

United Nations Development Programme

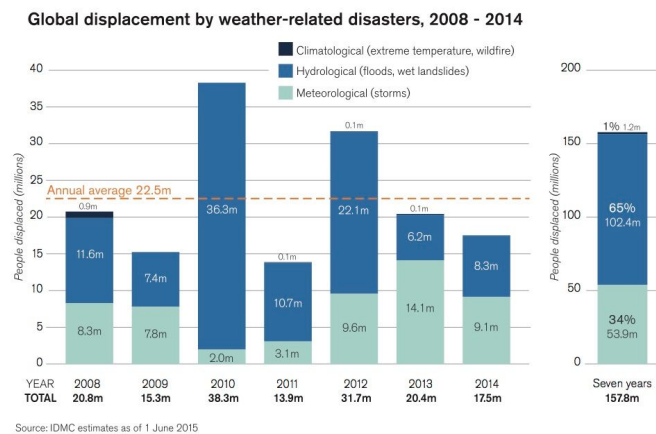
MetMUNC XLVIII

Topic: Disaster Preparedness

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Over the last two decades, over 1.3 million people and two trillion dollars have been lost to natural disasters.¹ Even though disasters can occur anywhere, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) states that 85% of people exposed to disasters live in developing countries.¹ This is a huge issue, because often these developing countries are already dealing with widespread poverty, a lack of educational resources, and thus few ways to prepare themselves for a potential disaster. UNDP is working on ways to help these developing countries create ways to prepare themselves for disaster, as well as educating the citizens of these nations about disaster preparedness.



Natural disasters have significant effects globally

Obviously, a natural disaster is never a positive occurrence, in any part of the world. However, the effects of a disaster are much more drastic in a developing nation. In the aftermath of a natural disaster, affected areas require large amounts of assistance from their government. In

¹https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/crisis%20prevention/disaster/asia_pacific/Issue%20BriefpreparednessJuly242013.pdf

a wealthy nation, systems exist in which this help can be provided relatively quickly and easily. The government has organizations that bring food, water, and medical care to victims, and rehabilitate communities. They also have officials with knowledge of how to coordinate these relief efforts. However, this assistance cannot be provided if the government is short on funds, or if government officials do not have the necessary skills or systems to provide relief, as is the case in many developing nations.² These are some of the reasons why in the past 20 years, 90% of disaster-related deaths occurred in developing countries.³ Social effects besides mortality include famine and malnourishment, and children being pulled out of school to help their families.

Additionally, many people in developing nations have moved to urban areas to seek work, but the infrastructure in these areas is often not properly built, and is vulnerable to collapse. The poor infrastructure in developing nations also means that when a natural disaster occurs, it is more likely to destroy houses, schools, factories, bridges, etc., than in a more wealthy nation. Damage to farmland hurts agricultural economies, and discourages farmers from investing in their practice.

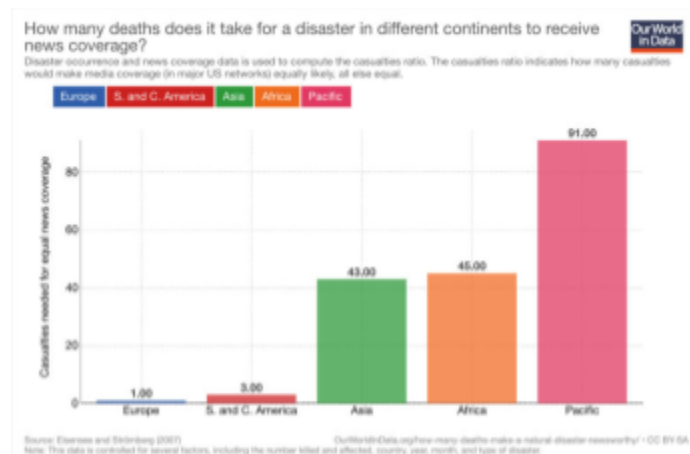
Recovery from a natural disaster is very expensive. To help developing nations make economically responsible decisions during this recovery process, the UN, World Bank, and European Union collaborated to create the Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) in 2008. By documenting what was lost, and what is available to help replace it, the PDNA guides recovery, and ensures that money from the affected government, the UN, and charitable organizations is being put to good use. The UNDP has coordinated 15 PDNAS since 2016, and constantly trains

² https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318862730_Natural_Disasters_and_Less_Developed_Countries

³ <https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/04/01/what-are-china-s-cyber-capabilities-and-intentions-pub-78734>

new members in how to implement one effectively. In a region in which UNDP has already had an influence, and created strong systems for recovery, the PDNA can be very effective.

The UNDP has taken steps to help with disaster preparedness by working with communities to teach them about disaster and give them steps to prepare for one. In Malawi, over 50 committees have been set up to teach citizens about disaster preparedness and outline evacuation routes and local hazards. In India, a disaster management programme has been set up by the UNDP, and has taught over 9,000 volunteers how to give emergency first aid.¹ In efforts such as these, the UNDP not only focuses on specifics, but gives general training to help trainees know how to act under duress and communicate effectively with those in need of help. The idea is that if citizens are able to help one another during and after a disaster, less government assistance will be required. The UNDP also makes offering training to all genders and races a priority.⁴



There is a clear divide between the regions as to how many deaths are required to make a disaster serious enough for news coverage.

UNDP is also working with many governments to develop ways to prepare for disaster. In Yemen, the UNDP set up a national authority to train and hire staff, and to provide equipment necessary to help in a disaster. In Pakistan, the UNDP assisted the government in setting up a satellite-based tsunami warning system, as well as conducting evacuation drills, so that the

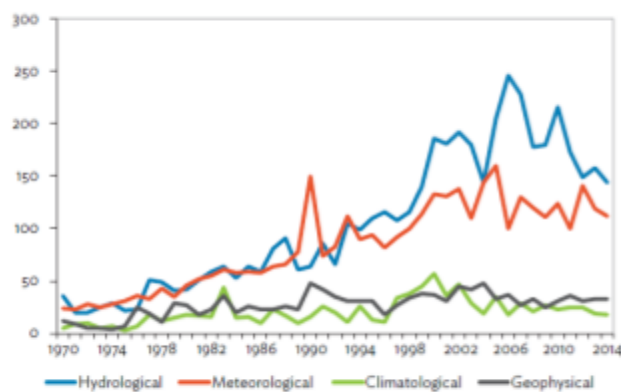
⁴<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/2030-agenda-for-sustainable-development/planet/disaster-risk-reduction-and-recovery/disaster-risk-reduction.html>

country can respond quicker in emergency based situations. In the Maldives, the UNDP trained staff in meteorology, and set up a warning system that required the use of their new skills to track incoming storms. In Uzbekistan, the UNDP developed a mobile phone system that dictates what to do before, during, and after an emergency.¹

All of these initiatives are tied together by one common theme: the UNDP is not trying to respond to disasters after they occur. They are trying to provide nations with the information and resources they need to help themselves out of a crisis, by training their governments and citizens in ways to properly respond to emergencies. While UNDP helps coordinate efforts with NGOs and other UN organizations to provide relief to disaster-stricken areas, it is not their primary focus.

Education as a method of disaster control has many proven benefits. Kids that are taught how to act during and after an emergency are likely to retain that information throughout their entire life, and to share it with their parents.⁵ Adults can be taught how to care for themselves and their families in sessions at workplaces or other public areas. Government officials can be taught how to keep their government running even during power outages. In the Philippines in 2006, school programs that taught children how to

Figure 1: Global Frequency of Natural Disasters by Type (1970–2014)



The number of natural disasters has surged since the 70s.

⁵ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6512217/>

recognize the signs of an imminent natural disaster were proven to be successful when families knew to evacuate before a landslide hit.⁶

In a world in which the amount of natural disasters is expected to increase by 320 percent over the next 20 years, such efforts are very necessary.⁵

The United States Developmental Programme has also set up partnerships with organizations like the World Bank to help bring materials like food and water to disaster-affected areas. The UNDP works with global shipping companies such as Deutsche Post/DHL to create a system that helps airports prepare for emergencies and use them as communication/evacuation centers to get supplies and people out quickly and safely. This system focuses on training airport staff and officials on how to deal with emergency preparedness and how to be ready for a situation.

This committee will aim to find ways to help countries become better prepared for natural disasters. Obviously, there is no way to prevent natural phenomena from actually occurring, but there are ways to help less developed nations deal with the aftermath of them. Delegates will need to determine how to institute effective disaster-preparedness plans in nations where such plans may be insufficient.

⁶ <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2012/10/31/prioritizing-education-in-the-face-of-natural-disasters/>

Questions to Consider:

1. Does your country have any systems in place to prepare for emergencies? What are they?
2. Is your country effectively prepared to deal with a potential natural disaster? Why or why not?
3. Is your country and the people in it trained in disaster preparedness? If so, in what ways are they prepared?
4. What type of natural disasters affect your country and how many people are affected by them each year?
5. How has your nation responded to any past natural disasters it was affected by?

Helpful Links:

- https://www.huffpost.com/entry/deaths-in-disasters-5-times-higher-in-low-income-countries-than-high-income-countries-data_n_57ff8be4e4b0e8c198a64ceb?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAGQWcgq59faEPATAOgsjamYMURT58iI9zaVQLSh1e18Omd7tpDOukmdpvaCbDfzjx2yBU3H17ewk7H-iqKeUxDgaUor9_By2RLChg17SqLxBrJPKC9s0XmRBD2d_kdH-j-cf3Gcv92XD-7geREoJih5SR6WsmLmM5V3HihJnMfPT
- https://journals.lww.com/ccmjournal/Abstract/2005/01001/Worldwide_disaster_medical_response__An_historical.2.aspx
- <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/crisis%20prevention/20130712UNDPsupporttoHyogoframework.pdf>
- <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/2030-agenda-for-sustainable-development/planet/disaster-risk-reduction-and-recovery.html>