

<b>Forum:</b>	3rd Committee of the General Assembly
<b>Issue:</b>	Improving international help in the event of natural or other hazardous disasters
<b>Student Officer:</b>	Celine Leib
<b>Position:</b>	Deputy Chair

### **Background information/Description of the issue**

All over the world, countries are affected by natural disasters such as droughts, earthquakes, floods, extreme heat, thunderstorms and lightning.

These natural disasters become economic and social disasters as soon as they destroy human life and livelihoods. People lose their belongings as well as their homes and their morale and thus fall into a deep financial as well as social and personal crisis. However, it is not the individuals themselves, but also the state as a whole which can become affected, as the government should help the population by providing relief in the form of emergency accommodation and healthcare. Furthermore the government can lose important sources of revenue, which makes it difficult for the concerned states to finance help which the population urgently needs.

This is why international help is vital. It is of the utmost importance that nations help each other, when they cannot handle to help themselves.

As the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) explains, the focus of helping nations in the event of natural and hazardous disasters should lie on the prediction of hazards and a proper education of the population, in order to prevent the loss of property and life.

As natural disasters are the results of specific climatic circumstances, some countries are more vulnerable for some specific hazards than others. Especially developing countries in Africa and Asia suffer from hazards such as floods and droughts due to extreme rain fall or earthquakes. In developing countries as such, financial help can be very important as the prediction of these hazardous disasters is a very expensive technical method, for which it needs experts and expensive materials. Moreover the often missing infrastructure in these countries makes it difficult to be able to educate the population. Less media than in industrialized countries and experts of how to educate the population are missing as well.

### What international help can look like

#### Direct help:

In order to help an affected country directly, nations can send geological or meteorological experts, in order to help developing a predicting system or method and in order to educate the population in beforehand.

When the disaster has already happened, helping nations can send military reinforcement, in order to rebuild homes and work places as well as organize places, in which the people can temporarily stay. Furthermore, medical care such as doctors and nurses can be send to build a working healthcare system for the concerned people. For example this can happen in camps that can be built in the affected areas.

After all nearly any kind of presence of people can be a help. So even volunteers who temporarily take care of orphaned can be a huge help.

Indirect help:

Indirect help can be anything that a nation or a private person can do, without being present in the concerned area. For example funding or creating a donation system can be indirect help. Nations and private persons can send money to organisations that can give direct help.

### **Kinds of disasters and what can be done against them**

Kind of disaster:

Prevention/What can be done:

<p><b>Droughts:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Caused by extreme heat in long period of time</li> <li>- Result in loss of harvest</li> <li>- Increases the risk of forest fires</li> <li>- Cause lack of water for a long period of time</li> </ul>	<p><b>Prevention:</b></p> <p>In order to save crops, the rain water needs to be saved. Therefore trees can be planted around the plantations, as they save the water instead of letting the water flow away.</p>
<p><b>Earthquakes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Caused by tectonic plates that slide against each other</li> <li>- Cause so called seismic waves, which cause extreme vibrations</li> <li>- Destroy livelihoods and landscape</li> <li>- Cause extreme material damage and thus financial problems</li> </ul>	<p><b>Prevention:</b></p> <p>In order to save property and human life, residential buildings should receive special static standards. For bigger buildings the Earthquake Protection Systems, Inc. developed a special system as well.</p> <p>Furthermore people can be educated to know how to act in case of an earthquake.</p>
<p><b>Floods:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Caused by extreme rain falls</li> <li>- Result in loss of property</li> <li>- Destroy landscape and crop</li> <li>- Cause hygienic problems and thus spread diseases</li> </ul>	<p><b>Prevention:</b></p> <p>In order to reduce or prevent the effects of flood waters, flood water methods were created. It consists of 'technical methods' like temporary holding ponds, dams (levees), reservoirs and weirs and 'renaturalisation methods' like rebuilding levees, recreate leas.</p> <p><b>What can be done:</b></p> <p>Nations can establish flood warning centres and hydro power plants near the concerned area.</p>
<p><b>Hurricanes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Also known as tropical cyclone, tropical depression and tropical storm</li> <li>- Caused by low-pressure areas over the water of oceans</li> </ul>	<p><b>Prevention:</b></p> <p>In order to save property and their life the population should stay tuned to local news to know about the classification of the hurricane. If it is classified 1 to 3, the population needs to save all their property</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bring extreme rain falls and thunderstorms</li> <li>- Destroy property and crop fields</li> </ul>	<p>that can be flown away by tying it down or remove it. If it is classified 3 to 5, the only way is to evacuate in time. The population in this case needs to be educated what to take with them and where to go, for example to family members. Clean water tanks also need to be filled.</p> <p>What can be done: In case people could not or did not have to evacuate, in the event of a hurricane they should stay inside their houses, stay away from windows and doors that also should be closed. Moreover they should have an emergency and first aid kit as well as enough clean water.</p>
<p>Tornados:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Are strong and violent winds swirling in either a clockwise direction south the equator or an anti-clockwise direction north the equator</li> <li>- Rotate with a very high speed of over 450 kilometres per hour</li> <li>- Are very powerful</li> <li>- Destroy property and landscape</li> </ul>	<p>Prevention: In order to reduce the risk of property loss and death, the population in the concerned area should prepare for a tornado by removing rocks and trees or other materials that could destroy their property, when the storm blows them against it. They should also stay tuned to local radio and other informative media.</p> <p>What can be done: In case a Tornado is happening, the population should be educated to stay away from the windows and doors and to keep them closed. Furthermore they should have an emergency and first aid kit.</p>
<p>Tsunamis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Are huge waves caused by a submarine earthquake or volcano eruption</li> <li>- Cause floods</li> <li>- Flush away livelihoods and landscape</li> <li>- Cause damage of property and family lives</li> </ul>	<p>Prevention: In order to evacuate in time, the population should listen to local radio and other informative media, as tsunami warning systems can be installed. Furthermore governments can try to reduce high tsunami damage by building walls and dams.</p> <p>What can be done: In case the population could not be evacuated in time, they should be educated to know to flee to the top of high buildings or hills. In order to save their life they should know not to take any property with</p>

	them, as the tsunami can be faster than they might believe.
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### Definition of Key Terms

**Emergency Management or Disaster Management:** Measures to protect the life, health or the environment in or before the emergence of a disaster.

**Tectonic Plates:** Large pieces of earth crust. There are seven major plates. All plates move very slowly and can collide.

**Plate Boundary:** The spot where two plates meet. In this spots most earthquakes and volcano eruptions occur.

**Primary Hazards:** Things such as ground shaking or lava flow. These things happen in the first few moments of a hazard.

**Secondary Hazards:** Things such as landslides or tsunamis, which happen as a result of the hazard.

### Organizations

- SOS Sahel/ Welthungerhilfe: helped farmers in the Sahel desert against drought by planting 40.000 trees
- International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement: biggest helping organization in the event of natural hazards and disasters. Giving direct help such as food aid, medical aid and education for development aid.
- The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR): working on a global agreement on natural disaster risk reduction.
- Action Against Hunger (AAH): runs emergency systems that help against nutrition and health problems. Also runs preparedness programs to educate the population.
- Doctors Without Borders: sending 2.000 doctors of 45 nationalities to nations that need medical help.
- Mennonite Central Committee (MCC): sends people, food and material to nations suffering from natural disasters or war.
- The Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA): gives humanitarian assistance and helps to reduce the social and economic impact of natural disasters.

### Resolutions on the topic:

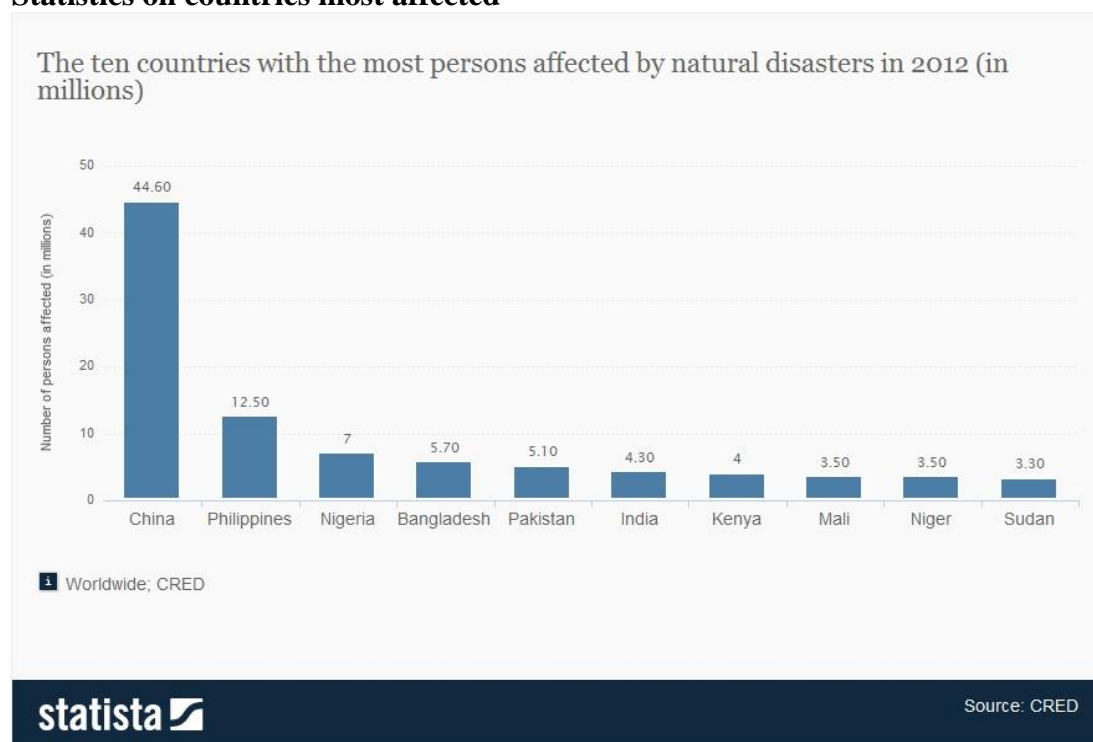
United Nation Resolutions:

- [A/RES/65/307](#)
- [A/RES/65/264](#)
- [A/RES/65/157](#)

### Other Resolutions:

- EUROLAT – Resolution of 25 January 2013  
[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/eurolat/assembly/plenary\\_sessions/santiago\\_2013/adopted\\_docs/social\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/eurolat/assembly/plenary_sessions/santiago_2013/adopted_docs/social_en.pdf)
- Government of Odisha Revenue and Disaster Manage Department  
[http://www.orissa.gov.in/disaster/src/crf\\_coll\\_files/Revision\\_of\\_items\\_and\\_norms\\_of\\_assistance.pdf](http://www.orissa.gov.in/disaster/src/crf_coll_files/Revision_of_items_and_norms_of_assistance.pdf)

### Statistics on countries most affected



<http://www.statista.com/graphic/1/273314/countries-with-the-most-persons-affected-by-natural-disasters.jpg>



[http://3.bp.blogspot.com/\\_aWxsaFGEwAQ/R\\_jo\\_uaeNzI/AAAAAAAAAB0/BLU5m35urvE/s320/top10.gif](http://3.bp.blogspot.com/_aWxsaFGEwAQ/R_jo_uaeNzI/AAAAAAAAAB0/BLU5m35urvE/s320/top10.gif)

## Inform yourself about

### In how far is your country affected?

- In what area lies your country and how high is the risk of a natural disaster?
- In how far does your country help concerned nation?
  - o Does your country fund any organizations?
  - o Does your country support concerned nations through financial aid?

### In how far is your country able to help other nations?

- What is the current economic situation of your country?
  - o Is your country able to invest or to fund organizations?
- What is the current social and political situation?
  - o What does your country currently suffer from the most and in how far can it concentrate on helping other nations?

## Useful Links

[http://www.wmo.int/pages/themes/hazards/index\\_en.html](http://www.wmo.int/pages/themes/hazards/index_en.html)

<http://www.ready.gov/natural-disasters>

<http://reliefweb.int/report/world/annual-disaster-statistical-review-2012-numbers-and-trends>

<http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/humanitarian/>

<http://www.21stcenturychallenges.org/focus/who-are-most-vulnerable-to-natural-hazards/>

<http://www.eathquakeprotection.com>

Organization links:

<http://www.unisdr.org>

<http://www.globalcorps.com/jobs/ngolist.pdf>

<http://www.aah-usa.org/>

<http://www.dwb.org/>

<http://www.mennonitecc.ca/>

<http://www.usaid.gov/>