CERRITOS CONFERENCE 2021

Novice

OCHA

TOPIC:
INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE TO NATURAL DISASTERS

DIRECTOR: ASHLEY LEE

October 9th, 2021

To Delegates of CHSMUN Novice 2021

Dear Delegates,
Welcome to CHSMUN Novice 2021!

It is our highest honor and pleasure to welcome you all to our 2021 novice conference here at Cerritos High School. On behalf of the Cerritos High School Model United Nations program, we are proud to host this conference, where you will become more knowledgeable on international issues, participate in intellectually stimulating discussions, and create new and everlasting friendships.

The CHSMUN program continues to compete around the world as a nationally ranked MUN program. Our delegates utilize diplomacy in order to create complex solutions towards multilateral issues in the global community. Our head chairs are selected from only the best seniors of our program, undergoing a rigorous training process to ensure the highest quality of moderating and grading of debate. Furthermore, all the topic synopses have been reviewed and edited numerous times. We strongly believe that by providing each and every delegate with the necessary tools and understanding, he or she will have everything they need to thrive in all aspects of the committee. We thoroughly encourage each delegate to engage in all of the facets of their topic, in order to grow in their skills as a delegate and develop a greater knowledge of the world around them.

Although there will be a few changes to our conference due to Covid-19, our advisors and staff have put in countless hours to ensure delegates have an amazing experience. Our greatest hope is that from attending CHSMUN 2021, students are encouraged to continue on in Model United Nations and nevertheless, inspired to spark change in their surrounding communities. With this strong circuit consisting of over 500 delegates, CHSMUN Novice 2021 will provide a quality experience for beginner delegates to enhance their speaking and delegating skills.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact us! We look forward to seeing you at CHSMUN Novice 2021!

Sincerely,

Anushka Panjwani & Naima Dellawar

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Secretary-Generals

A Note From The Director

Delegates,

Hey everyone! My name is Ashley Lee and I'm thrilled to be your OCHA chair director for this year's Cerritos High School conference! It's been nearly 4 years since I've joined the program, and it has been the single most important experience of my highschool career. I've met some of my closest friends through MUN, and the community experience is something I never thought I'd ever be a part of. Outside of MUN, I'm part of the board for our school's Christian club (Lighthouse) and You & Me club - two clubs that I'm extremely passionate about. In my free time, I'm usually trying out new chicken sandwich places with my friends or listening to some of my favorite artists: Doja Cat, Pink Sweats, and Agust D!

For this year's conference, I'm sure that it's the first in-person conference for most delegates and I'd highly advise everyone to come in prepared and confident. It's totally fine to get pre-committee jitters but remember: confidence and research is key! I chose a topic that is attracting traction in correspondence with climate change and global warming, and I believe that each and every one of you will bring unique perspectives as well as solutions to the table. Wishing you guys good luck and I'm so excited to finally meet you all!

Sincerely,

Ashley Lee

Director, OCHA

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Committee Introduction

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Human Affairs (OCHA) was founded and established in December 1991 to bring together international efforts and humanitarian actors to immediately respond to complex emergencies and natural disasters. The committee was first founded as the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) and merged to OCHA, succeeding the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO). Since its establishment, the committee has collaborated with other United Nation agencies such as UNHRC and IMO to develop policy frameworks that are flexible for all countries regardless of economic status. In addition, the committee founded the UN Central Emergency Response Fund, or CERF, in means of developing a rapid humanitarian response team for people affected by natural disasters. Within the committee itself, topics for action range between advancing the agenda for humanity to discovering and applying faster sources of technology that sustain internal collaboration during times of crisis.

Topic: International Response to Natural Disasters

Background:

Every year, Earth's biosphere is targeted by minor and major disasters that kill on average 60,000 people, accounting for 0.1% of global deaths. Although death rates are variable and dependent on the severity of the catastrophe, it doesn't undermine the unpredictability of when and where a disaster will strike. Natural disasters can be categorized in three basic levels: geographical, hydrological, and meteorological.

Geophysical disasters are typically caused by seismic and tectonic movement beneath Earth's biosphere and consist of earthquakes, landslides, tsunamis, and volcanic activity. These disasters have similar signs before major occurrences such as shaking, swaying, and unstable ground. Almost 98% of geophysical disasters have a degree of unpredictability and geologists have a hard time pinpointing the specific timeframe and direct location where a catastrophe will strike next. Communities located along the Ring of Fire - especially eastern and central North America - are extremely vulnerable to geophysical damages that may lead to large-scale structural damage of buildings and infrastructure. Measurement of seismic activity is leveled on a scale that ranges from 0.0 to 10.0 to denote the magnitude, and DPR, or Disaster Plan Relief, is applied in these situations accordingly in terms of preparedness, recovery plan, and immediate response.

The second type of natural disasters fall into the category of hydrological, meaning the distribution or occurrence and movement of water on Earth's surface. In between the years of 2001 through 2018, 74% of natural disasters were water-related and caused by avalanches, floods, tsunamis, and typhoons. Over three billion people were negatively affected and hydrological disasters caused a global economic damage of $700 billion USD. According to UN Water, threats to mother nature such as climate change, deforestation, rising sea levels, and loss of wetlands are expected to exponentially increase the number of people and communities affected by water-related disasters in the coming years. Despite preventive efforts through global collaboration, investment in these sectors must be scaled to meet current and future needs, marking it a major challenge for most nations.

The third type is meteorological. Unlike hydrological and geographical disasters, meteorological disasters are far more violent and calamitic. Caused by an alteration in the atmosphere, meteorological disasters are caused by weather-forming processes and associated with extreme rain, drought, snow, ice, or wind. Cyclones, storms/wave surges, droughts, hot winds, and tornadoes are all examples of weather disasters and a direct result of global warming and climate change. Following Hurricane Mathew's destruction in 2016, global efforts responded by sending humanitarian aid to affected locations; however, parts of the United States, the Caribbean Islands, and Haiti had water services shut down for hours and even days, and the total damage in the US alone neared $2 billion. Meteorological disasters are typically undermined

because they're short-lived and extremely sudden, but it can lead to mass destruction of critical infrastructures in urban and suburban areas alike.

United Nations Involvement

On an international scale, the United Nations has been working to better respond to catastrophic events in terms of speed and effectiveness. In 1989, the United Nations passed Resolution 44/236, or the International Day for Disaster Reduction (IDDR) to encourage risk-awareness within developing countries. Every year, on October 13th, global citizens come together and celebrate communities that have overcome natural occurrences in their area. The successor to IDDR - the partnership with Sendai Seven - focuses on reducing economic losses and disaster death rates to promote global awareness. The Sendai Seven campaign is recognized yearly on the same day as the IDDR and targets global disaster mortality rates, disaster damage, economic loss, and work to increase availability of multi-hazard early warning systems as well as risk information and assessments. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction was founded by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction - or UNDRR - to bring together governments and reduce disaster risk. As the years passed, both minor and major revisions were made to the Sendai Framework in coordination with climate change risks and to tackle a broader set of disaster relief related conflicts.

In terms of UN action towards better international collaboration and efforts, the United Nations passed Resolution 2816 and created the United Nations Disaster Relief Office, or UNDRO. The UNDRO, another successful UN resolution, is a relief coordination formed in 1971 "in response to a request for disaster assistance from a stricken state and also to coordinate UN relief with the assistance." Since its development, this body has set out numerous policy reforms in ill-equipped nations in support of people living in poorer housing that are more susceptible to mass destruction. To add, they prepare for disasters and approach communities to strengthen themselves, free of any form of discrimination.

As for non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the International Red Cross and Oxfam are preparing international and national groups of people in the case of an emergency. The International Red Cross, or IRC, is a global ambassador of immediate aid and provides humanitarian assistance to citizens all around the world. In 2015, the IRC assisted more than 16.4 million people after natural disaster incidents, marking it the single NGO to aid the largest number of people. Oxfam is another nonprofit group that is based in Australia, and they work to help people bounce back to their normal lives once a disaster has devastated the region. Regardless of race, gender, sexual identity, and age, Oxfam influences policy makers to implement disaster risk reduction plans within all countries.

Case Study: Hurricane Sandy

Hurricane Sandy (often referred to as Superstorm Sandy) was a culmination of storms that progressed into deadly floods, mudslides, and destructive winds between a 9 day period in the Caribbean islands and United States. On October 22, 2012, a predicted Category 1 storm that formed off the northeast coast of Nicaragua in the Caribbean sea passed over the countries of Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti. As it progressed North and up to the U.S. on the East Coast, Sandy unleashed widespread havoc and swept over the states of New Jersey, New York, and Delaware. The hurricane became a hybrid of two storm systems and killed 70 people in the Caribbean, 150 in the U.S., and caused at least $70 billion in damages, making it the most expensive storm in U.S. history. Aside from Sandy's calamatic destruction in North America, the disaster was a wake-up call to the world and showed how vulnerable countries were to unpredictable damage.

In immediate response to the disaster, the Red Cross distributed more than 17.5 million meals and handed out roughly 7 million relief items and kits such as blankets, gloves, and clothing. In addition, the United States Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) deployed 6,000 staff to coordinate emergency response and minimize communal impact. Despite national and global aid, the aftermaths of Sandy were still present in affected communities and families struggled to get back on their feet due to property damage, mental health damage, and lack of funding.

Bloc Positions

Western: Unlike other bloc positions, the Western bloc is typically considered to be the most resilient when a disaster strikes. Major foreign powers such as the United States are quick to respond during times of crisis, and they provide immediate relief and support to parts of the country in dire circumstances. In addition, most western countries are able to reach out and help poorer countries when catastrophe strikes in correspondence to their economic status. However, due to the unpredictability of nature, it's crucial to understand that the situation may not always play out according to plan. Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Sandy are just two examples that showed how stronger countries needed to step up their efforts when responding to natural disasters. Better evacuation plans, telecommunicating systems, and resource deployment become critical topics to consider when formulating possible solutions and policies.

Latin America and Caribbean: The Latin America and Caribbean bloc is the second most disaster-prone region in the world. Between the years of 2000 and 2019, 1,205 natural disasters killed 152 million people within the area. In this region, floods, storms, and earthquakes are the most common type of disasters and have caused more than $1 billion in damage. The most notable disaster was Brazil's Brumadinho dam collapse that occured on January 25, 2019 when a mudslide buried around 300 people and injured 280 individuals. Environmental experts claim that this event could've been easily avoidable through stricter licensing laws and the adoption of more modern technology. Countries still lack the agility to take these measures into strict consideration which calls for necessary protocols to be taken place before more lives are taken. Oftentimes, economics are placed too far ahead of human life and environmental issues which results in institutions to optionalize regulations not in favor of civilian protection. Major

companies and business owners are at the height of this issue and it becomes critical to zone in on oilers who margin major profit.

African: The African bloc is the most vulnerable region to natural disasters due to lack of appropriate policy framework, resources to prepare and manage when a catastrophe strikes, and internal attention that works to exacerbate the impact of these events. In response, the African Union founded the African Risk Capacity (ARC) in 2012 to specialize in risk management finance, capacity-building, and institutional support for early warning systems. Since 2014, more than 16 out of the 34 African countries have become active allies of this treaty and raised over $36.8 million to distribute to drought-affected communities within the area. Yet, their efforts can not catch up to the frequent disasters that take place yearly and require radical change to better respond to these situations. Even with collaborations such as the ARC that work to mitigate the impact of natural disasters, it is estimated that 85 million people will have to relocate within the region due to a reduction in crop yields from lack of rainwater. Countries located in the African bloc must focus on both pre and post-disaster protocols to appropriately build peoples' resilience to shocks and uncertainties.

Asian-Pacific: The Asian-Pacific bloc deals with a large range of natural disasters because the landmass is extremely spread out, making the situation internally complex. News worthy disasters such as frequent earthquakes, cyclones, floods, and droughts are increasing in frequency and intensity. In the year of 2018 alone, 140 medium to large intensity disasters occurred and the death toll is increasing in increments of thousands. People living in the Asian-Pacfic bloc are 25 times more vulnerable to massive disasters than those living in developed countries such as Europe or North America due to the geographical location of the region. Located among the Pacific Ring of Fire, active volcanoes, tropical cyclones, river flooding, and tsunamis are not uncommon. Asian-Pacific countries experienced 55 earthquakes, 217 cyclones/storms, and 236 severe floods between 2014 and 2017, killing respectively 50 million people. Aside from geographical disadvantages, the Asian-Pacific bloc is typically overpopulated with little to no active facilities that distribute resources during times of crisis. Poorer and rural parts of the area lose most of their farms and housing, leaving them in extreme cases of poverty and in need of dire aid. When considering possible solutions,

Basic Solutions:

Basic solutions for immediate response to natural disasters consist of improving communication and communication networks within all countries. Especially in poorer countries that lack the technology to do so, telecommunication networks are fundamental to facilitate rapid message delivery. In 2011, the Gudbrandsdalslågen River flooded due to a heavy rainstorm, and telecommunication networks in that area shut down, leaving civilians with no form of receiving and sending out information. In response to the crisis, the country of Norway allocated a large majority of funds to install telecommunication centers all around the country for $5,000 USD per set-up. Another solution to consider is to strengthen climate change laws on a national and international level to prevent the frequency of natural disasters. The feasibility of this solution is slim to none, but it is important for delegates to remember that even the smallest steps can impact a greater future.

It's important to consider that not all countries will accept outside aid post-disaster. When considering possible solutions, it's crucial to implement ones that comply with your country's policy and approach to past natural disaster catastrophes. In addition, funding as well as resource distribution is one of the key issues regarding natural disaster response.

Questions to Consider:

1. What are some of the most common natural disasters in your country and what can be done to better respond to these catastrophes?
2. In emergency situations where aid cannot be immediately provided, how will your country work to tackle these challenges?
3. How will you protect individuals in poorer countries that lack the resources and necessities in terms of resilience?
4. What solutions can be implemented to minimize the impact of large-scale natural disasters when they are least expected?
5. For countries that lack technology, what tools will be accessible in order to alert civilians of the situation?

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