



INTERNATIONAL WEBINARS AND LIVE EVENTS

SEA-LEVEL RISE: DISPLACEMENT, MIGRATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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Sea-level Rise topic: member states in the General Assembly have been calling for the United Nations **International Law Commission (ILC)** to look at the issue of Sea-Rise Level. In 2018, the ILC decided to include the topic of sea-level rise in the long-term program of work.

One of the special aspects about this topic and the way the commission decided to deal with it is that it will not be through the process of a special rapporteur. The commission felt it was more appropriate to use the **format of a study group**. We have a study group that is led by rotating co-chairs, because it is a wide subject, considering the 3 issues: Law of the Sea, Statehood, Protection of Persons affected by the sea-level rise. It gave an opportunity to the commission to **work in an interdisciplinary way**.

We are working not only as co-chairs in close contacts, but we also tried to work as much as possible with **member states** (side events, regional workshops etc...). The idea is to have a **study, as a final outcome**, where we would compile the different findings from the different sources.

There will be an **important impact of sea-level rise** on human communities that live in **coastal zones** and in the **Small Island Developing States (SIDS)**. It is not only about SIDS, but also low-lying coastal zones around the world where many populations live today.

Sea-level rise is increasing at an **accelerated pace**. Not globally uniform and **will vary regionally**. Many **low-lying megacities** (NYC, Shanghai, and Rotterdam), **large agricultural deltas** (Mekong, Ganges, Nile) and **small islands** (SIDS, Fiji, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Maldives) are at risk.

Sidney Conference Report 2018 and “Sidney Declaration of Principles on the Protection of Persons Displaced in the Context of Sea-Level Rise”:

- Primary duty and **responsibility of states** to protect and assist affected persons.
- Duty to **respect the human rights** of affected persons.
- **Evacuation** of affected persons and **planned relocations** of affected persons.

International legal framework for analysis of protection of persons affected by sea-level rise: International human rights law, IHL, International refugee law, International Migration law, International Climate change law.

Human rights constitute a general legal framework applicable and for that reason, it is on the top of the list. We have to look at **which human rights will be mostly affected**: right to life, right to health, cultural rights, right to water, right to freedom of movement, principle of non-refoulement.

Important role of **International Organizations (IOs)**: IOM, ICRC, UNHCR, OHCHR, PDR, World Bank.

There is an **opportunity for states and IOs** to provide information that could contribute to the work of the Commission. Any information on good practices concerning sea-level rise is welcomed.

The issue for SIDS is to **protect their own populations**. It will be a great challenge for them in the future.

Including **accountability for climate change** would be a risk for our project because it is a very highly sensitive and political issue.