

Committee: Social and Humanitarian Committee
Issue: Strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations
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Position: Chair

Introduction

Armed conflicts, natural disasters, global financial crisis and economic downturns, extreme poverty and other humanitarian emergencies have been major problems for the citizens of earth. These types of problems have been ongoing for centuries and have been tormenting people's lives.

Even though there is not a permanent solution for these problems, by providing several safety, security, survival and other various types of humanitarian assistance, the loss or damage which these situations cause can be reduced. Since United Nations (UN) was found, one of their main purposes was to ensure peoples security, welfare and health, by providing humanitarian assistance the UN plans to aid the people who are in poor conditions due to their sufferings from a global challenge or a disaster and provide them with security, welfare and health.

The UN has been taking several measures and has created several resolutions in order to strengthen the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance to the people in these situations. Although these measures are improving year by year, the methods used are not effective enough and needs to be improved in a massive scale.

Definition of Key-Terms

Humanitarian

Having concern for or helping to improve the welfare and happiness of people.

Welfare

The good fortune, health, happiness, prosperity, etc., of a person, group, or organization; well-

being.

Coordination

Harmonious combination or interaction, as of functions or parts.

Natural disaster

A natural hazard that occurs in an uninhabited area may not be considered a natural disaster. An example highlighting the difference between natural disasters and natural hazards would be 2010 earthquake in Haiti. The earthquake on its own would be a natural hazard, whereas the situation as a whole would be considered a natural disaster.

Natural hazard

The peril of naturally occurring phenomena that impact negatively on people and the environment. Natural Hazards can be categorized into geological, hydrological, and climate and atmospheric hazards.

Earthquakes, Tsunami's, Floods, Hurricanes, Cyclones, and Landslides are good examples for natural hazards.

Refugee

A person who flees for refuge or safety, especially to a foreign country, as in time of a natural or a man-made disaster.

Background Information

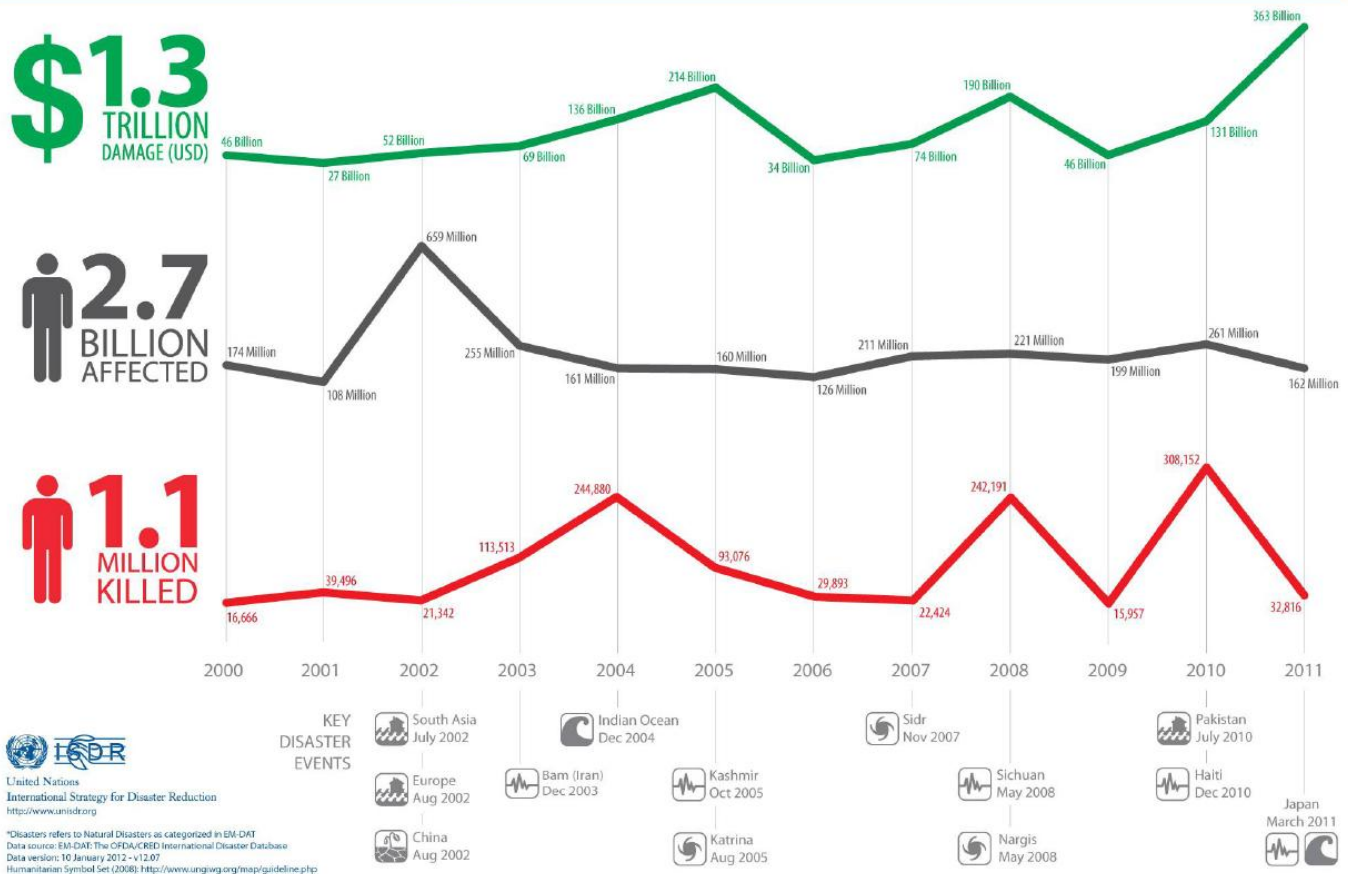
Natural Disasters

Over the last years we have witnessed an increase in the frequency and intensity of natural disasters, devastating human lives and livelihoods, especially in the most vulnerable communities. We take some small comfort from the fact that the impact of natural disasters has been somewhat lower in the past year, but also that in several cases such as Typhoon Bopha in the Philippines, the impact of natural disasters has clearly been mitigated by preparedness measures, vindicating this approach.

Overall, it is important to note that better preparedness, based on clear national disaster management plans and improved disaster management capacities, was the determining factor

in improving disaster response and averting severe economic damage. For 2009, estimates of economic costs related to disasters averaged between \$35 and \$50 billion, again a significant divergence from the 2000-2008 average of \$94 billion. Unfortunately, this average vastly increased in 2010 by the earthquake in Haiti and in 2011 because of the Tōhoku earthquake in Japan.

The Economic and Human Impact of Disasters* in the last 12 years



Conflicts

Conflicts negatively impact the life and safety of civilian populations and cause immense human suffering. In conflicts similar to the Syrian Civil War or Northern Mali Conflict it is impossible for the international community to deliver aid to all the people in need but by strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance the number of people whom received help may increase.

Globally, an estimated 27 million people were internally displaced by armed conflicts. By the end of 2009, 10.4 million refugees had received assistance from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), almost as many as in 2008. In Africa and Asia, where armed conflict continued to ravage communities, the figures for people in both new and protracted situations of internal displacement and seeking refugee status remained alarmingly high. In a number of contexts, humanitarian needs were compounded by a coexistence of armed conflict, natural disasters and global challenges. Humanitarian access continued to be hampered in several conflict-affected emergencies. Continuing violent and deliberate attacks on humanitarian relief personnel remain particularly alarming...

Development

While, providing measures of protection to populations in need, it is important that the international community respects the fundamental humanitarian principles of humanity, independence, impartiality and neutrality. Most importantly there has to be a smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation and development, emergency assistance must be provided in ways that will be supportive of recovery and long-term development and that emergency measures should be seen as a step towards sustainable development.

Preparedness

Strengthening national and international local preparedness and providing a more predictable and effective delivery of assistance and relief is very crucial for this issue. Taking precautions and early action can avoid or lessen the effects of humanitarian emergencies which may not be avoidable by actions taken later.

Transportation and Communication

In emergency humanitarian situations these two fields are almost always affected to a great extent. This limits the effectiveness of all aid that has been donated, seeing as it cannot be properly distributed, and given to all those who need it. As seen with the earthquake in Haiti, rubble blocked most roads, meaning that even aid that was able to reach the country took time to get to where it was needed.

Displacement & Refugees

The UN has provided humanitarian assistance to persons displaced by natural and man-made disasters since World War II, at which time most refugees traveled within Europe. After World War II, the plight of refugees and internally displaced persons has grown beyond the scope of Europe and spread worldwide. Today, over 42 million people worldwide "have been forcibly displaced from their homes and communities.

Humanitarian Assistance

Humanitarian assistance is an aid provided by the international community to the people whom are suffering from conflicts, weather and natural disasters, to the impact of such disruptions on health, hygiene, education, nutrition and even basic shelter. The ultimate aim is to save and protect the lives of people such as refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), to alleviate suffering and to maintain human dignity.

Earthquake in Haiti

On January 12, 2010, the capital city of Haiti, Port au Prince, was struck with a 7.0 magnitude earthquake, rendering 220,000 dead, 1.5 million homeless, and many hundreds of thousands injured and affected. This quake was a test of the effectiveness of rehabilitation and emergency relief. With the destruction of 8 local hospitals, field hospitals were established, and the UN worked with affiliated organizations to gather financing and to coordinate aid. Although this seemed like quick deployment, the aid took time to reach Haiti, and internal transportation was limited, which was one of the biggest setbacks.

Despite the immediate taking of action, one year later, a disputed 800,000 are still living in tent camps, 30% of the children are malnourished, and 70-80% of the population is unemployed. These figures are hard to process, seeing as Haiti was not in a stable state prior to the earthquake, and we can't figure in how much the aid has actually benefitted, and whether or not the situations are bettering, especially as compared to how it was previously.

The earthquake was not only detrimental to Haitians, but was also the third biggest loss for the United Nations with 150 members listed as missing, and a reported 22 killed. These losses added to the challenges faced by the UN in offering their assistance. One of the biggest difficulties was the closing of ports due to damage, and an airport that wasn't able to handle the large traffic of aid carrying flights. The rubble, cracks and pedestrians on the road made transportation of goods within the city problematical. Only 10% of the nation had internet, and the lack of working phones and other communication devices proved corresponding between teams difficult.

Great East Japan Earthquake (Tōhoku Earthquake)

It was the most powerful known earthquake ever to have hit Japan, and the fifth most powerful earthquake in the world since modern record-keeping began in 1900. The earthquake had a magnitude of 9.0(Mw) and had numerous aftershocks. Moreover, the earthquake triggered powerful tsunami waves that reached heights of up to 40 meters which caused a nuclear meltdown in Fukushima Daini Nuclear Power Plant and residents within a 20 km radius of the

plant were evacuated.

According to the World Bank it is the costliest natural disaster in world history with an estimated economic cost of 235 billion US dollars. Fortunately, According to Japan's foreign ministry, 116 countries and 28 international organizations had offered assistance to Japan not only economically but in many other aspects including humanitarian assistance. As of March 2012, donations to areas affected by the disaster totaled ¥520 billion and 930,000 people have assisted in disaster recovery efforts. Compared to the disaster in Haiti, the aid given to the people suffering in Japan was more successful.

Syrian Civil War

The Syrian Civil War which is a part of the Arab Spring is an ongoing conflict between the Syrian Government and the Free Syrian Army who are against the Assad regime. The conflict began on 15 March 2011, with popular demonstrations that grew nationwide by April 2011. The conflict has no clear fronts, with clashes taking place in many towns and cities across the country. According to the UN, between 90,000 and 100,000 people have been killed and there are 1.7 million refugees who are displaced all around the Middle East in countries such as: Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon. As well as 4.25 million internally displaced citizens. These people cannot commute to work, school and other places of business, or get supplies or medical care. This makes life unbearable for people who already have little access to food, water, medical care and electricity.

The situation for both internal and external Syrian refugees is only expected to get worse: The UNHCR reports, "By the end of the year it is estimated that half of the population of Syria will be in need of aid. This includes an anticipated 3.45 million Syrian refugees and 6.8 million Syrians inside the country, many of whom will be displaced from their homes." Furthermore, according to some refugees, the refugee camps lack of basic necessities such as electricity or water and the refugees are living by primitive ways...

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

OCHA is responsible for bringing together humanitarian actors to ensure a coherent response to emergencies. The aim is to assist people when they most need relief or protection. A key pillar of the OCHA mandate is to "coordinate effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors".

Humanitarian coordination seeks to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian response by ensuring greater predictability, accountability and partnership. OCHA is leading the international community's efforts to develop a better architecture for the humanitarian system, including strong in-country humanitarian leaders (Humanitarian Coordinators); representative and inclusive Humanitarian Country Teams; an effective and well-coordinated framework within which all humanitarian organizations can contribute systematically; and predictable funding tools.

United Nations Peacekeeping

The UN Peacekeeping is a group of trained personnel that direct the peace movements in areas inflicted by conflict and disasters, and assist in the implementation of set peace agreements. They are deployed in politically unstable and post-disaster areas.

United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC)

UNDAC is part of the international emergency response system for sudden-onset emergencies. It was created in 1993. It is designed to help the United Nations and governments of disaster-affected countries during the first phase of a sudden-onset emergency. UNDAC also assists in the coordination of incoming international relief at national level and/or at the site of the emergency.

UNDAC teams can deploy at short notice (12-48 hours) anywhere in the world. They are provided free of charge to the disaster-affected country, and deployed upon the request of the United Nations Resident or Humanitarian Coordinator and/or the affected Government.

UNDAC can also undertake disaster response preparedness missions. Such missions evaluate the national disaster preparedness and response capacity and plans upon request specific request from a Government.

United Nations Development Program (UNDP)

A UN group that assists nations in bettering the welfare of their respective countries through focus on fields such as the promotion of democracy, poverty and HIV/AIDS minimization, setting in place preventive measures to natural disasters and working on recovery and the reaching of their energy goals. The UNDP also plays a crucial role in assisting developing nations with securing aid, and focuses on the rebuilding of the society and the recovery process in post disaster areas. This organization commissions an annual Human Development Report, highlighting the key setbacks regarding development, and analyzing proposed ideas on a way to overcome these hurdles.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

This United Nations organization was established with the incentive to help children after World War II. With the same ideologies of assisting children, this fund grew to become UNICEF, an integral part in supporting the younger members of society. In post-disaster situations, UNICEF has outlined ubiquitous issues, and has focused in these areas for providing aid. When UNICEF deploys to a post-disaster area, they provide emergency immunizations to protect against the many possible epidemics including cholera and malaria. They also make available vitamin A supplementation and clean drinking water, and work to improve basic sanitation. For long term goals of rehabilitation, UNICEF rebuilds schools to provide a safe and positive environment for children, and fight against gender based violence for children and women, form reunification programs complete with family tracing, and demobilize child soldiers.

World Health Organization (WHO)

The branch within the United Nations system that focuses on health, the WHO deals with global health matters. In a post-disaster setting, the United Nations almost always deploys the WHO to first and foremost minimize casualties. This would begin with strengthening the capacity of the existing health units in the area, and deploying any necessary hands from organizations such as Doctors without Borders. WHO works to prevent the outbreak of epidemics, and monitors health trends. Furthermore, they coordinate international health aid for nations that are lacking the facilities.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was established on December 14, 1950 by the United Nations General Assembly. The agency is mandated to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. Its primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees. It strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another State, with the option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally or to resettle in a third country. It also has a mandate to help stateless people.

The United Nations Office for Risk Reduction (UNISDR)

This UN office serves as the focal point in the United Nations system for the coordination of disaster reduction and to ensure synergies among the disaster reduction activities of the United Nations system and regional organizations and activities in socio-economic and humanitarian fields.

Syria

Since March 2011 there is an ongoing civil uprising in Syria which is protests against the Assad regime. After months of military sieges, these protests have evolved into an armed rebellion which started the Syrian Civil War. Due to the civil war, the people of Syria are in bad conditions and lack of humanitarian necessities. Despite, there have been assistance from the neighboring countries; there are still too many people in need whom humanitarian assistance cannot reach.

Japan

The second largest contributor of monetary aid to peacekeeping operations, Japan provides overseas assistance in three primary ways – the deployment of Japanese disaster Relief team, the provision of emergency relief goods and emergency grant aid. Dispatched teams are composed of search and rescue teams, medical teams, advisors on disaster prevention and water supply all transported via air and sea. Emergency relief kits provided carry essential items such as tents, blankets, generators, water tanks, water purifiers, plastic sheets etc. Emergency grant aid is given with the purpose of emergency assistance, as a support of democratization and to aid the reconstruction and development process.

Moreover, Japan is one of the countries which are exposed to the most amount and most disastrous natural hazards but because of their advanced risk management strategies usually, only few people die in disasters. For example in the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011 which caused a Tsunami and a nuclear accident, there were only 15,883 deaths which is a low amount for this particular disaster. According to the World Bank it is the costliest natural disaster in world history with a estimated economic cost of 235 billion US dollars.

USA

USA is the largest contributor of aid in the world. They provide assistance and monetary fund's by United States Agency for International Development (USAID). USAID is a government agency which aims to provide economic, development and humanitarian assistance around the world in support of the foreign policy goals of the United States. It was created by John F. Kennedy in 1961 and operates in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Europe.

Germany

Germany is the third largest contributor of aid in the world, and increased their monetary aid budget to more than 6 billion, in 2010. Germany's aid strategy focuses on the environment, natural resources, climate, and agriculture and food security. Germany printed their White Paper in June 2008, to better outline their aid providing goals. Their White Paper highlighted the importance of food security, peace, security and clean water. It is with these same ideologies

that Germany has been contributing to Afghanistan and Africa.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of Event
22 December 1989	The UN General Assembly declares the 1990s as International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction
December 1991	General Assembly Resolution 46/182 is adopted, creating the position of Emergency Relief Coordinator, OCHA and the IASC
1993	UNDAC is established
12 July 2001	United Nations aid agencies are complaining that lack of funding and security are coming in the way of their work
December 2004	An earthquake in the Indian Ocean, causes a tsunami to hit the shores of Thailand – the worst natural disaster the nation has faced till date
January 2005	The UN plans to create global warning systems, to better prepare nations for natural disasters
8 March 2006	The strengthening of humanitarian aid is relooked at, as the General Assembly adopts resolution 60/124
12 January 2010	January 12, 2010 The Haitian capital city, Port-au-Prince is hit with a 7.0 magnitude earthquake
9 March 2011	Devastating Earthquake hits Japan and causes 15,883 deaths
15 March 2011	Armed conflicts began in Syria
17 May 2013	UNHCR announces that the number of displaced Syrians civilians reached to 1.7million

Relevant UN Treaties, Resolutions and Events

- Strengthening of the Coordination of Humanitarian Emergency Assistance of the United Nations, 19 December 1991, A/RES/46/182
- Strengthening of the Coordination of Humanitarian and Disaster Relief Assistance of the United Nations, Including Special Economic Assistance: Emergency International Assistance for Peace, Normalcy and Reconstruction of War-Stricken Afghanistan, 12 February 1996, A/RES/50/88
- Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: special economic assistance to individual countries or regions Emergency assistance for peace, normalcy and rehabilitation in Tajikistan, 17 October 1997, A/52/500
- Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, 07 February 2002, A/RES/56/107
- Participation of volunteers, "White Helmets", in the activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development, 15 September 2003, A/RES/58/118
- Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and prevention in the aftermath of the South Asian earthquake disaster - Pakistan, 12 September 2005, A/RES/60/13
- Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, 8 March 2006 A/RES/60/124
- The 60th Session of the General Assembly was successful in passing 16 resolutions on humanitarian assistance and coordination in emergency response situations
- International Cooperation on Humanitarian Assistance in the Field of Natural Disasters, from Relief to Development, 22 February 2007, A/RES/61/131
- Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, 1 March 2007, A/RES/61/134
- Strengthening Emergency Relief, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Prevention in the Aftermath of the Indian Ocean Tsunami Disaster, 8 February 2008, A/RES/62/91
- Humanitarian assistance, emergency relief, rehabilitation, recovery and reconstructing in response to the humanitarian emergency in Haiti, including the devastating effects of the earthquake, 17 May 2010, A/RES/64/250
- Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, 25 May 2010, A/RES/65/82
- Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United

Nations,16 May 2011, A/66/81

- Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations,7 December 2012, A/67/L.39
- Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United , 26 March 2013, A/RES/67/87

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

Resolutions

There have been numerous resolutions concerning this issue, both from The General Assembly and The Economic and Social Council.

Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)

The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) is a humanitarian fund established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2006 to enable more timely and reliable humanitarian assistance to those affected by natural disasters and armed conflicts. The fund is replenished annually through contributions from governments, the private sector, foundations and individuals and constitutes a pool of reserve funding to support humanitarian action.

Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)

It is a unique inter-agency forum for coordination, policy development and decision-making involving the key UN and non-UN humanitarian partners. The IASC was established in June 1992 in response to United Nations General Assembly Resolution 46/182 on the strengthening of humanitarian assistance. General Assembly Resolution 48/57 affirmed its role as the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance.

It is held twice a year in conferences chaired by the Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ms. Valerie Amos, usually in April and December. For urgent matters, the IASC Principals can schedule ad hoc meetings.

Possible Solutions

As mentioned earlier in the research report there are many NGO's whom are related with the issue, these NGO's must cooperate or strengthen their cooperation between governments and each other in order to increase the efficiency of their work and to intervene faster. Taking precautions and preparedness is very important; every government should be ready to give humanitarian assistance in emergencies. Moreover, especially in emergency situations similar to natural disaster providing ways of safe transport and communication are very important. Without communication or transport the humanitarian relief and assistance would be hard to provide. Furthermore, every governments humanitarian response system should be monitored and if needed should be improved by the help of related NGO's.

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