

Translated from French

23 December 2021

Chapter III of the report of the International Law Commission on the work of its seventy-second session

Sea-level rise in relation to international law

Comments from Belgium

In paragraph 26 of its report on the work of its seventy-second session, the International Law Commission invited States to provide, by 31 December 2021, information on “their practice and other relevant information regarding sea-level rise in relation to international law, including on:

(a) practice with regard to the construction of artificial islands or measures to reinforce coastlines, in each case in order to take into account sea-level rise;

(b) instances of cession or allocation of territory, with or without transferral of sovereignty, for the settlement of persons originating from other States, in particular small island developing States, affected by sea-level rise;

(c) regional and national legislation, policies and strategies, as applicable, regarding the protection of persons affected by sea-level rise;

(d) practice, information and experience of relevant international organizations and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement regarding the protection of persons affected by sea-level rise;

(e) measures taken by third States with regard to small island developing States, in particular those affected by sea-level rise, including:

(i) modalities for cooperation or association with such States, including the possibility of persons travelling to, as well as establishing residency and developing professional activities in, such third States;

(ii) maintenance of the original nationality and/or access to the nationality or citizenship of

the third State; and

(iii) conservation of the cultural identity of such persons or groups.”

Belgium would like to provide the Commission with the following information:

(a) practice with regard to the construction of artificial islands or measures to reinforce coastlines, in each case in order to take into account sea-level rise:

The following coastal protection measures are being taken in Flanders:

The Master Plan for Coastal Safety, approved in 2011, which takes into account a sea-level rise of 30 cm, is aimed at protecting the coastline against heavy storms, and consequently against flooding, until 2050;

The Coastal Vision project¹, launched in 2017, which takes into account a sea-level rise of up to 3 m, is aimed at ensuring long-term protection for the coast and the hinterland against heavy storms beyond 2050.

(c) regional and national legislation, policies and strategies, as applicable, regarding the protection of persons affected by sea-level rise:

The Coastal Vision project, the Master Plan for Coastal Safety and the Sigma Plan², which is aimed at improving flood protection in Flanders by 2030, especially in relation to the Scheldt River and its tributaries, are the main programmes in place to protect Flanders from rising sea levels.

More information about coastal protection measures being taken in Flanders can be found here: [Coastal protection | Flanders.be \(vlaanderen.be\)](https://www.kustvisie.be)

¹ <https://www.kustvisie.be>

² <https://sigmaplan.be/en>