



General Assembly

Distr.: Upper Elementary – Sept 2020

Original: English

Second Committee – Economic and Financial

This committee wants to improve the world economy to help the poor. They discuss how national, regional and international economies affect the world. They also focus on countries that have special needs. Some examples are the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) or the Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs).

This group believes people in poverty do not have to be poor forever. For this reason, they focus on how developing nations can improve their economies. They also find ways to directly help people in poverty. They might talk about how to help countries get access to money. Or, they might find ways that technology can help countries develop faster.

This committee works closely with the UN Economic and Social Council. Some of the resolutions they have passed deal with sustainable development, harmony with nature, and migration.

Agenda Item 19.C – Sustainable Development: Disaster Risk Reduction

Background

Natural hazards are normal. These can include tsunamis, floods, earthquakes, storms, heat waves, extreme cold, landslides, wildfires, and volcanoes. Disasters are what sometimes happens after a hazard. Disasters often happen because of not planning for hazards or not responding properly after a natural hazard. It is when the lives of people are at risk and the affected community is unable to cope with the situation. Sometimes there is nothing anybody can do to stop a situation from turning into a disaster. However, disaster risk reduction aims to reduce those chances.

The largest disaster after a natural hazard in the 20th century were the 1931 China floods. Some estimates suggest that close to 4 million people died. Heavy snowfall and higher than expected rainfall in 1931 caused the flooding of the Yangtze and Huai rivers. The water level was 16 meters above normal. Millions of people were negatively affected. The flood was made worse because of deforestation, building too many dams, and humans reclaiming wetlands. Prevention would have saved millions of lives and might have prevented a disaster.

In the past, people felt that disasters were inevitable. They were just something that happened and communities just had to deal with it. Often, they were called “Acts of God”. However, beginning in the 1960s, people began to look at disasters differently. Often, it was poor people who suffered the most during a disaster. This showed there was an economic connection to disasters. The statistic is shocking.

The 1970s saw great steps in how countries responded to disasters. The UN created the Disaster Relief Office. This office was responsible for coordinating help for countries after a disaster. It encouraged countries to develop early warning systems and took donations so that they would be able to respond in an emergency. In 1992, it joined the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

There were many disasters in the 1980s which encouraged the international community to do something to raise awareness about the problem. The 1990s were made the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. A lot of research on disasters was done in this decade and a World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction was held in 1994.

In 1999, the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction was created to bring together all the parts of the UN and various countries that were working to reduce disaster risk. In 2005, countries met in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan and created an International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. This was a ten-year commitment called the Hyogo Framework for Action.

- The UN continued to bring attention to disaster risk with the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in March 2015.
- States worked to create the Sendai Declaration and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015. This Framework aims to learn more about disaster risk, to improve the management of disaster risk, to invest in risk reduction and to improve the response to disasters.
- Weather can be very unpredictable. One example is the El Niño climate cycle. This is when warm water in the western Pacific Ocean shifts east. This shifts the position of tropical storms to the west coast of the Americas. Weather all over the planet is affected. It causes temperatures in Australia to be higher than normal. There is often more rain in Peru, Chile and Ecuador. In the southern part of the US rainfall is above average. Also, fishers in South America catch less fish.
- Scientists do not know exactly why El Niños happen. They usually occur every 3-5 years. In 1982-1983 it caused \$10 billion worth of damage worldwide.
- There are things states can do to prepare for a disaster. For example, they can encourage buying insurance and make it easy to do so, or upgrade homes and businesses to better withstand natural hazards, or even encourage people to purchase sandbags in case of flood.
- Governments can make sure that they are ready for an emergency and have plans in case of a sudden natural hazard.
- The Sustainable Development Goals 2030 deal with disaster risk reduction. Goal 11 for inclusive cities asks countries to improve how well cities survive disasters. They want to see a big improvement by 2020.
- Goal 3 asks countries to help with risk reduction when it comes to health risks. Health risks are higher during a disaster. People might have limited access to clean water, safe food, and water for cleaning. In this type of situation, diseases can be spread quickly.
- Women and girls can be more affected by a disaster than men or boys.
- Women and girls are 14 times more likely to die in a disaster than men. After a cyclone in Bangladesh in 1991, 90% of the dead were women.
- Women are at a disadvantage when it comes to disasters. In Sri Lanka, climbing trees and swimming is mainly taught to boys. This puts them at a disadvantage to survive during a tsunami.

- November 5 is World Tsunami Awareness Day. Although they are rare they are extremely deadly. In the last 100 years, 58 tsunamis have killed more than a 250 000 people. The deadliest was in the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004. It killed 227 000 people and affected more than 14 countries.

Recent Developments

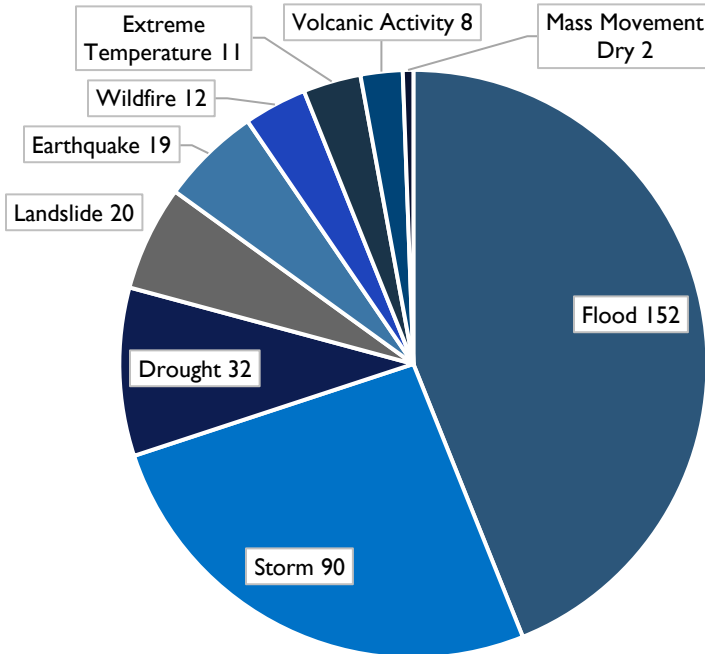
Sustainable Development Goals

- ✓ Began in 2016 to replace the Millennium Development Goals. These goals are much broader and focus on bringing people out of poverty.
- ✓ Poverty is one of the factors of disaster risk. Goal 3 and Goal 11 both deal with reducing disaster risk.
- ✓ Countries will work together to reach the goals by 2030.

Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

- ✓ This program began in 2015 after the end of the Hyogo Framework.
- ✓ It asks countries to research disaster risks, invest in disaster risk reduction, be prepared for disasters and “Build Back Better” after a disaster.
- ✓ There are 7 global targets it wants to achieve. One of them is to reduce global disaster mortality by 100 000 between 2020-2030.

2015 Disasters by Natural Hazard



There were 346 reported disasters in 2015.

71.8% of all deaths were in Asia.

An earthquake in April 2015 killed 8,831 people in Nepal.

Guiding Questions

1. Is your country at risk of natural hazards? Are your neighbours? How would a disaster negatively affect your country? If your neighbours had a disaster how might some of the effects of the disaster affect you?
2. How do natural hazards and disasters affect food security in your region?
3. How does climate change play a role in disaster risk reduction?
4. What can countries do in order to help minimize the risk of a disaster? What is your country doing? What does your country need to do?
5. The continent that is most affected by disasters is Asia. What are some of the reasons this area is more at risk?
6. Research a disaster. What could have been done in order to reduce the intensity of that disaster? How could we apply those lessons to present-day problems?
7. How can women and girls be better protected during a disaster? How can countries be convinced to make these changes?
8. Does the problem exist in your community?

9. How does being a delegate from a different country help you understand this problem in your community?
10. How do the choices you make in your life help resolve this problem?

Resources

Title	Hyperlink	How is it helpful?
United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction	https://www.unisdr.org/who-we-are/what-is-drr	Official UN site for Disaster Risk Reduction.
Natural Disasters, Conflict, and Human Rights	https://www.brookings.edu/on-the-record/natural-disasters-conflict-and-human-rights-tracing-the-connections/	In depth article about the far-reaching consequences of disasters.
The Devastating Impact of Natural Disasters	https://www.childfund.org/Content/NewsDetail/2147489272/	An overview of natural disasters and the problems they create.
The Countries Where a Natural Disaster is Most Likely to Strike	http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/maps-and-graphics/Mapped-Where-a-natural-disaster-is-most-likely-to-strike/	Statistical information about which countries are most at risk.
Epidemiology of Disasters	http://www.pitt.edu/~epi2170/lecture15/index.htm	A university professor's PowerPoint presentation about disasters. Easy to follow and read.
International Red Cross	http://www.ifrc.org/en/publications-and-reports/world-disasters-report/world-disasters-report/	This site has yearly disaster reports.
2015 Disasters in Numbers	http://www.unisdr.org/files/47804_2015disastertrendsininfographic.pdf	A two-page pamphlet with interesting disaster statistics.
Prevention Web	http://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/statistics/	An online resource that has disaster profiles for all countries.

