

**Forum:**Economic and Social Council

**Issue:** Establishing an international framework for the provision of financial aid to Nations affected by natural disasters

**Student Officer:** Stefanos Kerkoulas

**Position:** President

## **PERSONAL INTRODUCTION**

Dear delegates,

My name is Stefanos Kerkoulas and it is my utmost pleasure to be the President of the Economic and Social Council. I'm a graduate high school student at Arsakeio General High School of Psychico and I will begin my studies in Law this year.

To begin with, I would like to congratulate all of you on your decision to join this year's Economic and Social Council, one of the most challenging and intriguing Committees in a MUN conference.

As your Chair, I hope to cooperate with all of you throughout the conference. Writing resolutions, debating on solutions, informing you on the subjects and answering your questions will be my pleasure. I hope my study guide will provide you with insight into the topic. Finally, I would like to inform you that I will be at your disposal ([stefanosker@outlook.com](mailto:stefanosker@outlook.com)) for any information on the issue.

I am looking forward to meeting you at the ATSMUN conference.

Sincerely,

Stefanos Kerkoulas

## INTRODUCING THE TOPIC

To begin with, between 1980 and 2000, disasters like earthquakes, tsunamis, and floods killed roughly 1.5 million people and directly affected at least 2.3 billion people worldwide. Economic losses from these catastrophes average between \$250 billion and \$300 billion per year, a number that's expected to increase in the future. And the impact falls disproportionately on poor countries. Clearly, there's a tremendous demand for disaster relief. So it's a huge problem that disaster aid from wealthier countries rarely lines up with actual needs.

Natural disasters are those adverse events resulting from natural processes of the earth. Examples of such events include earthquakes, hurricanes, tsunamis, floods, droughts and fires. Many natural disasters are profoundly destructive. They leave in their wake a trail of injury, death, loss of livestock, property damage and economic loss. The event with the highest death toll since 1980 was the Boxing Day tsunami in South East Asia that claimed the lives of 220,000 people. In regards to economic damage, the most destructive natural disaster during that time was the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan.

China has experienced a number of the world's most deadly disasters. In 1976, an earthquake claimed the lives of 242,000 people making it the most deadly earthquake since 1900. The country was also the victim of the most deadly flood since 1900 when 3.7 million people lost their lives in 1931. In certain countries the frequency of natural disasters gives the perception that their occurrence is somehow normal. However, in others it creates the perception they live in a thoroughly dangerous place. For example, 69 percent of Italians thought the country was the most environmentally dangerous country in the world in 2017. Fortunately for the Italians, this claim is not backed up statistically. China is often the most affected country, such as in 2016 when 34 natural disasters occurred.

Although natural disasters are largely seen as out of human control, human actions are at times responsible for the extremity of such events. Land use can influence the ability of an area to deal with the heavy rains that result in flooding. On a larger scale, the adverse effects of rising global temperatures may result in increasing frequencies of hurricanes and other extreme weather events in the future.



## KEY TERM

### **Natural disaster:**

A natural disaster is a major adverse event resulting from natural processes of the Earth; examples are floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, tsunamis, and other geologic processes. A natural disaster can cause loss of life or property damage, and typically leaves some economic damage in its wake, the severity of which depends on the affected population's resilience, or ability to recover and also on the infrastructure available.

## HISTORICAL INFORMATION

### Haiti Earthquake (2010)



A magnitude 7.0 earthquake with a depth of 8.1 miles rocked Haiti on January 12, 2010. Its epicenter was located just southwest of Port-Au-Prince with 59 aftershocks ranging from

4.2 to 5.9 magnitudes in strength. The strongest earthquake to hit the country since 1770, it led to over 200,000 deaths, 2 million homeless, and 3 million people in need of emergency aid.

### Indian Ocean Earthquake (2004)



Also known as the Sumatra-Andaman earthquake, it was estimated to have a magnitude of 9.15, and occurred on December

26, 2004. While the earthquake itself lasted for only 10 seconds, it caused a tsunami that killed an estimated 200,000 to 310,000 people along the shores of Indonesia, Sri Lanka, South India, and Thailand with one death even occurring at Port Elizabeth in South Africa, 8,000 miles away from the epicenter.

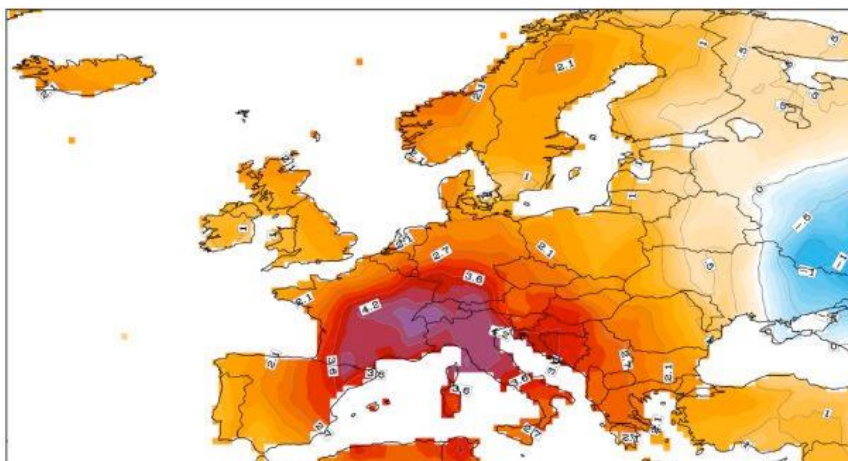
### East Africa Drought (2011)



The worst drought in 60 years, the Horn of Africa experienced a severe drought starting in mid-July of 2011. There was an estimated 12.4 million people in need of food. It resulted in a food crisis across Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Djibouti. It

threatened the livelihood of more than 9.5 million people and caused widespread death and famine.

2003 Summer temperature anomaly



### European Heat Wave (2003)

Europe is not too used to scorching hot summers, so when the 2003 European heat wave

struck, it resulted in a health crisis in several countries as well as a drought which led to a crop shortage. In the Ukraine, 75% of wheat crops were lost, and at least 14,802 casualties were recorded in France alone. The extreme temperatures also resulted in forest fires and counter-intuitively, even flooding.

## Hurricane Harvey (2017)



On August 25, 2017, Category 4 hurricane Harvey hit Texas causing around \$180 billion in damage. That's more than any other natural disaster in U.S. history for the exception of the largest estimates of

Hurricane Katrina.

Hurricane Harvey flooded one-third of Houston, forcing 39,000 people into shelters and damaging 203,000 homes.

## Spanish Influenza (1918)



The first wave of the Spanish flu, which is one of the several types of influenza viruses, began around March 1918 and spread throughout Asia, Europe, and North America. A contagious

illness, it was responsible for the death of between 20 million to 40 million people, though other estimates range from 40 million to 100 million people.

### **Hurricane Katrina (2005)**



One of the deadliest hurricanes to hit the Gulf Coast, it was ranked as the sixth strongest overall to hit the United States. It was also one of the costliest natural disasters with estimated property damages of over \$81 billion.

### **POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

It is no secret that in order for a country to deal and eventually overcome the multifaceted effects of a natural disaster there must be a plethora of strategic measures taken beforehand not only in the form of an emergency plan, which is undeniably crucial for the protection of the citizens and their properties, but also the government will need financial aid from foreign countries or international organizations ( such as but not limited to: the IMF and the World bank ).

Moreover, the financial aid that the affected state will need for the recovery of its wounds will be immediate and therefore there must be a pre-consented budget, that will be directly allocated to meet the needs of the respective country. For such

actions to be taken in a short amount of time for the elimination of the post disaster effects there must be a prior to the event international agreement, either between neighbor countries or most effectively a resolution signed by all UN member states that will highlight the importance of the proposed measures and will ensure that the money given for the recovery will be used correctly, without any kind of fraud.





## **RELATED QUOTES**

-While natural disasters capture headlines and national attention short-term, the work of recovery and rebuilding is long-term.

**Sylvia Mathews Burwell**

-We cannot stop natural disasters but we can arm ourselves with knowledge: so many lives wouldn't have to be lost if there was enough disaster preparedness.

**Petra Nemcova**

-If a natural disaster strikes your community, reach out to your friends, neighbors, and complete strangers. Lend a helping hand.

**Marsha Blackburn**

-Responding to a natural disaster is a complex problem.

**Tom Perez**

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