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United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

#Background Guide

UN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP)

Director: Alexandra Ceballos



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Introduction

Letter from the Dais

Dearest delegates,

Welcome to YMUNC 2024! My name is Alexandra Ceballos, and I have the great honor of serving as Chair of the **United Nations Development Programme** Committee. The United Nations Development Programme, also referred to as the UNDP, seeks to achieve Sustainable Human Development. The programme is currently operating in over 170 countries around the world and working to achieve what is ultimately a two part mission: “sustainable development” and “human development”. The UNDP starts by increasing capacity development in nations around the world by providing policy and technical support in addition to facilitating the presence of the UN system at the country level. Through capacity development, the UNDP empowers societies to obtain and maintain the capabilities necessary to achieve their individualized goals. The question is: where does sustainability come into play? As sustainability is a part of the UNDP’s mission, our committee will be presented with two topics closely related to this idea. Topic A is Creating Sustainable Cities, and this is an all-encompassing topic that will allow you to closely engage with peers in defining sustainability. Starting from the microlevel within your own nation, and then out into regions and the greater global community, you will have the opportunity to discuss how we can support the growth of cities that encourage the wellbeing of all those in it. Topic B is Disaster Resilience, which will allow you to consider what building resilience should mean. This topic encourages you to think beyond and engage with geographical/economic circumstances, societal conditions, and the climate vulnerabilities that vary from nation to nation. Both topics are an incredibly exciting opportunity to propose inclusive ideas that promote the wellbeing of all!

And now a little bit about me! My name is Alexandra, I am a first-year from Miami, Florida and am a prospective Global Affairs major, pursuing a certificate in Chinese Language. I am a part of the Directed Studies program at Yale, where I get to spend a year analyzing works spanning from Dante’s Inferno to Aristotle’s Metaphysics. I served as Chair for CSTD at Yale Model United Nations 50, and am currently a director for DISEC at Yale Model United Nations Europe. In my free time, you can find me at the Branford Pottery Studio or playing Connections on the New York Times. When joining YMUNC, I knew that the most important thing to me was creating an incredible committee experience. The depth of these topics, in both their causes and consequences, are what excited me most about bringing this committee together. I look forward to meaningful discussions in our sessions, and I am here to make sure that we create the right environment for that.

Beyond working papers and resolutions, the main goal for our committee is ensuring that collaboration is ensured at every step. To excel in this committee, delegates must be able to compromise and communicate with each other in order to create comprehensive solutions. That also involves doing research and showing a profound understanding of their regional circumstances. The UNDP's mandate is to empower lives and build resilient nations. Delegates, I encourage you to let that guide you!

I am excited to meet you all and for you all to meet each other, and with that I would like to emphasize that professionalism and respect is of utmost importance in debate. My hope is that every delegate will gain new skills, friendships and an understanding of the global community as a whole. I encourage you to embrace collaboration, seek innovation, and be excited about this incredible experience to come! Should you have any questions about our Committee, Yale, or YMUNC, please feel free to email me at alexandra.ceballos@yale.edu with your name(s) and country.

Kindly,
Alexandra Ceballos

Committee History

In 1945, 193 sovereign states signed the UN Charter, thereby establishing the United Nations. Since that year, the United Nations has grown to be made up of several specialized agencies, funds and programmes that further access to the UN's services. In 1949, the United Nations Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance was created to work for the economic development of underdeveloped nations. The Programme was later combined with the United Nations Special Fund to become the United Nations Development Programme we know today in 1966. The United Nations Development Programme's work centers around 3 major focus areas: sustainable development, democratic governance and peace building, and climate and disaster relief. In that way, the UNDP is the part of the UN that facilitates global communication aimed at development.

If the UNDP works to provide development assistance, the question is how? The answer is through the services that it offers. Using what they call their "signature solutions", the Programme emphasizes the fact that solutions must begin at the very root of the issue. Because it services a plethora of countries whose needs and resources vary, it uses what are called Country Programmes to detail current priority areas that are based on the nation's current situation and provide the framework through which change can occur. As a program, it also prides itself on the results that its work has been able to produce. Focusing particularly on the solutions that are relevant to our committee agenda, their work has allowed access to essential services for 71 million people in over 30 countries around the world. The United Nations Development Programme provides an Annual Report that contributes to a clearer vision of the on-ground action that the Programme mobilizes around the world.

The UNDP is headquartered in New York City, and it is composed of a 36-member Executive Board. For the purposes of our committee simulation, we will be expanding the Executive Board to include additional countries who have been a part of the Executive Board in the past. It is important to note that when it comes to regional divisions, delegates should reference the UNDP's official website in regards to where their nation falls in terms of its UNDP-assigned region.

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Creating Sustainable Cities



Creating Sustainable Cities

Introduction

How does one “create” a sustainable city? Reimagining the current function of a city, this topic encourages solutions that contribute to safe, affordable and resilient cities.

Glossary

Accelerator Labs Network: Considered one of the UNDP’s flagship initiatives, it is a learning network through which over 100 countries and 91 labs currently in operation exchange information on the current international development practices

Carbon Footprint: Total emissions of greenhouse gases made by an activity or organization over a certain period of time.

Climate Change: A long-term shift in global weather trends, typically in reference to rising temperatures.

Green building: The processes that ensure that the entirety of a building’s life-cycle is environmental

Least Developed Countries (LDCs): These are low-income countries who face severe structural impediments to sustainable development.

Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs): These are countries whose lack of access to the sea serves as a significant challenge for their participation in the global market economy

Small Island Developing States (SIDS): Located in the Caribbean, Pacific, and the Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea (AIS), these are states whose remote geography (among other factors) contribute to vulnerabilities in their functioning.

Urban Planning: Refers to the overall process of developing and designing urban areas. Because of its interdisciplinary nature, urban planning uses techniques across disciplines like architecture and sociology to further optimize city spaces.

Topic History

The word “city” comes from the Latin *civitas* (sometimes *citatem*), which was used to refer to citizenship, or rights of said citizens. Something essential to the definition of a city is this idea of participation within it. Within the historical and political texts of the past, the definition of a city grew as different things were prioritized. Although one could explore the many nuances of a word like city, it is important to point out the fact that a city does not just reference its physical location, but also the individuals that take part in it. One can trace the history of cities back to ancient civilizations like the Uruk and Ur cities in ancient Mesopotamia in 7500 BCE. During this time, people gathered alongside streams or valleys that would facilitate their access to sources of food. As more of these cities were able to establish themselves in nutrient-rich regions, the size of these populations continued to grow.

When did we transition from those cities into the cities we know today? Many historians will credit that transition to the Industrial Revolution in the 1700’s. The Industrial Revolution propelled the world’s more developed areas into massive growths in population as a result of technological developments. It is through the Industrial Revolution that we can gain a better understanding of what forms the modern conception of a city. Among the most prominent is the steam engine, which was famously credited to have been the work of James Watt.

The steam engine would become one of the major energy sources for machines and vehicles at the time, and maximize the efficiency of production methods. It marked a transition away from manual production and towards its mechanization in introducing the factory system.

In the societal aspect, the Industrial Revolution also caused mass urbanization, bringing families out of the rural areas and into the urban

production areas to join the workforce. With this urbanization, however, significantly impacted the well-being of people in the working and lower class. In cities like London and Manchester, people lived in incredibly confined spaces and were subject to horrible working conditions. Due to the lack of knowledge on sanitation and diseases at the time, malnutrition and dehydration were also prominent within the working classes at the time. Among the most vulnerable and most affected by these conditions were children. Forced to labor to either support their families or were orphans housed within factories, these devastating realities for children came to the attention of reformers. After many



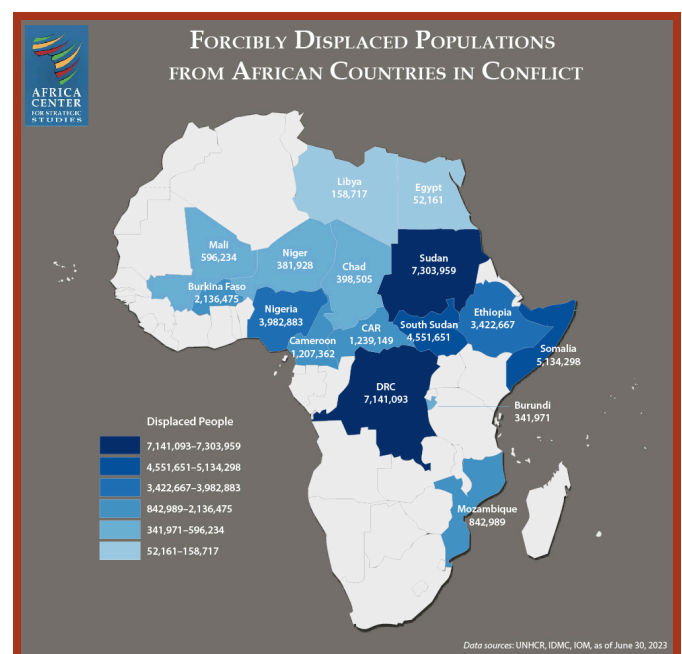
years, legislation aimed at specifically reducing the exploitation of children for labor began to take effect. In the United Kingdom, laws like the 1842 Mines Act and 1844 Factory Act allowed for the conditions of children to improve. While laws that would take children out of factories and into schools would take much longer to develop, this moment in history serves as an important perspective from which to understand the cities we know today. While cities serve as hubs of industry, they are also home to the generations that will lead the world into the future. From the historic definition of a city into its adaptation to the modern world, it's clear that this issue is a multifaceted and important one.

Current Situation

In order to take the topic into the current day, we will focus on highlighting regional focus areas and current ongoing efforts to increase sustainability in cities. Because every region is uniquely situated within its individual circumstance, it is important to track the similarities and how collaboration on solutions can be encouraged. The ultimate goal, as was mentioned earlier, is to cultivate safe, affordable and resilient cities. It is these three things together that will allow us to define what sustainable cities will look like in the future. The following will be heavily based on efforts to meet the Sustainable Development Goals established by the United Nations in 2015. During the UN Sustainable Development Summit, the United Nations General Assembly established the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This was a conjunction of 17 goals and 169 targets that would work to eliminate poverty, fight inequality and tackle climate change. As the year 2030 steadily approaches, our discussion in the following section will be directed towards the 11th Sustainable Development Goal: Sustainable Cities and Communities. Perhaps one of the most interdisciplinary among the 17, Goal 11 will provide a comprehensive understanding of the many conditions that come together to form the entirety of a city.

African States

According to the International Monetary Fund, Africa's population has grown to over 1.4 billion people as of 2023. It is projected that this number will increase to 2.5 billion by 2050. This is a result of the fact that the median age in Africa was about 18 years of age as of 2021. While other regions find themselves at risk of having stagnant birth rates descend into the negatives, Africa finds itself in a unique circumstance when it comes to population. The question for many experts then became how would Africa handle this situation. A jump in population could mean increased rates of economic growth across its states. Just as a jump



would permit for significant growth, being unprepared for it could exacerbate many of the pre-existing conditions currently ongoing in the continent. Current conflicts in the region have led to significant internal displacements, meaning that they will move from one African state to another. This focus on population for the African states can be illustrated by the city of Lagos in Nigeria. Also known as Lagos City, it has the largest population of any city in West Africa and is among the most densely populated in the world. Per an article from the World Bank on the situation, there are nearly 20 million individuals living in less than 100 square kilometers. For reference, this is about 3/5ths as big as Washington, DC. As a result of its large population, the city is especially vulnerable to the effects of pollution. Kinds of pollution including air, single-use plastics and solid waste in Lagos has led to the deaths of over 30,000 people in the city. Academic reports written on the subject of air pollution (particularly exposure to Lead Aerosol) in Lagos have even generated a cost of around US\$400–600 for every resident of Ikorodu. As a result of efforts directed by the World Bank, Air Quality Monitoring Stations were set up in smaller subsets of the greater Lagos that can help the local government better tackle the environmental situation. In a collaboration between the African Union, UN Habitat and the UNDP, a Spatial Development Strategy was organized to specifically address the needs of the Sahel region. Known for being the stretch of land that divides the Sahara from the tropical savannahs of the South, the region has faced significant challenges related to how conflict and external shocks have limited the capabilities for sustainable development in the region. As it also faces the challenges of violence-related displacement, the Spatial Development Strategy uses territorial analysis to guide solutions that would encourage local cooperation. It is important to consider the fact that the kind of planning this region demands has just as much to do with urbanization as it does sustainability efforts. As the region faces the particular challenge of directing urbanization in a positive direction, it is all underlied by ensuring that the efforts are focused on the humanitarian needs of a city.

Asia-Pacific States

According to data released in February 2024, UN data reports that the current progress being made towards the Sustainable Development Goals in Asia-Pacific states will not be sufficient to reach the 2030 Agenda set out by the Sustainable Development Goals. In a report released by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), reaching Goal 11 of Sustainable Cities and Communities is among those on the lower ends of progress. As the report references the particular expected achievements that fall under the Goal, the only one that was in the “Green-Maintain progress to achieve target” zone was 11.1 Housing and Basic Services. Those that needed accelerating or were immeasurable were more closely connected to Urban air quality and questions of sustainable urbanization. This begs the question of what exactly is causing the regression in these questions. The report does credit certain efforts that were made towards Disaster Risk Reduction, but there was much work to be done towards tackling air pollution and improving housing in the region. In particular, the urban-rural divide was especially focused on as a disadvantage for some states in the Asia-Pacific region. The rural areas faced problems like disproportionate access to safe drinking water and proper sanitation facilities. As most of these issues are closely related to the region’s regression in

fulfilling Goal 13 on Climate Action, it demands a better understanding of how the region's geographical location also makes it more susceptible to the effects of extreme climate events. CBRE, an international commercial real estate services company, conducted research on the subject of sustainable cities in particular. In December of 2022, they released the Asia Pacific Sustainable City Ranking that collected data on a number of cities in the region to measure current and potential environmental resilience in the region. This provides a more economic view on the question of sustainable cities, as the research conducted also allows a view into how it would impact the commercial real estate market. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the housing market in Asia faced sharp increases in housing prices that reduced availability across the region. It is important to note the fact that commercial real estate can often overlap with the housing market, as many rental units are a part of what can be considered commercial real estate. With this information in mind, one can gain a better understanding of the way that this question of sustainable cities must also keep in mind the affordability and capacity of a city as it is today. Evaluated on key aspects like the city's carbon targets and attempts towards reaching Green goals like Green Building and Renewable energy practices, the study reveals the many ways that progress towards sustainability can be achieved. While the city of Seoul has made significant growth in transitioning into a low-carbon economy, Ho Chi Minh City has high levels of the adoption of renewable energy and low stress on its water systems. With all of this in mind, it is a great introduction into how business and markets can also be a part of this question of sustainable cities.

Eastern and Western European States

In the Eastern and Western European States, most of the research that has been gathered on progress towards sustainable cities is tracked by the European Union. Per the Europe Sustainable Development Report 2023/2024, Finland, Sweden and Denmark are in the top three out of the 34 nations data was collected from in terms of their percentage of completion in reaching the Sustainable Development Goals. It is important to note the fact that this edition of the report excludes 2 of the member states that are currently a part of the United Nations Development Programme's Executive Board as a result of their being candidate countries for the European Union. Past versions of the Sustainable Development Report are available, and inquiring into the nuances of correlation between the membership and attaining SDG targets is definitely worth looking into. The Report was released in the context of the upcoming European Parliament Elections, which is of utmost importance for these nations to remember. In these elections, citizens of the European Union elect representatives to serve as Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). Happening this summer from June 6th to June 9th, these MEPs form part of the world's only directly elected transnational assembly. This is incredibly relevant to the topic of sustainable development and particularly for cities, as they are the ones who decide the laws that will extend to nations across the European Union. When it comes to Sustainable Development Goal 11, the European Union as a whole has made strong steps across the board in reaching the desired thresholds. Among them is the almost doubling of the recycling rate of municipal waste from 2000 to 2021. To highlight yet another feature of the Sustainable Development Goals, one of the principles that was introduced alongside them was the promise of "Leave No One Behind". This principle was used

across many of the major discussions when it came to the Sustainable Development Goals across national lines. It promises that the future the SDGs will create is not an exclusive one, but rather that it is meant to be a future for everyone. All of the UN Member states will contribute to eliminating four inequities that exist in our world today: poverty, services, gender and income. Part of this new Europe Sustainable Development Report is a “Leave-no-one-behind” (or LNOB score), which evaluates the extent at which population groups are being left behind. What makes this index such a step forward is the fact that it embraces one of the promises sustainable cities hope to achieve. The report took into account questions like early childhood education, gender employment gaps and proper living conditions when evaluating a country’s LNOB. Once again, one of the most important aspects of the European approach to sustainable development when it comes to cities is how firmly that goal is set within the structure of the European Union. Approaching the topic from this perspective will best enable you to get to how their disposition is different as a result of this institution.

Latin America and Caribbean States and Other States

In Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), the Emerging and Sustainable Cities Initiative (ESCI) pioneered by the Inter-American Development Bank has allowed for the region to address its most significant challenge. The LAC region was reported to be the second-most urbanized region on the planet, having experienced a spike in its urbanization rate in the 2000’s. As a result, the region faced issues from the lack of urban planning set in place to mitigate the environmental effects of urbanization. The ESCI focuses on three focus areas: environmental and climate change sustainability, urban sustainability and fiscal sustainability and governance. Like the other situations that had been presented earlier, there is a delicate balance between urbanization and sustainability. Because approximately 66% of the people in poverty in the LAC live within urban areas, it is important to consider the way that sustainability can encourage both a growth in the quality of life for the urban poor and of the city itself. Urban cities (particularly those of intermediate-size) in Latin America and the Caribbean continue to become areas of increased investment. This disparity between urban development and external investment is what the ESCI hopes to address. In supporting sustainable development in rapidly-developing intermediate cities, they hope to expand the capacity and reach of the cities. The initiative grounds itself in sustainability efforts like reducing a city’s carbon footprint, which will ultimately circle back with positive effects for those living in the city. But as Latin America and the greater American continent as a whole has to continue to adapt to the challenges of climate change, one must continue to question how progress towards these goals can be measured. One such method is organized by the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, also known as LEED. They are a green building certification program that offers professional credentials and standards from which the world of green building can evolve. One of their certifications is the LEED for Cities and Communities initiative. It collects data from social, economic, and environmental performance indicators to strengthen progress towards sustainability objectives. As you continue to take into account the current situation of your own country, keep in mind that it is essential to consider the way that your nation interacts with those in its region and around the world. Create innovative approaches

to this question of sustainability that prioritize inclusivity and access. That will ensure that these solutions are not only effective, but long-lasting.

Questions to Consider

1. How does the question of sustainable cities interact with industries whose practices may interact with progress towards sustainability?
2. How can one best encapsulate the needs of both the individual and the community in working to make progress towards more sustainable cities?
3. What have methods of international communication on sustainability looked like in the past, and how can they be adapted to take into consideration questions that are pertinent today?
4. What role should technology take in increasing access to sustainable solutions?
5. How does your state currently face the question of sustainability in cities? Does it focus on energy, affordable housing, quality of life, etc.
6. What can we do for the countries from whom we have limited data/access? How can we increase the resources available to them?
7. What kinds of sustainable practices are working in your country/region? Consider how these can be expanded upon.

Additional Resources

<https://population.un.org/wpp/>

<https://www.unescap.org/kp/2024/asia-and-pacific-sdg-progress-report-2024>

<https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/>

<https://eu-dashboards.sdghttps://unfccc.int/climate-action/momentum-for-change/lighthouse-activities/emerging-and-sustainable-cities-initiativeindex.org/>

<https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/universal-values/leave-no-one-behind>

<https://www.usgbc.org/leed/rating-systems/leed-for-cities-communities>

2

Disaster Resilience



Disaster Resilience

Introduction

With particular attention to climate-related disasters, this topic is all about solutions that lead to a reduction of not only their effects, but of their frequency. Understanding disaster resilience involves understanding both the scientific foundations of climate-related disasters and the societal infrastructure that can be reimagined to help mitigate its effects.

Glossary

Climate Displacement: Also known as climate migration, it is migration that comes as a result of extreme weather events or climate catastrophes within their home region.

Carbon Neutrality: This is more particular than climate neutrality, which will be introduced later as a net-zero state similar to that described below. Carbon neutral means that there is a balance between the emission and absorption of carbon in the atmosphere.

Disaster risk: This is a particular circumstance in which the potential loss of life, injury or assets could occur that is determined by the hazard, exposure, vulnerability and capacity. Something to emphasize about the term is the fact that it also particularly emphasizes the way that hazardous situations arise as a result of present and pre-existing conditions.

Resilience: The ability to properly handle the result of a crisis, and have the faculties to return equally as strong.

Net-Zero Emissions: This is reaching a balance between the amount of greenhouse gasses being produced and removed from the atmosphere.

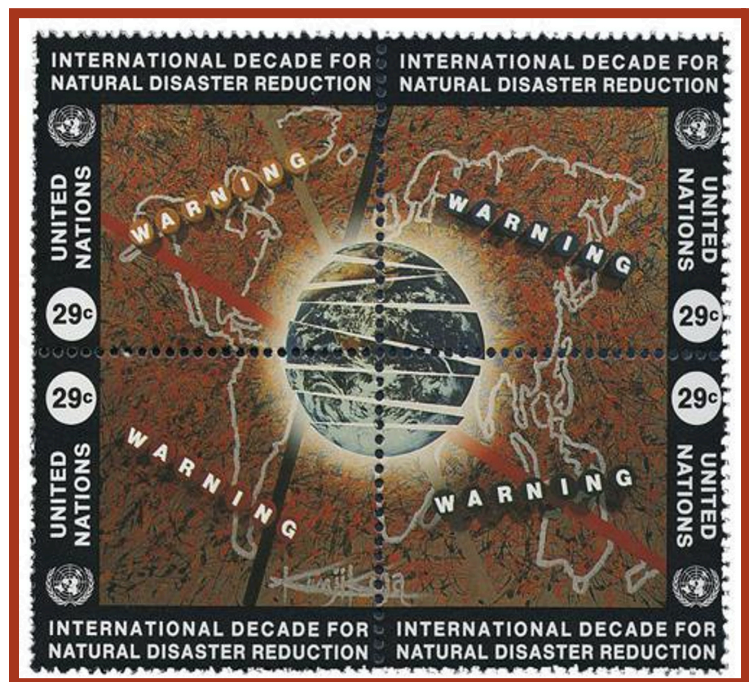
United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction: This is the UN agency that works to increase the presence of disaster risk reduction practices into humanitarian efforts.

Topic History

It is important to preface the fact that the history of the discipline of Disaster Risk Reduction has been significantly impacted by the tragic events that have built up our history on this topic. These events were marked by the significant loss of life, and the work that repairing these communities would require. In 1971, Resolution 2816 of the United Nations General Assembly created the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator. This individual would spearhead the new United Nations Disaster Relief Office, appointed by the Secretary-General as a means by which they could promote seeking a greater understanding of natural disasters in addition to placing them in a permanent position to do so. The General Assembly continued to strengthen the UNDRR as the years that would follow this initiative would continue to challenge the United Nation's ability to handle the ongoing natural disasters. A series of natural

disasters in the year 1988 brought significant damage upon communities across the world. Hurricanes in Latin America, floods in Sudan and Bangladesh, the list simply goes on. It was as a result of this that the General Assembly declared that the 1990's would become the "International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction" (IDNDR for short). Some of the most impressive accomplishments made during the course of the decade included the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction in 1994. Hosted in Yokohama, Japan, the conference adopted what would be known as the Yokohama Strategy. This was an all-encompassing

solution that addressed prevention, preparedness and mitigation. The Strategy, alongside a Plan of Action, was endorsed by the General Assembly as well. Further into the 1990's, the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) phenomenon posed its own challenge as the UN attempted to work towards ending the IDNDR. This phenomenon particularly affected the tropics, which includes Africa, Latin America and South/Southeast Asia. It is a naturally occurring climatic phenomenon in which ocean temperatures fluctuate in an irregular cycle, occurring every 2-7 years. What makes ENSO so indicative of the fact that disaster resilience is an ever-important subject of discussion is its health impacts. Because of the way that the cycle affects certain environments around the world, it increases exposure to vector-borne diseases who are dependent on the environment they are transmitted by. The correlation between ENSO and these diseases is often unclear, as the year/climate can vary across ENSO cycles. Vectors like mosquitoes, ticks and fleas transmit these diseases and depending on a particular region's suitability



for vector activity at a given time, it is easy to see the way that disasters can often bring effects beyond those one could imagine. The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, in more recent years, has worked to address the situations that came as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and devastating spikes in the human and economic costs of disasters. Looking closely at past annual reports of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction will allow for more fruitful discussion when it comes to how the United Nations Development Programme interacts with these solutions.

Current Situation

Like before, it is important to note the fact that our discussion when it comes to the current situation in disaster resilience will vary from region to region. Take notice not only of the situation as it is represented within your own nation and region, but also how you can broaden your perspective on the subject by considering how it relates to that of others. As we are moving towards describing more current circumstances, discussing disaster resilience will also include conversations on how climate change has increased the urgency for solutions. It is by understanding how climate change leads to disaster that we can orient ourselves towards what we will ultimately be working towards in committee: increasing disaster resilience.

African States

The African States have made significant progress towards mitigating the effects of climate-related disasters, but it is difficult to ignore the way that climate change has continued to make the situation seem more unpredictable. In 1983, a drought in Ethiopia that led to the death of 300,000 people was the deadliest recorded in Africa between 1970 and 2019. Almost 6 months ago, the Africa Climate Summit in Nairobi discussed the fact that the Horn of Africa region faced one of its worst droughts in decades from the year 2020 to 2022. In 2023, Tropical Cyclone Freddy was an exceptional case in the history of tropical cyclones. Affecting Malawi, Mozambique, Madagascar, South Africa and Zimbabwe, the cyclone traveled across the Southern Indian Ocean and made landfall multiple times. The Cyclone is also a lesson for the world when considering the effects of tropical cyclones within the context of disaster resilience. The storm lasted for more than a month, and the question for many meteorologists at the time was what contributed to its strength. One way to understand Cyclone Freddy's magnitude is the fact that the accumulated cyclone energy (or ACE) that it built over its lifetime was on par with that of an entire North Atlantic hurricane season. It is important to note that its periods of intensification, unusual path, and record length all indicated that this storm was different from any other the world had faced before it. And climate change is the root of this: as the oceans continue to warm, the water is better able to conduct these stronger storms. Africa, like other regions, also faces the particular challenge of mitigating the effects of climate migration. The effects of climate change have come to completely transform the way of life of many, leading them to seek other places in which to live and work. This presents an essential aspect of the way that we should approach disaster resilience. We should work to ensure that we address climate disasters at the root, to ensure that situations such as

climate migration can be avoided. One of the institutions currently at work in the region is the African Climate Policy Centre, which came to life thanks to collaboration between internal and external agencies. One of its accomplishments was the creation of the Africa Climate Resilient Investment Facility (AFRI-RES), which aims at ensuring that African institutions have the resources to mobilize towards resilience. This particularly contributes to the capacity of Africa's public and private institutions to direct investment in a sustainable direction. It ensures that investment in its sectors address the potential economic growth that is inherent in the increasing urbanization in the region. AFRI-RES provides a glimpse into how disaster resilience can be a joint effort, and truly contribute to development that anticipates the effects of climate change.

Asia-Pacific States

In the Asia-Pacific region, the work of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) continues to provide comprehensive information for policymakers in this region. As you have been able to gather from the topic history and our previous discussion on the African States, building disaster resilience is heavily dependent on the information that is available. Bridging gaps in information will not only be essential for future solutions, but it will also make for increased international cooperation on the subject. Housed under ESCAP is the Asia-Pacific Disaster Resilience Network (can also be referred to by the name Risk and Resilience Portal), which has steadily contributed to transparency through data. The Network prioritizes addressing what it refers to as the “disaster-climate-health” riskscape, which is becoming a reality for many regions around the world. Although we are approaching the subject of disaster resilience from a climate perspective, this term addresses the fact that these events are intensified by other factors. Consider events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced many global operations to halt. The Network is what provides nations with the tools necessary to increase resilience. As reported by the United Nations Environment Programme, nearly 1.4 billion people in the Asia-Pacific region were affected by natural disasters between the years 2005 to 2014. In this way, we can get to better understand the way that Disaster Resilience incorporates itself into this question of development. Another one of ESCAP's major initiatives when it comes to disaster resilience is the Asia-Pacific Disaster Report. It is incredibly comprehensive and details the way that



climate-induced disaster risk continues to challenge the progress being made to strengthen the region's resilience as a whole. It takes into account the costs that were previously mentioned when discussing ENSO. First, take into consideration the development to date of the region. Should climate hazards continue to inhibit progress being made in the region, the report points out that they will continue to affect the region's biodiversity. This also includes the fact that climate hazards can affect industries that are dependent upon certain conditions, one that is particularly critical is the agricultural sector. In South Asia specifically, the United Nations Environment Programme released an article on the many dimensions through which the sector is affected by climate change. In Pakistan and India, the areas of focus for this article, extreme heat was a dangerous situation. Because of the extreme temperatures, individuals with limited means were disproportionately affected as a result. For laborers and farmers, extreme heat caused droughts, wilted crops, and even health concerns. Because shelter was limited for some, it was difficult to source the appropriate means of protection from the sun. The loss of crops would also lead to food shortages in the region, leading to even the banning of wheat exports to ensure that enough would be available for those in the region. It is important to note the fact that possible solutions to this situation are indicative of the way that we should approach our understanding of resilience. Not only should we be accounting for the way that past actions have contributed to climate conditions today, but we should also think about how we can transform consumer sectors to better address the way we produce and consume.

Eastern and Western European States

In the European States, the European Union and its agencies serve as a major point of information when it comes to how the region approaches disaster resilience. The EU reports that between 1980 and 2020, approximately 50 million people faced the effects of disasters and generated nearly 12 billion Euros in losses for the member states per year. The European Environment Agency, also known as the EEA, is the agency responsible for cultivating sustainability efforts in the region. It is important to note the fact that the EEA is also able to engage at a greater level as a result of its collaboration with regional and international partners. The agency takes into account EEA member countries that are a part of the EU, EEA cooperating and observer countries, European neighborhood countries and Central Asian countries. It is important to note the way that Europe is put in a distinct position compared to other regions. As their weight in most of these climate-related discussions continues to waver in the face of greater powers, it is critical to note the way that this inclusion introduces a unique approach to sustainability: green diplomacy. It is a term that reaffirms the EU's commitment to "science-based policies and positions" as they express through documents such as the European Green Deal. It was approved by the European Commission in 2020, and seeks to make the European Union (and effectively the continent) the first climate-neutral continent. But what is climate neutrality? This is a term that is best understood as working towards achieving net-zero emissions. To reach net-zero emissions (particularly greenhouse gas emissions in most cases), the most direct approach is to bring emissions down to zero. Part of what makes a goal like climate neutrality so transformative is the fact that it requires engagement from multiple sectors. This goal would require collaboration between the private

and public sectors, and it is something that the EU sees as an essential part of how we should redefine global climate action. Despite these policies, the continent still faces significant challenges as climate change continues to exacerbate some of the region's most vulnerable areas. In 2023, Slovenia faced its most devastating natural disaster as floods devastated much of the cities in the country that were close to water sources. The floods generated \$500 million worth of damage, on top of the support that would come from EU and NATO mechanisms. These circumstances reiterate the fact that the regional climate situations we've been discussing continue to occur and with greater strength each time.

Latin America and Caribbean States and Other States

Within Latin America and Caribbean states (LAC), an International Monetary Fund (IMF) article introduces climate shocks as a significant driver of cross-border migration in the region. Since we have defined disaster risk as the possibility, the use of the term "shock" appropriately takes it one step further. Shock suggests that they are the realization of the risk, and really serves as an opportunity for there to be a rhetorical push in the narrative when it comes to disaster resilience. Migration is a unique result of climate change, and it is one that must be viewed in conjunction with many other factors. It is helpful in this way to consider some of the typical aspects of migration: the origin-country, the destination-country and global factors. Taking this in the context of disaster resilience, climate migrations are therefore a result of the ways that a nation fails to show resilience in the face of climate shocks. From the perspective of an individual citizen, the effects of climate change can encroach on every bit of the society we understand. Natural disasters can destroy homes, workplaces, and schools. They can also take away essential pieces of the local food supply, and in doing so impact the smaller spheres of agriculture that subsist on the community. It is important to understand that the effects of climate change ripple out, and it is this lack of resilience that perpetuates instability. That instability is best addressed by using information and data to create solutions. One example of this is a previous collaboration between the Organization of East Caribbean States (OECS) and the UNDP to provide technical assistance that would create an early warning system for Barbados. This allowed for the Caribbean Tsunami Information Center and the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology to bring together sources of information for the use of communities in the region. In the case of other nations, they also share a need to identify a middle ground between understanding and acting to reverse the evolution of climate change. Among those active in this effort is the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, which historically was founded in order to serve as a source of information for nations around the world. As you can gather from both this and the research you will conduct, there is no straightforward way to bring a solution to the table. Disaster resilience is a multifaceted issue, and creating solutions will only be possible if you work to be well-informed on the data that is critical to our considerations in committee.

Now that we have discussed both Topics, and below you will find additional questions and resources to reference, I will leave you with some more food for thought. Disaster resilience is about building resilience together. It is about getting to understand those around you, their circumstance, and being

able to lead discussions that will make this experience even more meaningful. I am excited to see you engage with these topics, and further discover the nuance of such profound ideas.

Questions to Consider

1. As disaster resilience is closely dependent on regional conditions, how should the need for international cooperation be addressed?
2. How can we use developing technologies to assist in our understanding of the kinds of disasters that can occur?
3. Precedent, or this idea of using earlier events as a guide by which one can evaluate current situations, is of particular importance to disaster resilience. What about disaster resilience makes the issue cyclical, and what would it take to break it?
4. How does the rhetoric around disaster resilience affect the way that the topic should be discussed?
5. What kind of research is currently available to reference in the context of natural disasters? How can our solutions link the information provided by data on natural disasters, climate change, migration, etc.
6. Climate change continues to further its course, and many wonder if we are reaching a point we will not be able to reverse. How do you think our solutions should account for the changes, and even attempt to anticipate them?
7. Do you feel that the international community has sufficiently discussed the extent at which international cooperation can improve our disaster resilience?

Additional Resources

<https://www.undrr.org/>

<https://www.undrr.org/annual-report/2022#foreword>

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000225784>

https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wesp/wesp_current/2014wesp_country_classification.pdf

<https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2023/12/08/Climate-and-Cross-Border-Migration-5421>

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