TECHNICAL BRIEFING SUMMARY REPORT

Treaty on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters and Disaster Displacement
Monday 23 March 2026 | 14:00–15:00 | IFRC, Geneva

1. Overview, Background and Purpose

On 23 March 2026, the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD) and the Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law, in collaboration with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), hosted an in-person technical briefing in Geneva for representatives of Member States, United Nations (UN) organizations, PDD Advisory Committee Members and other key stakeholders on the proposed Treaty on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters (PPED Treaty).

In 2024, the UN General Assembly decided to elaborate and conclude a legally binding treaty on this topic by the end of 2027, based on the International Law Commission's 2016 Draft Articles (A/RES/79/128). Since that decision, States and other stakeholders have engaged in discussions and submitted written proposals to amend the draft text. The process is now entering a pre-negotiation phase ahead of the formal diplomatic conference in early 2027. In this context, the Sixth Committee session scheduled for 6–10 April 2026 in New York, which will consider a revised text, reflecting the proposals submitted, represents an important opportunity to consolidate areas of convergence and identify issues requiring further consideration.

The technical briefing was convened to provide an update on the status of the PPED Treaty process and next steps, and to create space for information-sharing among Geneva-based colleagues and exchange ahead of the UN Sixth Committee Working Group session. It discussed the scope of the PPED Treaty, considerations for protection of persons and international cooperation, and how displacement, and the protection of displaced persons, could feature in the evolving draft text.

The technical briefing was opened by the IFRC and the Government of Costa Rica in its capacity as Chair of the PDD and moderated by Professor Walter Kälin, Envoy of the Chair of the PDD. The panel discussion featured presentations by experts, followed by reflections and interventions from States and the European Union. The Government of Costa Rica, PDD and the IFRC provided closing remarks.

2. Key Insights

The briefing:

- underscored the importance of the PPED Treaty process as a significant development in the international legal framework governing disasters and the protection of affected persons;
- discussed the relevance of the PPED Treaty for strengthening international cooperation and clarifying responsibilities;
- emphasized the importance of keeping the protection needs of persons affected by disasters, at the centre of the PPED Treaty, and explored how displacement could be more clearly reflected in the evolving text;
- reinforced the value of State engagement both ahead of, and in a more sustained manner following, the April 2026 Sixth Committee Working Group session;

- demonstrated the direct relevance of the PPED Treaty for stakeholders working across policy and practice on the disaster risk management continuum, humanitarian response, protection and displacement;
- underscored the role of Geneva-based stakeholders in helping to ensure that the PPED Treaty is practical, reflects humanitarian considerations and strengthens the capacity of local actors; and
- reflected the strong interest among Geneva-based stakeholders in remaining informed and engaged as the PPED Treaty process moves forward.

3. Summary of Presentations and Exchange

In her opening remarks, **Caroline Holt**, Director of the Disaster, Climate and Crises Department at the IFRC, emphasized that disaster response and displacement are not only strategic priorities for the IFRC network, but also a daily operational reality for its 191 National Societies and 16 million volunteers worldwide. She noted that the IFRC responds to more than 400 disasters each year and supports tens of millions of people affected by crises, while also assisting more than 18 million migrants and displaced people annually, including many displaced in disaster contexts. She stressed that National Societies, as local actors, are often the first to respond and remain engaged long after international actors have left, including in support of longer-term recovery and solutions. She highlighted the PPED Treaty as an important opportunity to strengthen global solidarity across the disaster risk management continuum; reinforce disaster risk reduction before, during and after disasters; and facilitate fast, effective and coordinated international humanitarian assistance.

In his opening remarks on behalf of the Government of Costa Rica and as the Chair of the PDD Steering Committee, **Roberto Céspedes Gómez** noted the urgency and timeliness of the briefing. He emphasized that the human impacts and costs of disasters linked to natural hazards are increasing, including in the context of global warming, with more than 100 million people affected by disasters each year and more than 45 million people estimated to have been displaced in disaster contexts in 2024. He welcomed the 2024 UN General Assembly decision to elaborate a legally binding Treaty on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters by the end of 2027. Such a treaty when adopted will support and reinforce the objectives, work and strategic priorities of the PDD. He also highlighted the importance of the briefing as a space for Geneva-based exchange ahead of the 6–10 April 2026 session in New York, including discussion on how displacement and the protection of displaced persons could be reflected in the evolving draft text.

In her presentation, **Martina Müller**, Programme Manager, Partnerships, UNDRR, New York Liaison Office, noted that the PPED Treaty presents a potentially significant advance in the international legal body of instruments governing disasters. She emphasized that this is particularly important in the context of disaster risk reduction because the Sendai Framework, while highly influential, remains a non-binding and time-bound soft law instrument. In that sense, the PPED Treaty could help enshrine disaster risk reduction more firmly in international law, strengthening long-term accountability and action while reinforcing commitments already reflected in the Sendai Framework and related instruments. She also noted that Member State engagement in the process has been substantial: as of March 2026, 28 Member States and groupings had submitted amendment proposals, and these submissions, together with the

compilation document (A/80/610), provide an important basis for the next stage of consideration in the Sixth Committee Working Group.

Isabelle Granger, Global Lead, Disaster Law and Auxiliary Role at the IFRC, emphasized that the PPED Treaty offers an important opportunity to strengthen international law governing disaster protection by centring the protection of persons, including displaced persons, across the full disaster risk management continuum. She highlighted three priorities reflected in the IFRC amendment proposals to States: stronger protection and humanitarian assistance language; binding obligations on disaster risk reduction across sectors to help reduce disaster and displacement risks; and clearer facilitation measures for external assistance to ensure timely, effective and well-coordinated humanitarian action. She stressed that a stronger treaty in these areas would improve protection for people in vulnerable situations, reinforce domestic leadership and help save lives in disaster contexts.

Professor Jane McAdam, Director of the Evacuations Research Hub at the Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law, UNSW Sydney emphasized that displacement is a central and increasingly common consequence of disasters and should be explicitly reflected in the PPED Treaty. She noted that while disasters already drive very large-scale internal displacement, the current draft text refers to displacement only indirectly and risks omitting it altogether if the definition of "disaster" is revised. She noted that expressly acknowledging displacement in the text would help ensure that disaster risk reduction, response and recovery are designed with displaced people in mind, centring their lived experience while also providing an important interpretative framing and a hook for future action. Drawing on evolving State practice and regional frameworks, she proposed that the PPED Treaty should recognize evacuations and planned relocations as disaster risk reduction measures and include evacuation support and humanitarian and protection visas as forms of international cooperation. She stressed the practical implications for national law, operations, financing, diplomacy and international cooperation, helping to strengthen protection for people at risk and those displaced in disaster contexts.

Following the presentations, several States and the European Union took the floor and exchanged perspectives, welcoming the technical briefing, reiterating their commitment to develop and negotiate the new treaty, and noting its relevance in the present context of more disasters and the adverse effects of climate change. Participants stressed the importance of anchoring the PPED Treaty in the principles and standards of the UN Charter and other foundational UN documents, including respect for the principles of national sovereignty and human rights standards. Commitment to international cooperation was highlighted as a cornerstone of the new treaty. A task for the pre-negotiation phase is to agree on language and terminology in the draft text. Some States expressed interest in providing proposals for amendment. The exchange reflected strong interest among Geneva-based stakeholders in remaining informed and engaged as the PPED Treaty process moves forward, including for the organizers of this technical briefing to prepare another one in mid-2026.

In his role as moderator, **Professor Walter Kälin**, Envoy of the Chair of the PDD, closed the substantive session by reinforcing the importance of the PPED Treaty, including as a framework for strengthening international cooperation. He also noted the strong interest in Geneva in continued technical and policy exchange, including to help ensure that practical and humanitarian considerations are reflected in the evolving text.

4. Additional Resources

On the PPED Treaty process and State submissions:

- United Nations Diplomatic Conference on the Plenipotentiaries on Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters, established on the recommendation of the Sixth Committee
- International Law Commission, Draft Articles on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters, 2016. Commentaries to the Draft Articles are also available at the same link
- UN General Assembly Sixth Committee, Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters
- Proposals for amendments to the draft articles, submissions received
- Report of the United Nations Secretary General, Compilation of Proposals for Amendments to the Draft Articles on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters

Kaldor Centre and the IFRC Resources:

- Professor Jane McAdam, Incorporating Displacement into the PPED Treaty, remarks at the Technical Briefing, 23 March 2026
- UNSW Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law, Policy Brief 17: Foregrounding Displacement and Evacuations in the Proposed Treaty on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters, 2025
- IFRC, Proposals on Strengthening the Draft Articles, 2025
- IFRC Disaster Law webpage, Treaty on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters
- IFRC, Africa Regional Report, Forced to Flee in a Changing Climate, 2025
- IFRC, Asia Pacific Regional Report, Forced to Flee in a Changing Climate, 2025

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