

Best Delegate Model United Nations

Background Guide

Natural Disasters



Social, Cultural, and Humanitarian (SOCHUM)

Topic: Natural Disasters

Topic Background

Key Words:

Natural Disaster: a natural event such as a flood, earthquake, or hurricane that causes great damage or loss of life.

Climate Change: a change in global or regional climate patterns, in particular a change apparent from the mid to late 20th century onwards and attributed largely to the increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide produced by the use of fossil fuels.¹

Greenhouse Gas: Any of the atmospheric gases that contribute to the **greenhouse effect** by absorbing infrared radiation produced by solar warming of the Earth's surface. They include carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), and water vapor.

Greenhouse Effect: an atmospheric heating phenomenon, caused by short-wave solar radiation being readily transmitted inward through the earth's atmosphere but longer-wavelength heat radiation less readily transmitted outward, owing to its absorption by atmospheric carbon dioxide, water vapor, methane, and other gases; thus, the rising level of carbon dioxide is viewed with concern.

Renewable Resource: a natural resource that is unlimited or that is naturally replenished rather quickly, such as sunlight or water

Fossil Fuel: any combustible organic material, as oil, coal, or natural gas, derived from the remains of former life.²

Climate Gentrification: the process of wealthier, often whiter populations moving to areas less exposed to the effects of climate change that were previously occupied by lower-income residents and communities of color, thus exacerbating displacement and disparities.³

Introduction

The number and frequency of **natural disasters** has more than tripled from thirty years ago, with the damage becoming more and more costly. In 2019 alone, reinsurance agency MunichRe registered 820 natural disasters causing insured losses. Since 1980, approximately \$5

¹ Oxford English Dictionary. <https://www.oed.com/>

² <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/renewable-resource>

³ <https://www.eli.org/vibrant-environment-blog/climate-gentrification-and-resilience-planning-what-stake-risk-communities#:~:text=In%20some%20cases%2C%20such%20as.by%20lower%20income%20residents%20and>

Trillion dollars worth of damages have been incurred by natural disasters worldwide.⁴ Due to rapidly increasing global temperatures, the lack of government incentives to preserve **renewable resources**, and utilize green energy; these problems are only set to become even worse in the coming years. The cultivation and combustion of **fossil fuels** such as coal, oil, and natural gas serve to uphold the status quo of public reliance on non-sustainable energy sources that are polluting the natural world.

Recent History of the Topic

On Wednesday, November 11th, 2020 Typhoon Vamco made landfall in the Philippines, causing more than 180,000 people to evacuate. This typhoon is the fifth storm to hit the Philippines within three weeks, and it devastated the same 1.6 million people affected by Super Typhoon Goni, just 10 days prior. At least 16 people are confirmed to be missing, injured or killed.⁵ The severity and frequency of natural disasters in recent years only confirms what climate scientists have been fearing for decades; that **climate change** has and will continue to exacerbate the frequency and severity of natural disasters, unless seriously mitigated.

The 22 or more forest fires ravaging California and 12 other states since August 2020 have burned over 4 million acres cumulatively. This number exceeds all previously recorded annual statistics dating back to 1987; and doubles the record prior.⁶ The effects of climate change such as annual rising temperatures - which are often a result of the **Greenhouse Effect** - and an increase in drought conditions have only helped the immense spread of the current fires, and increase the threat of more serious wildfire complications in the future. As stated in National Geographic's recent article on the subject, "Lower precipitation and warmer air temperatures dry the forests and other vegetation. Add strong winds and decades of fire suppression into the mix and you have a dangerous recipe for wildfire."⁷

In late August of 2019, Hurricane Dorian (pictured below)⁸ was originally set to hit Puerto Rico and the state of Florida as no more than a category 2 or 3 storm. However, when Dorian made landfall in the Bahamas on September 1st as a category 5, it made a catastrophic impact on the small Abaco Islands, and Grand Bahama Island. The island nation suffered more than \$3.4 billion USD of damages between infrastructural losses and destruction of assets. Almost 30,000 individuals were affected by the



⁴ <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/09/natural-disasters-global-risks-2019>

⁵ <https://www.cnn.com/2020/11/12/asia/typhoon-vamco-philippines-intl/index.html>

⁶ <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/california-exceeds-4-million-acres-burned-wildfires-2020-n1242078>

⁷ <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/2020/09/climate-change-increases-risk-fires-western-us/#close>

⁸ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/marshallshepherd/2019/09/09/hurricane-dorian-caused-a-human-tragedy-in-the-bahamaswhy-arent-we-hearing-more-about-it/?sh=70480d8f4b10>

destruction, resulting in increased homelessness and displacement. As of October 18th, 2019, 67 were confirmed dead and 282 people missing as a result of Hurricane Dorian. Other nearby islands such as the Lesser Antilles, and Puerto Rico also suffered heavy rains and winds but not nearly as much infrastructural destruction of property.⁹

In 2012, Hurricane Sandy hit the east coast of the United States. Unlike the San Andreas Fault, which causes schoolchildren in California to conduct earthquake drills, or the yearly hurricane season that, while often devastating, that helps Florida homeowners prepare for major storms by planning and marking evacuation routes and buying water stockpiles and other emergency supplies, the East Coast wasn't ready for Sandy. Homes were not built to accommodate flooding, and as a result many had to be completely rebuilt, or are still in shambles.¹⁰ People did not know how to evacuate, or where to go, and as a result many suffered injury or even died. The impact of Hurricane Sandy showed how in the global unstable climate context (increasingly strong storms and natural disasters caused by climate change), it is more important than ever that all communities be ready in case of a natural disaster.¹¹

The Problem at Hand

“At least 207 natural disasters were recorded globally in the first six months of 2020 — this is above the 21st century average (2000-2019) of 185 disasters. The number of events exceeded average in all regions except the Americas.”¹²

Global climate change, caused by human emission of CO₂ - a **greenhouse gas** - has shifted many of the global storm cycles that lead to increasingly strong storms. In 2017 alone, natural disasters caused horrifying damage in Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands after Hurricanes Maria and Irma tore through them, an earthquake in Mexico claimed hundreds of lives and caused millions of dollars in damage, Monsoon flooding in Bangladesh, Nepal, and India claimed the lives of thousands of people and caused one of the worst regional humanitarian crises in years, and flooding and landslides left more than 2,000 people homeless in Sierra Leone. While it is impossible to prevent events like storms, hurricanes, and floods from happening, it is possible for governments and individuals to work to reduce the risk they pose to communities.¹³

Past International Actions

The Sustainable Development Goals & SDG 11

⁹<https://www.iadb.org/en/news/damages-and-other-impacts-bahamas-hurricane-dorian-estimated-34-billion-report#:~:text=The%20%243.4%20billion%20impact%20was,per%20cent%20of%20the%20damage>.

¹⁰ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/oct/27/hurricane-sandy-five-years-later-climate-change>

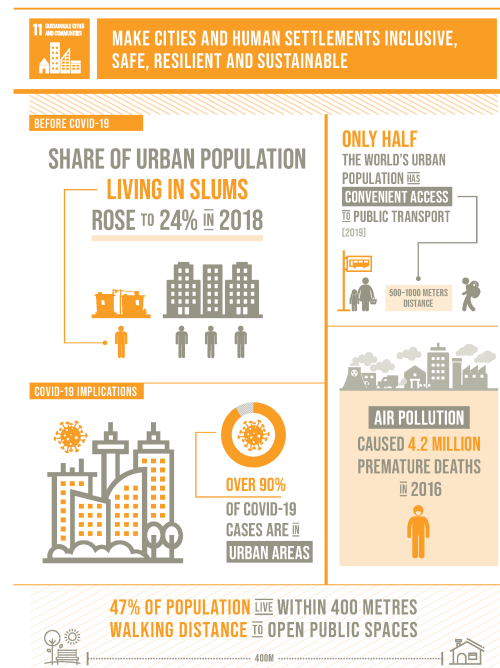
¹¹ <http://time.com/4933743/hurricane-irma-climate-change-global-warming/>

¹²<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/climate-change/more-than-200-natural-disasters-across-world-in-1st-half-of-2020-72445>

¹³ “The Deadliest Natural Disasters of 2017.” *Telegraph*. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/stem-awards/design/deadliest-natural-disasters/>

SDG 11 pledges to “make all human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.” Natural disaster risk reduction in both the long and short term is vital to ensuring the completion of Sustainable Development Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities. While the concept of disaster risk reduction is, in itself, assisting in making human settlements more resilient, addressing this issue also requires addressing the other parts of this goal: making cities more inclusive, safe, and sustainable. A vital part of ensuring the success of disaster risk reduction programmes is making sure that they are evenly prioritized and tailored to minority populations, in the process ensuring that the human settlements which are being assessed for disaster risk reduction are inclusive of these populations in and of themselves.¹⁴ Similarly,

efforts to ensure that infrastructure is strong enough to withstand a storm will increase the general quality of infrastructure and living spaces in communities engaging with disaster risk reduction.



Here are some of the targets highlighted within SDG 11:

- By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums;
- ...provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons;
- ...enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries;
- Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage;
- ...significantly reduce the number of deaths and...direct economic losses...caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations;
- ...reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management;
- ...provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.¹⁵

¹⁴ “Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities.” UNDP. <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-11-sustainable-cities-and-communities.html>

¹⁵ “SDG 11.” United Nations. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal11>

The Work of the UN



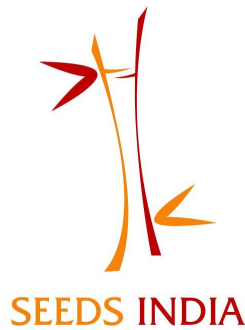
The UN has taken action on disaster risk response, even creating an office specifically tasked with focusing on the issue. The United Nations office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) was established in 1999 and given the mandate to serve as the central point in the UN system for coordination of disaster relief and ensuring smooth collaboration between the disaster-reduction activities of the UN system, NGOs, and activities in the socio-economic and humanitarian fields.¹⁶ The UNISDR's most important accomplishment to date is the development of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), which is a framework for disaster risk reduction approved by the UN in 2005, focusing on 5 priorities for action.¹⁷ These priorities ensure that DRR is a national and local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation. By reducing the underlying risk factors for natural disaster, and strengthening disaster preparedness and effective response at all levels, lives can be saved. The draft framework provides an excellent starting point for mobilization, but has faced problems with lack of resources and difficulty prioritizing. The UNISDR and HFA require coordination between all sectors of civil society, from institutions of finance, to education.

While the Hyogo Framework laid the basic foundation of priorities on disaster risk reduction, it was replaced by the Sendai Framework in 2015, which set concrete targets that frame the results the global community would like to see from disaster risk reduction plans. These targets included substantially reducing global disaster mortality, for every 100,000 people on earth for 2020-2030 compared to 2005-2015. It does so by proposing a reduction in direct economic loss in relation to global gross domestic product, an increase in the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies, and enhanced global cooperation.

The Work of NGOs, International Organizations, and Civil Society

¹⁶ <https://www.unisdr.org/who-we-are/mandate>

¹⁷ <https://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/1037>

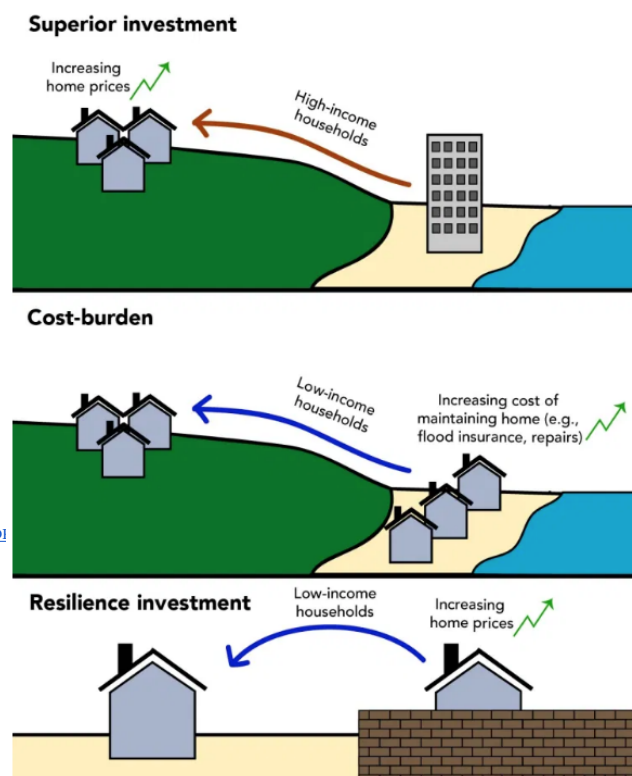


NGOs are key actors in the disaster risk reduction system, with one UNISDR highlighting how NGOs have proven useful to their own framework because they have higher operational flexibility, work on behalf of the most needy groups, and can operate at a grassroots level.¹⁸ Unfortunately, many of the NGOs dealing with disaster risk reduction operate at a local or regional level, and have had trouble gaining legitimacy from governments, or a seat at the table when it comes to high level discussions about the best strategies for DRR. Despite these challenges, projects like the Gujarat School Safety Initiative, sponsored by the NGO *SEEDS*, have been successful. The Gujarat School Safety Initiative worked with schoolchildren and teachers in Gujarat State in India, which had been hit by an extremely damaging earthquake in 2001. This initiative was developed to increase understanding and preparedness on natural disaster protocols. NGOs like *SEEDS* working to give local communities the tools they need to train on disaster risk reduction on their own, is an important step forward in making sure the DRR process is inclusive.¹⁹

Sub-Topics to Consider

Sub-Topic 1: Climate Change & Gentrification

Annually rising temperatures only increase the risk of droughts and water insecurity globally. This also heightens the risk for wildfires and lightning strikes to intensify in severity and duration. Warmer global ocean temperatures allow for higher wind speeds and worsening hurricane seasons, as seen in the Caribbean and South Eastern United States. An increase in frequency of hurricanes leads to a more rapid erosion of coastal land, and



¹⁸ https://www.unisdr.org/2008/partner-netw/ngos/meeting1-october-2006/NGOs_and_DI

¹⁹ Ibid.

displacement of communities.²⁰

The degradation of community infrastructure following natural disasters puts an average 14 million people at risk of displacement annually.²¹ While disaster relief efforts headed by organizations like the Red Cross often focus on mitigating short-term problems, the long term effect on local communities cannot be overstated. The loss of loved ones, job security, housing, and food security are all potential outcomes for communities impacted by natural disasters. Mental health and post-disaster trauma counselors, construction teams, and youth education initiatives all have pivotal roles to play in the reduction of permanent housing insecurity within impoverished communities, following natural disasters.

One of the key issues when it comes to climate change and the increasing prevalence of natural disasters in certain parts of the world, is the economic fallout that follows. For example, Miami, Florida is notoriously prone to Hurricanes, water damage, flooding, and is currently mitigating a rising sea level of over 1 inch every 3 years.²² In cities where climate change and natural disasters pose frequent threats to daily life, the value of properties in safer locations far from the eroding coastline goes up immensely. This often attracts developers looking to turn a quick profit constructing high-rise apartments for high-cost lifestyles; displacing the original inhabitants of such communities. Neighborhoods like Little Haiti and Overtown within the city of Miami are prime examples of this phenomenon taking place. Rather than providing the infrastructure and capital investment necessary for these communities to thrive on their own, profiteers instead allow vested interests to prevail over those of the community.²³ This phenomenon can also occur when city-planners turn abandoned railways, or wasted plots of land into urban greenspaces. While the original purpose of these projects like the Highline in New York City, is to provide an oasis for the community; they often lead to the displacement of low-income families in favor of high-end businesses and residents that will enjoy this new green space amenity.

Other stark examples of this include:

- Approximately, “100,000 Black New Orleans residents [being] permanently displaced from their homes due to the destruction of affordable housing following [Hurricane Katrina in 2005]. This included the razing of some developments that saw no significant damage as part of the city’s rebuilding strategy.”²⁴
 - Hurricane damage was positively associated with the likelihood of a New Orleans neighborhood having gentrified 10 years after Katrina. This suggests that natural disasters can sometimes pave the way for gentrification, uprooting

[20https://www.usgs.gov/faqs/how-can-climate-change-affect-natural-disasters-1?qt-news_science_products=0#qt-news_science_products](https://www.usgs.gov/faqs/how-can-climate-change-affect-natural-disasters-1?qt-news_science_products=0#qt-news_science_products)

[21https://www.nrc.no/news/2017/october/disasters-will-displace-14-million-people-every-year/#~:text=According%20to%20the%20report%2C%20over%20tropical%20cyclones%20in%20recent%20years.](https://www.nrc.no/news/2017/october/disasters-will-displace-14-million-people-every-year/#~:text=According%20to%20the%20report%2C%20over%20tropical%20cyclones%20in%20recent%20years.)

[22https://sealevelrise.org/states/florida/#~:text=In%20the%20last%20decade%2C%20the%20risen%20by%20another%206%20inches.](https://sealevelrise.org/states/florida/#~:text=In%20the%20last%20decade%2C%20the%20risen%20by%20another%206%20inches.)

[23http://sitn.hms.harvard.edu/flash/2019/climate-newest-gentrifying-force-effects-already-re-shaping-cities/](http://sitn.hms.harvard.edu/flash/2019/climate-newest-gentrifying-force-effects-already-re-shaping-cities/)

[24https://www.nrdc.org/stories/what-climate-gentrification#~:text=The%20rebuilding%20of%20New%20Orleans.a%20city%20in%20U.S.%20history.](https://www.nrdc.org/stories/what-climate-gentrification#~:text=The%20rebuilding%20of%20New%20Orleans.a%20city%20in%20U.S.%20history.)

existing populations en masse and wiping out infrastructure. Developers can swoop in afterward and invest in properties at lower prices and build higher-end projects meant to attract a wealthier population.²⁵

- The 606 in Chicago,
- The Atlanta BeltLine
- Houston's Buffalo Bayou Park²⁶

Sub-Topic 2: Disaster Risk Reduction

Disaster risk reduction is defined by the UN as “the conceptual framework of elements considered with the possibilities to minimize vulnerabilities and disaster risks throughout a society, to avoid (prevention) or to limit (mitigation and preparedness) the adverse impacts of hazards, within the broad context of sustainable development.” In simpler terms, disaster risk reduction addresses the problem of natural disasters by working before natural disasters happen to make sure that communities and infrastructure are as prepared as possible for their adverse impacts, and that development happens in such a way that it promotes responsiveness and adaptation to the changing natural environment.²⁷

To exemplify how disaster risk reduction can help prevent the adverse impacts of natural disasters from interrupting people's lives and nations' economies, consider the example of a large city like



Mumbai²⁸, India. In Mumbai, many buildings are built solidly, with strong foundations and steel and iron girding. However, the places in Mumbai that have been reached less by international development, such as the slums on its outskirts, are full of buildings that are not infrastructurally sound, that are slipshod or practically lean-tos. If a disaster were to hit Mumbai, it is more likely that the slums, which are less developed, would face massive destruction than the larger, sturdier buildings. This thought experiment illustrates in one city a problem that is worldwide: newer buildings and areas that are more developed often have the resources or capacity to be built in such a way that if a natural disaster hits, they will remain strong. However, in developing countries, not only is infrastructure less secure, but a lack of resources means that there are less

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-10-10/why-greenway-parks-cause-greater-gentrification>

²⁷ <https://www.unisdr.org/who-we-are/what-is-drr>

²⁸ <https://www.indiabullsrealestate.com/blog/5-reasons-that-make-mumbai-the-most-livable-city-in-india/mumbai/>

likely to be the political and emergency response infrastructure and planning in place to respond to natural disasters quickly.²⁹

Disaster risk reduction spans a wide variety of initiatives and issues, ranging from the very local (disaster response plans, mobilization of community resources) to globally interdependent (complex tracking and prediction schemes for storms and tectonic plate movements, global development initiatives) . However, it faces many problems in its implementation, including governance, priorities, and differing cultural contexts.³⁰



Prioritization is the first key issue faced by the international community when it comes to addressing disaster risk reduction. Prioritization is vital to successful disaster risk reduction because it is impossible to prepare every city in the world for every possible disaster. It would be a waste of valuable resources to protect Mongolia, a landlocked country, from a tsunami, just as it would be to protect Japan from desertification. Governments and other organizations have to decide what kind of disaster risk reduction to invest in, and in what communities. This can cause many problems, ranging from politicians giving preferential treatment and more comprehensive disaster risk reduction to the communities their constituents live in, to inaccurate data sets causing errors in prioritization as weather or tectonic patterns change, rendering investment useless . Finding an effective and fair way to prioritize investment in disaster risk reduction is key to ensuring that as many people as possible are able to live safely, without fear of the negative effects of natural disasters.³¹

²⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/12/us/fema-puerto-rico-maria.html>

³⁰<https://www.nat-hazards-earth-syst-sci.net/13/2707/2013/nhess-13-2707-2013.pdf>

³¹ Ibid.

Governance is the next key issue that must be resolved to fully ensure that disaster risk reduction is carried out successfully on a global scale. No single group or organization can administrate every aspect of disaster risk reduction in every country and community that needs it. It is therefore vital that organizations of both the public and the private nature come together to effectively cooperate towards this goal. The international community agrees that national governments should be the driving actors in disaster risk reduction, and should have the impetus to coordinate the work of other organizations acting within their territory or with their communities.³² However, this becomes complicated when international and supranational organizations, like the UN and EU, or NGOs like Doctors Without Borders or the International Red Cross try to coordinate with a nation's sovereign government. Though it is unquestionable that governments have sovereign right to govern their own territory, it is difficult to say where the line is drawn in humanitarian interventions: do NGOs need permission to enter a territory the same way another government would?³³ What happens if a government does not have the capacity to coordinate its own emergency response or worse, is not willing to? These questions keep disaster risk reduction from being fully implemented at the international level.

Finally, differing cultural contexts pose a key barrier to the implementation of disaster risk management. While there are many emergency response NGOs that are able to respond to a variety of contexts, these often value the adaptability and flexibility that comes with working under an NGO as opposed to with a government. Designing disaster risk management schema means different things to different communities.³⁴ At the most basic level, distinctions between levels of government (i.e. local, state, and national) may differ radically between countries. At more complex levels, cultural sensitivities or the unique experiences and practices of minority groups, and their relationships with their own governments, may make some development practices or emergency response plans completely implementable. For these reasons, it is not possible to make a comprehensive “disaster risk reduction guidebook” that applies to every country and every context. Instead, disaster risk reduction, and the development tied into it, must give nations the tools to develop their own plans and responses and tailor them to their own unique contexts.

The issue of natural disaster risk reduction is one that is vital to solve in order to guarantee that more lives are not lost to the destruction of natural disasters. With more and more impactful storms, weather patterns, and seismic activity caused by human intervention, natural disaster risk reduction is the only way to ensure that the next natural disaster does not cause massive loss of life, property, and productivity.

Sub-Topic 3: Clean Water & Sanitation

³² <https://eird.org/esp/acerca-eird/liderazgo/perfil/what-is-drr.html>

³³ <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/the-international-law-of-disaster-relief/the-role-of-international-organizations-in-disaster-response-a-case-study-of-recent-earthquakes-in-japan/0B00FBF05E7A938AF0493F9C8CF84809>

³⁴ Ibid.

Natural disasters can contaminate water supplies with animal waste, sewage, chemical runoff, and other man-made contaminants. Flooding and extreme winds can destroy sanitation infrastructure, leading to the increased presence of diseases within a community. These factors can exacerbate the strain on local health systems and hospitals in the wake of a natural disaster.³⁵ The same factors can have numerous adverse health effects, which, when compounded with the effects of the initial natural disaster, have the capacity to devastate societies. Methods to prepare for natural disasters and preserve clean water supplies are critical to the sustainability of the international community moving forward.

Possible Solutions

Disaster risk reduction is inextricably linked to many aspects of the Post-2015 development agenda, because all of the long-term solutions to this issue require heavy investment and coordination to ensure that cities and other communities are developed in a way that makes them as resilient as possible to potential disasters. Improving the existing frameworks for disaster risk reduction while exploring new methods must be done with an eye for both short term and long term solutions if disaster risk reduction is to be successful in the long term.

Like the Hyogo Framework for Action, disaster risk reduction initiatives must begin with short term solutions. There is little use for long term development initiatives if the communities that the international order is trying to develop are destroyed by wave after wave of natural disasters in the short term. Working with NGOs and civil society to create education initiatives and spread public awareness of disaster relief plans are vital to ensuring that each person in a settlement has the opportunity and resources needed to stay safe in a potential natural disaster. In the short term, governments need to find ways to incentivize efforts at both the national and local level to create disaster-preparedness plans, and strengthen responses tailored to each community, as well as developing the capacity for these communities to act. These education initiatives can range from extremely simple to very complex, from telling schoolchildren the safest places to shelter during earthquakes, to developing complex training on emergency relief efforts so that communities and NGOs are ready to act when disasters do happen.



Long term solutions in partnership with other development initiatives are also vital to the success of disaster risk reduction. While planning for disaster management is an excellent stop-gap measure, long term development combined with urban planning designed to reduce the impact of natural disasters on buildings and other infrastructure is vital to the ability of the global community

[p-water-system#:~:text=Natural%20disasters%2C%20including%20foods%2C%20hurricanes,%2C%20chemical](#)

to accomplish SDG 13 (combating climate change) and design human settlements that are truly resilient. One of the only ways to acquire the resources needed to accomplish this goal is through public private partnerships (PPPs), where corporations and governments work together to accomplish a goal using agreements that provide them a mutual benefit. In the case of disaster risk management, the combination of public private partnerships aimed at increasing the number of businesses developing human settlements in a country with potential regulations requiring certain safety features (i.e. using “earthquake proof” foundations in cities near fault zones, which are more flexible and therefore more resilient than a standard concrete slab formation) on all new buildings, can combine to both incentivize development along certain safety and risk reduction standards, and encourage the retrofitting of older cities and settlements with resiliency measures in areas that are already developed.

In long term solution planning, we find one of the clear divides in addressing disaster risk reduction and relief efforts: that between developed and developing countries and communities. This is an issue in terms of both prioritization and development strategy, as the international community and national governments have to decide between preserving existing communities, and assisting in the development of new infrastructure. Retrofitting disaster resistant architecture into existing structures, especially those with historic characteristics, can prove to be much more expensive and difficult than building new ones, and so cities like New York and London remain less resistant to natural disasters than those like Dubai.

Additionally, the question of burden of payment remains unanswered; while countries agree they should collaborate on disaster risk reduction, it is unclear who will bear the cost of these projects when they are undertaken by a national team. Larger countries like the US, who have the domestic funds (both private and public) to meet their own development and risk reduction goals, may be hesitant to contribute to pooled funds. Since the UNISDR, as a UN Agency, takes a large part of its budget from the donations of individual countries, this poses a large problem. Developed countries do not want to donate to initiatives that do not benefit their cities (despite the limited resources of the UNISDR, which may be more effectively allocated in the developing world), and developing countries feel it is unfair for UN funds to aid nations that can help themselves. This creates a dramatic divide between funding strategy and prioritization of the programmes that can actually happen. Finding incentives for both groups to work together will be vital to solving this issue.

It is not just encouraging collaboration that is important to solving this issue, but the harnessing of technological development, stable education initiatives, and building on the existing frameworks for disaster risk reduction. Delegates must prioritize global need and risk management so that no more lives are lost to natural disasters.

Questions to Consider & Further Reading

Questions to Consider

1. What is Climate Gentrification, and which communities does it impact most?
2. What is Disaster Risk Reduction? Who does it benefit?
3. How does climate change affect the strength and frequency of natural disasters? What are ways we can mitigate this?
4. What are the main initiatives proposed in SDG 11?
5. Why would a slum be more vulnerable to natural disasters than a city?

Further Reading

- [Solutions for Climate Gentrification](#)
- [SDG 11](#)
- [UN Disaster Risk Reduction](#)
- [Hyogo Framework for Action](#)
- [UNSDR Strategic Framework 2016-2021](#)
- [Natural Disasters During a Global Pandemic](#)
- [Red Cross Disaster Relief](#)