

**DNMUN23**

**Debate | Discourse | Diplomacy**

**Background Guide**

**UNGA**

**United Nations General  
Assembly**

**Agenda**

**Creating a framework to deal  
with natural disasters caused by  
climate change**

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## **Letter from the EB:**

Welcome, delegates, to the UNGA!

We, Phani Srivatsava and Udit Shivaram are delighted to welcome you to this wonderful committee where we will debate, discuss and deliberate about the ever prevalent issue of climate change and what mankind and the UN can do to mitigate its disastrous effects.

The UN General Assembly (UNGA) is the main policy-making organ of the Organization. Comprising all Member States, it provides a unique forum for multilateral discussion of the full spectrum of international issues covered by the Charter of the United Nations. Time and time again, it has constantly warned the world of the various threats of climate change in countless GA meetings involving nearly 200 states. The UNGA is one of the most well-known and one of the most active bodies of the United Nations, hence this session will be crucial in deciding what, and how the world community deals with a global crisis. The Executive Board expects you to come up with unique, detailed and most importantly realistic solutions to combat this issue. Ideally, the solutions you come up with have a positive impact on the majority of the committee and on your own portfolios as well.

Regards,

Phani Srivatsava (Chairperson)

Udit Shivaram (Vice-Chairperson)

# **Introduction to the UNGA:**

United Nations General Assembly, one of the six principal organs of the United Nations (UN) and the only body in which every member of the organization is represented and allowed to vote.

The first session of the assembly convened on Jan. 10, 1946, in London, with 51 countries represented. As of 2006 there were 192 members of the General Assembly. Numerous non-members, such as states, organizations, and other entities (e.g., the Vatican, the African Union, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and Palestine), maintain observer status, enabling them to participate in the work of the General Assembly.

The General Assembly exercises deliberative, supervisory, financial, and elective functions relating to any matter within the scope of the UN Charter. Its primary role, however, is to discuss issues and make recommendations, though it has no power to enforce its resolutions or compel state action.

Other functions include admitting new members; selecting members of the Economic and Social Council, the non-permanent members of the Security Council, and the Trusteeship Council; supervising the activities of the other UN organs, from which the General Assembly receives reports; and participating in the election of judges to the International Court of Justice and the selection of the secretary-general.

Decisions usually are reached by a simple majority vote. On important questions, however—such as the admission of new members, budgetary

matters, and peace and security issues—a two-thirds majority is required.

The General Assembly convenes annually and in special sessions, electing a new president each year from among five regional groups of states. At the beginning of each regular session, the General Assembly also holds a general debate, in which all members participate and may raise any issue of international concern.

Most work, however, is delegated to six main committees, known as

- (1) Disarmament and International Security
- (2) Economic and Financial
- (3) Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural
- (4) Special Political and Decolonization
- (5) Administrative and Budgetary, and
- (6) Legal.

(Committees are generally referred to by their number; thus, the Disarmament and International Security Committee is known as the First Committee.)

# General Rules of Procedure for the UNGA

- Internet regulations: Not allowed in committee.
- Facts and figures: Reuters, BBC, UN website, Official media of your countries only. (Local news agencies will not be accepted. However, if the director finds the situation appropriate, he shall accept local news).

## Parliamentary Procedure – Points

- Point of order
- Point of information (if valid)
- Point of personal privilege
- Point of parliamentary inquiry

## DEBATE PROCEDURE:

- GSL – General Speaker's Lists  
1 min per speaker - Max: 15 speakers, min: 6-8 speakers
- Moderated Caucus  
Max: 10 speakers, Min: 5 speakers, focused on a facet of the agenda
- Unmoderated caucus  
Max time: 20 min, Min time: 10min, regulated as per convenience).
- Motion to entertain (regulated by the chairperson).

## DEFAULTING OF DELEGATES IN COMMITTEE:

- Delegate is disruptive: warned 1<sup>st</sup> time
- Delegate continues to be disruptive: gagged for 3 mins (max:5mins)
- The delegate further continues to be disruptive: expelled from the committee.
- In cases of plagiarism of resolutions- (secretary general called, decision taken by secretary general is final).

# **Introduction to the Agenda:**

Climate change has been one of the biggest factors in the newly developed fragility of our beautiful planet, natural disasters being the glaring issue. Millions of people have been displaced, lost their lives and homes and have had nowhere to turn to and nowhere to go. However natural disasters have also been a driving factor in bringing different nations with opposing views on the world together. Nations have worked out their differences and built bridges to peace through standing together and helping one another in times of disaster.

Over the past decade, we have seen an increase in the intensity of natural disasters around the world. As climate change intensifies, extreme weather events, such as floods, droughts, storms, bushfires and heatwaves seriously affect people. Various protocols and agreements have been created by international bodies as well as the UN itself, including Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), United Nations Global Compact (UNCG), Greenhouse Gas Protocol (GHG).

The Emergency Events Database (EM-DAT) reported that over 730,000 people have lost their lives, over 1.9 million have been injured, and around 15 million have been made homeless in the last ten years as a result of disasters. The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) recorded in 2018, 1,600 disaster events that resulted in 17.2 million people being displaced from their homes, 90% of which fled weather and climate-related hazards. These encounters are reliable with a critical adjustment shortfall in developing and developed countries for some sectors and regions. The high incidence of disasters has disrupted countries' economic stability, loss of life, damage to infrastructure and social and environmental losses particularly on the vulnerable - the young and the elderly, women and indigenous people.

Countries in the world need money to build and support facilities and technological developments to prepare for disaster risk reduction. Some countries have already instigated regulations and systems to strengthen resilience.

Even if a good resilience system is developed at local, national and international levels, it would be useless if the community is not provided with sufficient and adequate socialisation about disasters, especially those who live in disaster prone areas. Education to increase public understanding and awareness in overcoming disasters is still lacking, knowing what needs to be done is challenging, and learning how to save ourselves if disasters occur is called for. Many communities still lack systems of fast response when a disaster occurs, which makes the loss, both economically and socially, caused by natural disasters very high.

### **Existing Disaster Mitigation Frameworks:**

#### **Action that has been taken or is being taken:**

Whilst the cases of climate-related disasters have been increasing, the international community has made efforts to reduce risks of the disasters and build resilience to them. In 2015, the General Assembly adopted the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 (SFDRR). This agreement set 7 goals to the expected outcome - “the substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries.” In order to support the implementation of the SFDRR, the UNDP plays a significant role, as the UNDP is working with national governments, unions and the private sector in countries around the world, strengthening community resilience and capacities to adapt to disasters and also raising the level of



public awareness of disasters. UNDP works with the Global Environment Facility - Least Developed Countries Fund (GEF LDCF), financing projects such as Haiti's National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA). This programme was established to identify the coastal development sector as a top national priority for climate change adaptation. In response, it developed a programmatic approach to support Climate Risks Management (CRM) in the most vulnerable Low-Elevation Coastal Zones (LECZ) of Haiti. The project aims to promote development that protects the local communities from climate change impacts. In terms of raising awareness of the public, UNDP, with the support of the Government of Japan, implemented a regional initiative to strengthen tsunami awareness and preparedness in 18 Asia Pacific countries. "Strengthening School Preparedness for Tsunamis in the Asia Pacific Region" contributed to the achievement of the seven Sendai Framework targets for reducing the number of people affected, and economic losses from natural and human-caused disasters. The project conducts training in schools on how to be prepared and know exactly what to do when an earthquake and tsunami occurs. Furthermore, for specifically those countries which have financial difficulties to build resilience and adapt to climate change, the Adaptation Fund was established in 2001. This project has allocated more than US\$ 783 million to relevant projects to help vulnerable countries and communities build resilience to natural disasters. In particular, the Fund helps the areas develop communities' strategies for resilience through training and workshops, and enhance climate and disaster resilient infrastructure systems.

# **Technology related disasters**

When it comes to disasters, natural disasters are the immediate assumption, such as earthquakes, tsunamis, droughts, tornadoes, and wildfires. However, as another subset of disasters, technological disasters, or man-made disasters, also happen frequently across the world, and a single technological accident brings no less damage to human well-being and national economies than a natural disaster. Technological hazards are defined as arising from, “technological or industrial conditions, dangerous procedures, infrastructure failures or specific human activities,” such as “industrial pollution, nuclear radiation, toxic wastes, dam failures, transport accidents, factory explosions, fires and chemical spills.” In addition, a technological event could also be triggered by a natural disaster, and this secondary technological accident is called a Natech.

Obviously, a Natech is much more problematic, as simultaneous responses to both the natural disaster and technological accident are needed when a Natech strikes. According to the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED), in 2017, 4,616 people died in man-made disasters on a global scale, and the number of affected people amounted to 21,497 . The technological accidents having significant impacts in recent years include the 2015 Bento Rodrigues dam disaster in Belgium, Tianjin explosions in China the same year, and 2014 Sundarbans oil spill in Bangladesh. Considered as the world’s worst industrial disaster, the gas leak of about 40 tons of methyl isocyanate (MIC) at a Union Carbide pesticide plant in Bhopal, India in 1984 killed around 15,000 people and affected at least 500,000 people over the following years after this disastrous event. The lingering effects of this

gas leak accident were evident through the thousands of newborns who suffered from “brain damage, missing palates, and twisted limbs” due to their parents’ exposure to the detrimental MIC gas and MIC-contaminated water. In response to this accident, The Union Carbide Corporation paid \$470 million for compensation, and public awareness on environment protection remarkably increased in India. The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) was established under the Environment Protection Act passed in 1986, bearing the responsibility of drawing up and enforcing environmental laws and regulations as well as “integrating environmental strategies into all industrial development plans for the country.”

The devastating “Triple Disaster” of Earthquake, Tsunami, and Nuclear Meltdown on March 11, 2011, in Japan could be considered as a Natech. The chain of calamity started with a 9.0-magnitude earthquake, which soon triggered enormous tsunami waves. Then this powerful tsunami immediately flooded the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant in Fukushima Prefecture, resulting in the worst nuclear disaster since Chernobyl in 1986. The death toll of this “Triple Disaster” was alarming: around 100 people died in this earthquake, but the tsunami took away almost 20,000 lives; the economic losses were estimated to be \$360 billion so that this catastrophe was considered as “the most expensive disaster in human history.” Additionally, the nuclear meltdown released considerable radioactivity into the surroundings, displacing more than one hundred thousand people. In response to this nuclear accident, the Nuclear Regulation Authority (NRA), an administrative body under the authority of the Cabinet of Japan, was created under the Ministry of the Environment in 2012 to ensure nuclear security in Japan. The NRA has set up local centres in Japan to develop and implement specialised

preparedness and evacuation plans for local communities. Furthermore, the Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies (NSs) have played an important role in strengthening preparedness to address the humanitarian consequences of nuclear accidents as well as effectively respond to nuclear and radiological emergencies.

To date, there is no international agreement in place especially on tackling technological hazards, though there are some regional and sectoral frameworks dealing with different types of technological disasters, such as chemical disasters. Therefore, during this conference delegates are encouraged to develop an overarching framework on disaster risk reduction of technological hazards, along with detailed preparedness, response, and recovery plans on technological disasters. Though not adequate enough to address the complexity of technological hazards, the Sendai Framework specifically mentions that it will apply to the disasters caused by technological hazards with multi-hazard management strategies at all levels and across all disaster-related sectors. Furthermore, international efforts are also coordinated on disaster recovery for specific technological accidents. For example, in 2002, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched the Chernobyl Recovery and Development Programme (CRDP) to help affected people return to their normal lives as well as collaborate with Ukraine's government to develop and implement development-oriented guidelines and policies for the affected areas. Within the large framework of international cooperation, delegates should not ignore the importance of transboundary cooperation as disasters could erupt across borders. For instance, supported by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), a project on disaster risk management in the Danube Delta, initiated by the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and

Ukraine, aimed for preventing the incidence of industrial accidents and enhancing the hazard management in the Danube Delta, especially focusing on high-hazard oil terminals located in these three countries on the Delta. Moreover, many countries have already directed their efforts on disaster preparedness and prevention. As many chemical spillage accidents caused fires and frequent human casualties in Tanzania, the Chemical Accident Prevention and Preparedness (CAPP-TZ) project was developed to strengthen disaster risk governance of chemical hazards in Tanzania; despite that, the lack of law compliance and enforcements, collaboration among shareholders, and public awareness on the importance of relevant legislations in Tanzania could undoubtedly hamper this progress.

In the United States, the Rail Corridor Risk Management (RCRM) System, developed jointly by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Department of Transportation Pipeline and Hazardous Safety Administration, and the Federal Railroad Administration as a national effort to reduce transport hazards, is being used in railroads for discerning “the statistical routing of hazardous substances on routes that pose the least overall safety and security risk.” The United States has also invested in other DRR activities, including “increasing trackside safety technology, increasing the number of track inspections, integrating emergency response training and developing emergency response capability plans.” While forming the blocs during the conference, delegates should also bear in mind that developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, small-island developing countries, and other disaster-prone developing countries, are more susceptible to technological disasters and accidents due to, but not limited to, unplanned urbanization; unwise land use; inadequate

resources for disaster prevention, preparedness, and recovery; loose industrial and environmental regulations; and weak law enforcements. Thus, delegates' positions should not be limited to their regional blocs. Apart from that, there is another factor to be considered for those delegates representing the resource-rich countries, known as the resource curse. The resource curse means "the failure of many resource-rich countries to benefit fully from their natural resource wealth, and for governments in these countries to respond effectively to public welfare needs;" therefore, those countries could face higher technological risks.

For instance, as one of the most petroleum-rich countries, Nigeria experienced 2,369,470 barrels of oil spill from 4,647 incidents between 1976 and 1996. Fuel conflict in the Niger Delta could partly account for the frequent oil-spill accidents. Niger Delta is home to over 75% of the nation's petroleum production and exports, whereas it is one of the least developed regions in Nigeria. This area has constantly been exploited by the national government as well as foreign oil and gas corporations who have amassed great wealth through this lucrative industry, suffering from frequent oil spills and widespread environmental damage. Unwilling to restrict such profitable activities from oil industry, the Nigerian state has done almost nothing to alleviate miserable livelihoods of local communities and deal with environmental degradation, regardless of the fact that the poor regulations and uncontrolled land exploitation for oil production have gradually led to the underdevelopment of this area.

# **Case Studies:**

## **Asia-Pacific:**

As the region most frequently plagued by both natural and technological disasters, Asia-Pacific countries should undoubtedly put DRR on the top of the agenda. Greatest risks of natural disasters exist in South and South-West Asia and South-East Asia, whereas Afghanistan faces a higher risk of conflicts. As this region has taken the lead in addressing DRR due to its vast experiences and advanced technologies such as early warning systems and data collection mechanisms, developing countries should develop their capacities through active partnerships and regional cooperation. The driving forces of disasters in this region include rapid urbanisation and economic growth, extensive poverty and inequalities, environmental degradation, and various transboundary issues.

## **Pakistan:**

Pakistan, located in South Asia, is prone to natural calamities such as floods. Because of its geographical position, monsoonal climate, and complicated river system, the country is prone to floods. The main rivers that run through Pakistan, such as the Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, and Sutlej, add to the region's vulnerability. Heavy monsoon rains, which occur between June and September, are the primary cause of flooding in Pakistan. It is important to acknowledge that Pakistan's contribution to global emissions stands at a mere 0.3 percent. Yet, the country bears a disproportionate and unjust burden of climate change impacts, experiencing heightened weather variability and extreme events. In 2022, climate change amplified the intensity of monsoon rainfall, triggering the devastating floods that ravaged the nation. The

repercussions of the floods continued to reverberate even during the UN Climate Conference of Parties (COP27) in November 2022. Pakistani Minister for Climate Change, Sherry Rehman, highlighted the disaster as evidence of Pakistan's vulnerability to a climate crisis primarily fuelled by emissions from other countries. Pakistan vowed to prioritize loss and damage in their negotiations, determined to ensure their concerns are heard and addressed.

### **Africa:**

African countries are the only region explicitly mentioned in the Sendai Framework as those developing countries suffering heightened vulnerability to disasters. In a region frequently struck by floods, droughts, storms, and earthquakes, African states lacked strong governance capacities, experienced great population growth and widespread urbanization, and suffered from limited funding to invest in DRR and community resilience. Bear in mind the case of Nigeria. Other resource-rich countries like Nigeria might face similar technological hazards caused by the resource curse. Arab States: This region suffered from a broad range of natural disasters, including both geological hazards (e.g. earthquakes and landslides) and weather-related hazards (e.g. droughts, sandstorms, tsunamis, and floods). Extreme poverty, political and social insecurity, poor urban planning, and increasing population growth are all facilitators in increasing disaster risks.<sup>108</sup> For those countries, inter-regional cooperation and partnerships with UN System and other NGOs are keys to ameliorate the situations.

### **Americas:**

This bloc comprises different areas, including North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, which are exposed to different types of



hazards. Some common issues plaguing this region include extensive environmental degradation, ill-planned urbanization, poor land-use regulations and management, and climate change. While Latin America and Caribbean countries are more affected by disasters, those in North America should consider their past actions to make decisions on financial and technical aid as well as other types of aid that help promote DRR efforts in the developing countries.

**Europe:**

The European Commission has identified 11 natural and man-made disaster risks the European Union might encounter, including flooding, extreme weather, forest fire, earthquake, pandemic, epizootic/animal & plant disease, industrial accident, critical infrastructure disruption, nuclear/radiological accident, terrorism, and cybercrime. However, there are other new and emerging risks delegates should consider while making decisions for your countries. For example, the influx of refugees and migrants from the countries experiencing wide-ranging humanitarian crises, such as Syria and Iraq, has negatively impacted the European countries and given rise to new issues on disaster risk management. Other emerging hazards include climate and environment-induced migration, space weather hazards, (re-) emerging infectious threats like antimicrobial resistance, and biodiversity loss.

# Position Papers

Position papers in this committee are not required; however, it is recommended to write one to gain a more comprehensive understanding of your own research and to assess your strong and weak areas.

Sample position paper:

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NAME: PHANI SREEVATSAHA

COMMITTEE: DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE.

INSTITUTION: PES UNIVERSITY

AGENDA: Discussion on the progress of the disarmament goals of the NPT, CWC, and BWC with special emphasis on the JCPOA and the activities of Iran and the DPRK.

COUNTRY: RUSSIAN FEDERATION.

“Religion makes people kill each other, science supplies them with weapons.” - Vladimir Putin.

Weapons of mass destruction (WMD) are atomic explosive weapons, radioactive material weapons, lethal chemical and biological weapons, and any weapons developed in the future which have characteristics comparable in destructive effect to those of the atomic bomb or other weapons aforementioned.

The Russian Federation has implemented arms control agreements and has participated in threat reduction programs that have dismantled and downsized substantial parts of its arsenals and made inventory numbers more transparent.

The Russian Federation complying with the prevention of development and stockpiling of biological and chemical weapons is a signatory of the Biological Weapons Conventions (BWC) and has signed and ratified the Chemical Weapons Conventions (CWC). Similarly, the treaties signed by The Russian Federation are – Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM), Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (LTBT). The Russian Federation is also a signatory of the NPT which it ratified as well during the Soviet Union era.

Russia has not signed or ratified the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) because Russia believes that the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons cannot be achieved by the unilateral and rather arrogant methods on which TPNW is based. Russia reaffirms its stance concerning this treaty and calls upon other states to review it thoroughly. Russia does not accept any claim that the TPNW contributes to the development of customary international law. We call upon all states that are considering supporting the treaty to reflect seriously on its implications for international peace and security. Russia recommends the need to further review the existing treaties such as the LTBT and the NPT and fix existing loopholes with a comprehensive plan of action.

Moscow's commitment to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) has not changed. The Motherland recommends future trade with Iran not be impacted by western sanctions. Iranian crude is becoming more appealing, as is the petroleum from nations with strict sanctions since the U.S. has stopped importing Russian oil and the EU is aiming to lessen its reliance on Moscow for energy.

To advance efforts for world peace, the Russian delegate suggests debate on the following subjects:

- 1) Prevention of state and non-state actors from acquiring fissile material, radioactive elements, and WMD by increasing surveillance in areas stored and mined from.

- 2) Strict checks on imports and exports of WMDs.
- 3) Enforcing a ban on reprocessing and phasing out the use of Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU).
- 4) Recommends increasing the comprehensiveness of the NPT which allows greater use of the task force against non-state actors with a special focus on ambiguous constructed Articles presently in the NPT.

The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) is a global network that detects atmospheric radioactivity. The Russian Federation highly recommends the creation of a new body that works in conjunction with the IAEA with the principles of the CTBTO to carry out inspections in member nations if any suspicious activities are to be detected by the CTBTO. The various inspections thus conducted by the IAEA based on the data provided by the CTBTO could be Ad hoc, Routine, or Special inspections.

In light of the current events, the motherland is committed to avoiding nuclear war.

The Motherland and the U.S. issued a statement last year in agreement to not get involved in a nuclear war, adopting a similar stance by the four permanent member nations of the UNSC.

The protection and control of WMDs are of utmost importance. The threat of Non-State Actors makes its presence felt substantial. The Russian Federation is willing to provide full support.

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# **QARMA**

- 1. What loopholes exist in current climate change disaster mitigation frameworks?**
- 2. How can you address these loopholes in a comprehensive and permanent manner?**
- 3. How can you analyse the full scope of the impact of man made disasters?**
- 4. How would you regulate nuclear entities in member states?**
- 5. How would you create legal frameworks to also address potential man made disasters that have never before been documented in a legal setting?**