to the trust fund to support the promotion of international law. These contributions would greatly assist developing countries, in particular least developed countries and small island developing states in attending the Diplomatic Conference, and in facilitating broad and inclusive participation which is important for the legitimacy and effectiveness of the instrument.

In closing, Belize commits to working with all delegations, in a spirit of partnership, towards an instrument that is broadly supported, implementable and impactful for the people it is meant to protect.

Thank you.