Egypt Votes in Favour of General Assembly Resolution Following up on the ICJ Advisory Opinion on Climate Change

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On 20 May 2026, during the 83rd plenary meeting of the 80th session of the UN General Assembly, the Assembly adopted a resolution "Advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the obligations of States in respect of climate change" (document A/80/L.65). The draft resolution was presented by Vanuatu on behalf of a core group of States leading the initiative. It aims to "translate the Court's findings into enhanced multilateral cooperation and accelerated climate action at all levels, consistent with international law".

The resolution was adopted by a recorded vote of 141 votes in favour, 8 against and 28 abstentions. The States voting against were Belarus, Iran, Israel, Liberia, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, the United States, and Yemen.

Prior to the adoption of the resolution, four amendments were introduced, namely:

- L.66 concerning operative paragraph 3;
- L.67 concerning operative paragraph 2;
- L.68 concerning operative paragraph 1; and
- L.69/Rev.1 concerning operative paragraph 4.

Upon the request of Vanuatu, amendments L.66 and L.69 were grouped together and put to a single vote as a package. Egypt voted in favour of both amendments. However, the package did not secure the required majority, receiving 53 votes in favour, 91 against, and 20 abstentions.

Similarly, amendments L.68 and L.67 did not obtain the necessary majority for adoption. However, Egypt was among States which voted against both amendments.

In its explanation of vote on the main draft resolution L.65, Egypt highlighted three principal points:

- **The ICJ Advisory Opinion on the Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change** is a historic turning point as it **provides an authoritative account of the primary rules of customary and conventional international law applicable to the protection of the climate system and the environment from anthropogenic greenhouse gases**. The Advisory Opinion confirms that the obstacle facing efforts to address climate crisis and achieve climate justice is the lack of political will and not the inadequacy of the legal and normative architecture on environmental protection.

Egypt therefore hopes that the Advisory Opinion will contribute to mobilizing the political support for taking effective action to address –referring to the Court– “an existential problem of planetary proportion that imperils all forms of life.”

- **Support to the authoritative determination by the Court of the scope and content of the rules of customary international law applicable to the protection of the climate system, other parts of the environment and transboundary resources, including the obligation not to cause significant harm. This obligation requires acting with due diligence and ensuring that projects and activities that has the potential of adversely affecting the environment are carried after conducting impact assessments and with prior notification and consultation with potentially affected states.**

  In this regard Egypt recalled and emphasized that **the obligation to prevent significant transboundary harm under customary international law is *erga omnes*.**

- Egypt supported the proposed amendment on operative paragraph 3 and expressed regret that it was not adopted. In that respect, **Egypt emphasized that the ICJ has determined that states parties to the (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement are bound to assist developing countries for the purposes of mitigation and adaptation. The conventional obligations are further reinforced by the duty of cooperation which is firmly established under customary international law.**

  Egypt highlighted that climate financing is –for itself and other developing countries– an urgent obligation and an urgent priority without which adaptation and transition will remain an unfulfilled promise. This obligation rests on the ‘Common But Differentiated Responsibilities’ (CBDR) principle as those which contributed most to the climate crisis bear the greatest responsibility to finance measures to respond to the climate crisis and mitigate its effects. Thus, pursuant to their obligations, developed states must honour their commitments and scale up financial assistance, capacity building, debt relief and technology transfer to enable developing countries to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.

For a contextual background, the ICJ has issued an advisory opinion on the obligation of states in respect of climate change on 23 July 2025.

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