

# Environmental Assembly

Supporting regions disproportionately affected by natural catastrophes and extreme weather events

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**Trigger Warning:**

**May contain mentions of death, violence, refused help, drowning, racial/ideological discrimination and similar or adjacent topics. If you are sensitive to any of these STOP reading and contact the authors of the document/ your student officers so they can be either censored, removed or worked around in a different way! Please stay safe!**

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## I. Introduction

Not all places on earth have the same weather or even the same weather patterns. This is a fact that most people will be aware of. But this simple fact does not only apply to the everyday weather, it also applies to more extreme weather patterns and events such as storms, floods, droughts and similar events, be they short episodes or longer lasting conditions.

Many people who live in areas with high weather variation have, over time, adapted to this as a stable component of their life, such as planting after the monsoon season, which is common in many south-asian countries<sup>1</sup>.

Because of the climate crisis however, many of these stable weather patterns have begun to become erratic<sup>2</sup>, while extreme weather events and natural disasters have become more severe and more likely to occur<sup>3,4</sup>.

Oftentimes, the support these areas receive is either heavily localized, meaning that it comes only from their municipal administrations or other immediate surroundings, or limited to post-disaster relief and humanitarian aid, meaning that help and support only arrives after a natural disaster has occurred.<sup>5</sup>

## II. Definition of Key Terms

**MAPA:** Most Affected People and Areas are the single or groups of persons as well as the regions mostly influenced and affected by climate change and its direct effects. This includes for example racial minorities, indigenous communities, queer people, younger as well as older people and poorer people<sup>6</sup>.

This presents a more accurate alternative to more wide-spread wordings, such as the global south.

**Disaster Resilience:** This refers to a state of preparedness and survivability of communities, individuals and organizations in the case of a natural or man made disaster. It encompasses the reduction of vulnerable systems like for example unstable buildings; but also the ability to recover from the event quickly and without suffering long term reductions of economic capability.

Additionally a measure of the ability to learn from past disasters and avoid their worst repercussions in the future.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [https://wiki.bildungsserver.de/klimawandel/index.php/Datei:Reis\\_Pflanzen\\_Indien.jpg](https://wiki.bildungsserver.de/klimawandel/index.php/Datei:Reis_Pflanzen_Indien.jpg)

<sup>2</sup> [https://wiki.bildungsserver.de/klimawandel/index.php/Indischer\\_Monsun](https://wiki.bildungsserver.de/klimawandel/index.php/Indischer_Monsun)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.carbonbrief.org/mapped-how-climate-change-affects-extreme-weather-around-the-world>

<sup>4</sup> <https://public.wmo.int/en/media/press-release/weather-related-disasters-increase-over-past-50-years-causing-more-damage-fewer>

<sup>5</sup> IPCC, 2012: *Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation*. A Special Report of Working Groups I and II of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

<sup>6</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Most\\_Affected\\_People\\_and\\_Areas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Most_Affected_People_and_Areas)

<sup>7</sup> <https://gsdrc.org/topic-guides/disaster-resilience/concepts/what-is-disaster-resilience/>

### **III. General Overview**

Due to the rise in the number and severity of extreme weather events and natural disasters the requirement for humanitarian, financial and physical support for MAPAs has risen as well.

It has become clear that many regions and even countries can not help their people and their communities.

This is why often external help is necessary. This support can come from national governments, the UN, private persons, Non-Governmental Organizations and corporate entities and in several different forms.

#### **Common Types and Timelines of Disaster Relief<sup>8</sup>:**

Physical support in the form of emergency supply shipments, staff for medical centers and search-and-rescue operations is most of the time the first kind to be available at the affected area and to the affected people. Financial support in the form of donations is also often delivered to these places. This can be counted as the immediate response to a disaster.

After the initial stabilization of the area, recovery can begin. This often includes the better rebuilding of destroyed systems, such as healthcare infrastructure and housing. It should be used as an opportunity to become better and more resilient against future disasters.

This ties into later risk mitigation, for example through building stabler housing and better disaster-protection-infrastructure such as dams and water pumps. Even though this again can require severe financial and physical support, it most often pays back in the future.

The last stage of the standard disaster relief timeline consists of building up the preparedness for future potential disasters. These measures can consist of developing more effective protocols for emergencies, stockpiling supplies but also educating people for the worst case.

### **IV. Major Parties Involved**

#### **Indonesia**

Indonesia was the country with the most natural disasters in 2020, there being 29 individual events, most of them of hydro-meteorological in nature<sup>9</sup>, so for example tsunamis, as well as the eruption of one of the 129 volcanoes. These volcanoes threaten the livelihood of an estimated five million people. Such a volcanic eruption can threaten, besides the obvious toll of human lives, the local ecosystems and economies, as they cause major damage to wildlife and infrastructure. There is also the risk of semi-manmade disasters due to the common employment of man made forest fires to clear land for farming<sup>10</sup>.

#### **WMO**

This is an agency of the United Nations whose task it is to expand international cooperation and global coordination in regards to matters concerning weather and its patterns, the

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.impact.upenn.edu/disaster-relief-phases-of-disaster-relief/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/269652/countries-with-the-most-natural-disasters/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.indonesia-investments.com/business/risks/natural-disasters/item243>

climate, the interactions of land, oceans and the atmosphere and water distribution. They provide early warning services for extreme weather events, support national weather and climate agencies and further sustainable development. The WMO is one of the primary sources of weather and climate related research and the practical application thereof. It is also recommended as one of your primary research sources in your preparation for the conference.

## **V. Conclusion**

Natural disasters and extreme weather events pose a huge threat to many communities. These can often not be overcome by those communities and their national governments and so they are dependent on international help. But this help often either does not reach them in time or not at all, even though it can be seen as an obligation to the international community to assist them to the best of their abilities in order to reduce the death toll and lasting ecological and economic damage.

Consequently it is crucial that member states come up with new suggestions and resolutions to support regions disproportionately affected by natural catastrophes and extreme weather events.

## **VI. Questions to consider**

- How affected is your country by natural catastrophes and extreme weather events?
- How can your country/the international community/the UN help MAPAs more effectively?
- Are there any (possibly new) types of natural disasters many programs do not address enough or even consider?
- Can you address other causes of natural catastrophes and extreme weather events and develop ways to limit these instead?
- What does your country consider to be the primary cause of natural catastrophes and extreme weather events?
- How is your country currently countering natural catastrophes and extreme weather events and supporting the population in those cases? Does your country require expanded assistance in tackling them?
- Which dimensions of natural catastrophes and extreme weather events and their consequences are not considered enough?
- How can long-term disaster resilience be achieved in your country and on an international level? Can both of those efforts be combined and if so, how?

## **VII. Recommended sources**

WMO: <https://public.wmo.int/en>

IPCC report 2018: [Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters ... - IPCC](#)

UNHCR: <https://www.unhcr.org/climate-change-and-disasters.html>

Other IPCC reports: <https://www.ipcc.ch/>

The United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals:  
<https://sdgs.un.org/goals> (especially 11 and 13)