

Statement by Marie Jacobsson, Special Rapporteur for the Protection of the
environment in relation to armed conflict.

ILC debate, UNGA 6th Committee 2 November 2016

Dear colleagues,

I would like to extend my thanks to all colleagues in the 6th Committee that have contributed to this year's **debate**, as well as for their contributions previous years. I would also like to thank those States that, over the years, have contributed in **writing** to the topic *Protection of the environment in relation to armed conflict*. Such contributions have been submitted either **formally**, through responses to the questions posed by the Commission, or **informally** (directly to me). I know how much work it takes to make such considerate contributions and I am therefore particularly grateful for them.

The contributions by States as expressed **orally** in the debate in the 6th Committee or **in writing** are **crucial for the Special Rapporteur** that works on a particular topic. But they are also of great importance to the **Commission as a whole**. Members of the Commission study the contributions closely and the contributions therefore form part of our own debate and work in the International Law Commission.

This year we have heard many and detailed statements in the 6th Committee, including on my topic. This has been particularly enriching. I have listen attentively to your constructive criticism and to your suggested amendments. I will not comment on your contributions now, but I will study them carefully and hope to be able to pass on my reflections to the next Special Rapporteur.

This year is a little special to me. As many of you know, this is my **last year on the Commission** and my last time at the podium as a Special Rapporteur. It is my wish and hope that the **new Commission to be elected tomorrow** will elect a **new Special Rapporteur** as soon as possible when it meets in Geneva next year. If the Commission so decides it could work on the draft principles provisionally adopted by the Drafting Committee this year and adopt them together with commentaries that we did not have the time to consider this year. If this is done, the topic will not lose momentum. Needless to say, this is for the **new Commission to decide**, but I have tried to do what I can to ensure that the topic can be taken up directly by the new Commission should it so wish.

In this context, I am therefore grateful to note that States have expressed a wish to see that the Commission appoints a new Special Rapporteur as soon as possible.

Finally, allow me to thank you for the kind words addressed to me. However, progress on a topic is not possible without support from other **Members** of the Commission, the excellent work by the **Secretariat**, the **interpreters** and the **translation** service. Last but not least, it would not have been possible without engagement of other UN entities such as **UNEP**, but also the **ICRC**. Research by **assistants, academicians, institutions** and *pro bono* contributions by skilled lawyers have been essential since a Special Rapporteur does not have any funding of his or her own.

With this I thank you, but hope to see you again next year – although no longer as a Member of the ILC.