



VMUN 2019

United Nations Development Programme

BACKGROUND GUIDE



VANCOUVER MODEL UNITED NATIONS

The Eighteenth Annual Session | January 25–27, 2019

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Dear Delegates,

My name is Jessica Lin and I have the utmost pleasure of serving as the Director of the United Nations Development Programme at VMUN 2019. I am currently a grade 11 student at Crofton House School and it has been four years since I set foot into my first committee room. Although I hardly raised my placard during my first conference, Model United Nations has not only allowed me to grow as a public speaker, but it has also given me the opportunity to discuss some of the most pertinent issues in the world with like-minded individuals. Looking back, I can confidently say that MUN has piqued my interest in current events and international relations, while enabling me to become an informed global citizen. I hope that this conference, and Model UN as a whole, will do the same for you.

The two topics on our agenda encompass the UNDP's goals for sustainable development through democratic governance and disaster resilience. Our first topic, Disaster Risk Reduction in the Caribbean, addresses the growing implications of climate change, especially in less-developed regions. As natural disasters are becoming increasingly pervasive in the Caribbean, it is essential that countries have the necessary mechanisms in place to withstand and recover from these crippling disasters.

Our second topic, Fair Elections in Emerging Democracies, is concerned with the execution of credible elections, particularly during the critical periods of democratic transition. Delegates will have to tackle vote-buying, post-election violence, and corruption, among other issues, in order to ensure that elections will effectively support democratization in developing nations. On behalf of your Chair, Emily Ni, and your Assistant Director, Christopher Bong, I look forward to a weekend of lively debate and fruitful discussion. Please do not hesitate to contact me via email with any questions regarding the committee, the topics, or the Background Guide. I look forward to meeting each and every one of you in January!

Sincerely,

Jessica Lin
UNDP Director

Position Paper Policy

What is a Position Paper?

A position paper is a brief overview of a country's stance on the topics being discussed by a particular committee. Though there is no specific format the position paper must follow, it should include a description of your positions your country holds on the issues on the agenda, relevant actions that your country has taken, and potential solutions that your country would support.

At Vancouver Model United Nations, delegates should write a position paper for each of the committee's topics. Each position paper should not exceed one page, and should all be combined into a single document per delegate.

For the United Nations Development Programme, position papers are not mandatory but highly recommended, and required for a delegate to be considered for an award.

Formatting

Position papers should:

- Include the name of the delegate, his/her country, and the committee
- Be in a standard font (e.g. Times New Roman) with a 12-point font size and 1-inch document margins
- Not include illustrations, diagrams, decorations, national symbols, watermarks, or page borders
- Include citations and a bibliography, in any format, giving due credit to the sources used in research (not included in the 1-page limit)

Due Dates and Submission Procedure

Position papers for this committee must be submitted by midnight on January 13, 2019.

Once your position paper is complete, please save the file as your last name, your first name and send it as an attachment in an email, to your committee's email address, with the subject heading as your last name, your first name — Position Paper. Please do not add any other attachments to the email or write anything else in the body.

Both your position papers should be combined into a single PDF or Word document file; position papers submitted in another format will not be accepted.

Each position paper will be manually reviewed and considered for the Best Position Paper award.

The email address for this committee is undp@vmun.com.

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Disaster Risk Reduction in the Caribbean

Overview

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) describes the practice of preparing for natural disasters and hazards such as earthquakes, floods, droughts, cyclones, and tsunamis to reduce the economic, social, and environmental damages inflicted upon a disaster-stricken region or area. Reducing disaster risk entails advocating for the allocation of government resources to prevention efforts and fast responders, as well as helping countries manage and mitigate risk through preparedness measures and recovery planning. However, when disaster strikes, those who live in the most-vulnerable and least-prepared countries are impacted the most. DRR has the potential to save millions of lives and dollars, but a number of structural and political barriers stand in the way of its effective implementation.

Caribbean countries are particularly prone to natural disasters. A study of 16 Caribbean countries showed that 9 out of 10 people have been affected by natural disaster, culminating in over USD 53 billion in losses.¹ Of these, over three quarters of incidences can be attributed to windstorms or floods.² However, real problems arise when the scale of destruction surpasses a community's capacity to withstand and recover from the disaster. Unplanned urban expansion, environmental degradation, and poor land management have left the Caribbean region particularly vulnerable to natural hazards, in part because the region has failed to instate effective disaster preparedness measures. If a natural disaster were to hit the shores of Caribbean nations, thousands of lives would be put at risk and millions, if not billions, of dollars would have to be diverted towards post-disaster rehabilitation efforts, crippling economies. Failure to implement proper DRR measures is an existential threat to Caribbean development.³

Current preparedness measures need to be revised and strengthened in order to most effectively protect economic, environmental, and social capital. DRR includes disciplines like disaster management, mitigation, and preparedness, as well as sustainable development.⁴ Thus, discussing the implications and implementation of disaster risk reduction strategies is key to rebuilding fragile economies and assisting disaster-stricken areas. Doing so will help safeguard the cities and communities of at-risk countries, while failing to may condemn these very people.

Timeline

October 24, 1945 — Out of the ashes of the Second World War, the United Nations is founded to promote international cooperation and dialogue, as well as conflict resolution. In years to come, it would serve as an incredibly important platform for promoting development.

¹ UNISDR News, "Sendai Framework Is Key: Latin America, Caribbean," March 26, 2015, <https://www.unisdr.org/archive/44504>.

² J Collymore, "Disaster Impact on the Caribbean," http://cdemav1.org/bitstream/123456789/34/1/DISASTER_IMPACT_ON_THE_CARIBBEAN_Collymore_revised_in_2001_.pdf.

³ PreventionWeb, "Livelihoods and disaster risk reduction Caribbean workshop," <https://www.preventionweb.net/events/view/17116>.

⁴ UNISDR, "What is DRR," <https://www.unisdr.org/who-we-are/what-is-drr>.

November 22, 1965 — The UNDP is founded with the main goals of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development, and empowering the most vulnerable in society. It involves itself heavily in disaster prevention measures around the world.

November 13, 1985 — The eruption of the Colombian volcano Nevado del Ruiz kills 25,000 from the resulting mudflow.⁵

1991 — An intergovernmental agency known as the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) is established by an Agreement of the Conference with the Heads of Governments of CARICOM to hold responsibility for disaster management.⁶

January 18–22, 2005 — The World Conference on Disaster Reduction is held in Kobe, Japan a year after the Indian Ocean tsunami. The *Hyogo Framework for Action* is ratified, setting five main goals for DRR.

August 2005 — Hurricane Katrina becomes the most destructive in the United States' history, killing more than 1,800 people.

January 12, 2010 — A magnitude 7.0 earthquake strikes Haiti. Already one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere, Haiti encounters the greatest humanitarian crisis in its history with 250,000 people dead and almost 3 million displaced.⁷

October 24–November 14, 2010 — Hurricane Tomas inflicts significant damage on the Caribbean basin, sweeping over 10 countries, including incredibly vulnerable communities in Haiti.

November 2012 — Hurricane Sandy, one of the largest cyclones to date, passes through the Caribbean before moving to the eastern United States, causing 54 deaths in Haiti.

2013 — The UNDP provides support to the National Emergency Secretariat in Paraguay through the creation of a national early warning system.⁸

March 14–18, 2015 — The Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) is held in Sendai. The *Sendai Framework*, which places heavy emphasis on disaster preparedness, is created to replace the now-obsolete *Hyogo Framework for Action*.

2016 — The UNDP Sustainable Development Goals come into effect, 10 out of 17 of which address disaster risk reduction.

⁵ History.com Editors, "The Eruption of Nevado Del Ruiz," HISTORY, February 9, 2010, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/the-eruption-of-nevado-del-ruiz>.

⁶ CARICOM Secretariat, "Agreement Establishing the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency," February 26, 1991, <https://www.caricom.org/about-caricom/who-we-are/our-governance/about-the-secretariat/offices/office-of-the-general-council/treaties-and-agreements/agreement-establishing-the-caribbean-disaster-emergency-response-agenc>.

⁷ World Vision, "2010 Haiti earthquake: Facts, FAQs, and how to help," <https://www.worldvision.org/disaster-relief-news-stories/2010-haiti-earthquake-facts>.

⁸ UNDP, "Disaster Risk Reduction," 2014, [http://www.latinamerica.undp.org/content/dam/rblac/docs/Research and Publications/Crisis Prevention and Recovery/Brochure_Disasters_english.pdf](http://www.latinamerica.undp.org/content/dam/rblac/docs/Research%20and%20Publications/Crisis%20Prevention%20and%20Recovery/Brochure_Disasters_english.pdf).

September 2017 — Hurricane Maria strikes the Caribbean, causing especially severe damage in Puerto Rico. Prior to the disaster, a lack of understanding of the magnitude of the looming crisis precipitated an ill-informed response, costing Puerto Rico thousands of lives both before and after the hurricane.⁹

Historical Analysis

Development of DRR

Since the 1970s, the mechanisms surrounding disaster mitigation have grown amidst shifting technological and political contexts. In the Caribbean, weak economies and unstable governments make disaster preparedness difficult to enact, but with adverse environmental changes, growing urbanization, and population growth, DRR will continue to be an essential part of state-building activities. Understanding the development of the practices surrounding DRR will be incredibly beneficial to its implementation.

Prior to the development of modern technology, it was relatively difficult to gather information about and predict natural disasters; thus, very few countries were accustomed to preparing for such crises. In the 19th century, however, the success of the telegraph facilitated long-range communication and drove the development of a regional forecasting system within the Caribbean. As further advancements were introduced, official networks were able to telegraph weather reports from sea to land. Technological developments during the World Wars led to the use of balloons and aircraft, which were later adapted for research purposes. As technology improved, so too did our capacity to predict and protect against disasters, setting the stage for better preparedness measures.

As natural disasters grew in frequency and severity, countries would slowly shift towards prioritizing DRR on a national scale, and later an international scale through the development of organizations like the UNDP. In 1979, U.S. President Jimmy Carter formed the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), responsible for providing aid during disasters.¹⁰ In 1991, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) was established with the primary goal of coordinating relief and response efforts in member states. In 2005 and 2015 respectively, the *Hyogo Framework for Action* and the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction* were drafted and ratified. The increasing prevalence of natural disasters pushed the international community to involve a variety of private, governmental, and supranational actors in preparing for these crippling catastrophes.

Hurricanes

One of the two major natural hazards experienced throughout the Caribbean, the emblematic weather symbol of the Caribbean is the hurricane, a type of cyclone that forms over tropical waters. The destructive winds and quick flooding that accompany hurricanes have decimated numerous coastal Caribbean communities within the past decade. Hurricanes are generally observed from June through November and rotate periodically among certain regions, coinciding with wet seasons.

Two hurricanes that recently impacted the Caribbean were Hurricanes Irma and Maria. Hurricane Irma lasted September 5–9, 2017, mainly impacting Barbuda, St. Martin, the Bahamas, and northern Cuba; Hurricane Maria raged on September 18 and 19, 2017, damaging Dominica, Guadeloupe, and St. Kitts and Nevis, and grazing Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Across all of those impacted, a vast amount of infrastructure, land, and

⁹ Eliza Barclay, Alexia Fernández Campbell, and Umair Irfan, "Hurricane Maria: 4 ways the storm changed Puerto Rico — and the rest of America," Vox Media, September 20, 2018, <https://www.vox.com/2018/9/20/17871330/hurricane-maria-puerto-rico-damage-death-toll-trump>.

¹⁰ Paul Williams, "Disaster Preparedness has a Long History in the United States," September 10, <https://blog.storagecraft.com/disaster-preparedness-long-history-united-states/>.

livelihoods were destroyed; 95 percent of Barbuda's structures were damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Irma. Furthermore, some countries experienced widespread looting, desperation forcing many to resort to stealing and violence to survive. The international community has contributed millions to the cause, with the U.S. contribution amounting to nearly USD 7.3 million. Alongside France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, international efforts have been mounted to help assist those impacted.¹¹

Earthquakes

Earthquakes are widely considered the single most destructive natural disaster in the Caribbean, with many countries lying in high-risk earthquake zones. The severity of natural disasters is heightened by the prevalence of low-quality and code-non-compliant infrastructure. Unfortunately for the Caribbean, the region has been experiencing more disasters each year, and environmental trends are set to shift for the worse. Small island states such as Antigua and Barbuda and Barbados, for example, have experienced five or more disasters over the course of a single year. The frequency of earthquakes in the Caribbean brings a need to reinforce earthquake-prone infrastructure and enhance the efficiency of aid distribution. In the first six months of 2010 alone, 160 natural disasters were reported, killing almost 230,000 people, affecting the lives of 107 million others, and causing more than USD 55 billion in damage. Most of the lives lost during this period were due to the earthquake in Haiti, where 222,000 people died and another 3 million were adversely affected.¹² Stores went out of business, schools shut down, people lost their homes, and entire industries were forced to halt production to focus on rebuilding. Furthermore, the intertwined nature of rural societies and the environment make rural livelihoods much more susceptible to the ramifications of natural disasters. With a lack of safe housing and public services in poverty-stricken areas, few such households are sufficiently prepared for earthquakes.

Climate Change

More recently, environmental policies and international DRR efforts have been encumbered by the progression of climate change, which intensifies and proliferates the occurrence of natural disasters. Primarily spurred by greenhouse gas emissions released through human industrial activities, climate change has profound impacts on the environment, leading to rising sea levels, the melting of polar ice caps, disturbed storm patterns, and inconsistent climates. The link between climate change and DRR is quite clear—countries will likely need to accommodate for more severe and frequent disasters in the near future. This fundamental shift within DRR calls for urgency and better cooperation between member states in facing the ramifications of climate change.

Government Intervention

Over the past 30 years, there has been an average of 32.4 natural disasters in the Caribbean per year, causing a total of 226,000 fatalities in the region and placing heavy burdens on the global economy. Of these, 90 percent occur in developing countries; consequently, the poor and ill-equipped suffer the most in their aftermaths. Such catastrophes put developmental gains at risk and slow sustainability efforts, while stymying economic growth and progress against poverty.

The Caribbean's weak disaster-mitigation strategies stem from political instability and an unwillingness to spearhead strong preparedness and relief efforts. Knowledge of the potentially-disastrous effects of natural disasters has not deterred governments from continuing to fund social services, health care, and tourism over

¹¹ Mark P. Sullivan, "Hurricanes Irma and Maria: Impact on Caribbean Countries and Foreign Territories," CRS Insight, September 28, 2017, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/IN10788.pdf>.

¹² UNDP, "Evaluation of UNDP Contribution to Disaster Prevention and Recovery," 2010, <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/thematic/par.shtml>.

DRR efforts. Rather than taking a proactive approach towards risk management, focused on risk reduction and preparedness, many states continue to rely upon costly reconstruction processes and post-disaster international assistance. This reactive stance is not only costly in terms of lives and destroyed assets, but is also largely unsustainable, since international assistance has not risen in tandem with the number and scale of disasters. As such, the improvement of disaster risk management is essential to safeguarding future economic and social development in the Caribbean region.

Past UN/International Involvement

The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency was founded in 1991 as a regional intergovernmental agency promoting disaster management in the Caribbean community and sets the foundation for multilateral cooperation efforts. With 16 participating states, the CDEMA's main function is to coordinate an immediate and effective response to any disastrous event. As such, the functions of the CDEMA range from forwarding reliable information on disasters to NGOs for quick humanitarian relief to maintaining adequate disaster response capabilities through the coordination of governmental and non-governmental actors.

Mainly due to a lack of decent infrastructure and relatively poor economies, Caribbean countries often reach out to the international community for aid, especially in times of constraint. The UNDP began providing aid in 2000 in an effort to strengthen each nation's capacity for disaster mitigation and recovery. A year later, the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) was formed by the Executive Board of UNDP, establishing the aid program as a strong global leader for disaster recovery. The BCPR evolved its program to include several international research projects that help improve disaster reduction strategies and capacity-building programmes.¹³ The Bureau's primary objective is to provide humanitarian relief as a post-crisis response and to assist in long-term community development after recovery.

A decisive step forward in putting disaster reduction on the international agenda was the approval of the *Hyogo Framework of Action* in January 2005 during the World Conference on Disaster Reduction.¹⁴ The *Hyogo Framework*, effective from 2005 through 2015, aimed to: ensure that disaster risk reduction was a national and a local priority; identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning; use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels; and strengthen disaster preparedness for an effective multi-layered response.¹⁵ The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) has initiated several projects that align with the *Hyogo Framework*, including the establishment of the *International Disaster Recovery Law*.

As a supporter of these frameworks, the UNDP has coordinated multiple projects ranging from building resilient residential structures to operating risk management centres in Caribbean communities. For example, the Caribbean Risk Management Initiative was established by the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery and is one of the largest knowledge networks connecting communities in the Caribbean intending to improve their disaster management capabilities. This program focuses on the improvement of risk reduction management and adaptation, which requires significant infrastructure investment. Overall, this initiative spreads awareness on climate risk management among Caribbean actors and encourages collaboration between countries regarding initiatives. As such, since 2005, the UNDP has invested USD 2.1 billion into disaster risk reduction and recovery to remodel early warning systems, enhance mitigation procedures, and engineer faster

¹³ UNDP, "Disaster Risk Reduction," 2014, http://www.latinamerica.undp.org/content/dam/rblac/docs/Research and Publications/Crisis Prevention and Recovery/Brochure_Disasters_english.pdf.

¹⁴ UNISDR, "History," <https://www.unisdr.org/who-we-are/history>,

¹⁵ PreventionWeb, "Hyogo Framework," <https://www.preventionweb.net/drr-framework/hyogo/>.

response devices. It is paramount to constantly reconsider old designs and policies to guarantee resilience in the Caribbean, especially given the dynamic nature of this topic.

Climate change mitigation is a large focus for the UNDP, seeing as climate change is the source of intensifying natural disasters. Combatting climate change is shaped by three important agreements: the *Paris Agreement on Climate Change*, the *Sendai Framework*, and the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. In the *Paris Agreement*, the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* identifies a clearly-defined goal to keep the global temperature from rising any more than 1.5 degrees Celsius.¹⁶ Caribbean countries have been deeply involved in the *Sendai Framework*, meeting as a regional community during the “VII Regional Meeting on International Mechanisms of Humanitarian Assistance in Latin America and the Caribbean.”¹⁷ The UNDP has deliberated extensively on this issue, having drafted numerous treaties and frameworks to help mitigate the effects of climate change.

The UNDP has established many of its initiatives around the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Achieving the SDGs requires tackling the dual harms of climate change and natural disasters to ensure that sustainable development continues to occur. The SDGs aim to have their respective objectives fulfilled by 2030, being, as regards disasters, to build the resilience of the poor and the vulnerable and to reduce their exposure and susceptibility to climate-related disasters. The SDGs further aim to reduce the number of deaths and people affected by direct economic losses that accompany natural disasters.¹⁸

After a whirlwind of natural disasters in the Caribbean during the 20th century, initiatives to strengthen disaster risk reduction strategies were established in 2017 in a CARICOM agreement with Mexico. Following two major Mexican earthquakes that killed thousands and caused widespread damage in September 2017, The *Mexico-CARICOM Strategy for Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management* aimed to strengthen existing initiatives in order to combat and mitigate the effects of disasters, seek international support in managing the economic turmoil that follows natural disasters, and to promote cooperation in training task forces for emergency responses. In particular, Guatemala has developed a comprehensive *National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2012–2017* that has set the benchmark for other risk management systems. The plan notes the effects of poverty, inequality, and underdevelopment, which have exacerbated hazards and increased the vulnerability of communities.

These initiatives all recognize the importance of disaster risk management in ensuring sustainable human development, strengthening overall resilience, and combatting climate change. More recently, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 71/276 (A/RES/71/276) on February 13, 2017, which includes indicators for measuring global progress in reducing disaster losses.¹⁹ Recommendations of the 2016 Report conducted by intergovernmental experts measure global progress set by the *Sendai Framework* and established Resolution 69/284 (A/RES/69/284) on the June 15, 2015. Such resolutions expand DRR cooperation with the UN to develop metadata for disaster-related statistics to indicate future climate trends.

¹⁶ "The Paris Agreement," UNFCCC, October 22, 2018, <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>.

¹⁷ UNISDR News, "Sendai Framework Is Key: Latin America, Caribbean," March 26, 2015, <https://www.unisdr.org/archive/44504>.

¹⁸ PreventionWeb, "Hyogo Framework," <https://www.preventionweb.net/drr-framework/hyogo/>.

¹⁹ "The UN General Assembly Adopts a Resolution on Disaster Risk Reduction," February 17, 2017, <http://www.ieudl.eu/universal-level/the-un-general-assembly-adopts-a-resolution-on-disaster-risk-reduction/>.

Current Situation

The Caribbean faces incredibly high risks of hydro-climatic events—cyclones, flooding, downpour, and landslides—making it incredibly vulnerable to natural disasters. The region lies on unstable tectonic plates, active volcanoes, and tumultuous waters where infrastructure is especially at risk. At some point, 30 percent of the Caribbean's 240 million inhabitants have been affected at by natural disaster, necessitating improvements in current programs and the continuation of prevention and mitigation efforts. Critically, beyond the immediate effects of natural disasters, the long-term economic ramifications are equally pernicious. Hurricane Gustav cost almost USD 4 billion for Cuba when more than half of the country's primary export, sugar, was destroyed. DRR implementation, due to poor government allocation, uncooperative efforts, and limited accountability, has not yet yielded significant advances.²⁰

Funding Allocation

Unfortunately, not all facets of DRR can be held equal. Governments must make investment decisions given limited revenue, but instead of directing spare capital to DRR, funds are often diverted to social services or other government expenditures. Distinguishing between developmental and DRR efforts can help governments more clearly delineate efficient aid distribution. For smaller states, the capacity to carry out relief and mitigation is limited. While regional agencies like CDERA, CDEMA, the Coordination Centre for Natural Disaster Prevention in Central America (CEPREDENAC), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), and other experienced national agencies can certainly further disaster relief efforts, government efforts are just as important, if not more, seeing as transnational organizations' resources are stretched thin by the vast number of countries they assist.²¹

Caribbean governments have long been aware of the potential disastrous effects of climate change, but have adopted a relatively laid-back approach, taking minimal action in integrating climate change into their sustainable development agendas and loosely following the Caribbean Uniform Building Code (CUBiC). Specific recommendations for these interventions have been available for some time but have not been adopted. Sufficient preparedness could have already been achieved if buildings had been fit to disaster standards and countries had more intently focused on sustainable development years ago. Retrofitting structures and buildings with more resilient infrastructure would ultimately be more cost-effective than repeatedly rebuilding structures destroyed by extreme natural disasters. Investment in infrastructure and the structural stability of society cuts long-term costs for the government, lowering the cost of repairs in the aftermath of the disaster. However, most governments have opted for a reactionary policy over an anticipatory one, costing billions more and further depleting the state's capacity for relief efforts.

Organizational Cooperation

The complexity of natural disasters in their impacts on civilian lives and structural damage to infrastructure poses significant challenges to organizations and groups intending to provide humanitarian and economic aid. Considerations of governmental or international organizations alongside local or foreign assistance significantly impact the extent to which cooperation among different groups can occur and how solutions are implemented. While a local organization could provide more sustainable and well-suited relief for a given natural disaster, international organizations may be more efficient and timely given their scale and proficiency in dealing with crises.

²⁰ George Nicholson and Mathieu Fontanaud, "The ACS and Disaster Risk Reduction in the Greater Caribbean," <http://www.acs-aec.org/index.php?q=disaster-risk-reduction/the-acs-and-disaster-risk-reduction-in-the-greater-caribbean>.

²¹ Ibid.

Involving local organizations in relief efforts is critical, especially given that they are the most relevant and informed actors in a localized disaster. While community-based groups may be smaller in scale and capacity, they often work more effectively as they can address the more-specific needs of victims in a given area. The delivery of aid and distribution of workers on the scene of the disaster would be better managed by those who understand the people and land well, thus increasing efficiency through knowledge. In addition, the strengthening of local organizations allows affected communities to be more independent, bolstering their capacity to prevent and mitigate disasters without aid in the future.

Despite such benefits, local organizations are often dismissed on the basis of two assumptions. First, they are often seen as irrelevant, since such small organizations lack the capacity to act, and are thus deemed ineffective. Secondly, local, community-based organizations that are typically comprised of affected citizens are often portrayed as ‘victims’ who are overwhelmed by the dysfunctional nature of such disaster. As such, these actors are unable to act rationally and are in need of being directed or controlled.²² In extreme cases, this could lead to the justification of martial law. Government policy surrounding these local groups has, in many ways, completely mischaracterized the common people, painting them as a self-serving and incapable mass. On the contrary, the reality is that the citizens of local communities are best equipped to solve local problems as their goal of rebuilding their community is perfectly aligned with that of recovery efforts, thus aligning the self-interest of citizens with the common interest of the recovering community.

Institutional Accountability

Governments hold primary responsibility for managing and implementing disaster preparedness and reconstruction efforts. This accountability takes root not only in the government’s obligation to secure the basic needs of citizens and represent the will of the people, but also in the government’s capacity to tackle natural disaster prevention and recovery. Despite such an objective, governmental accountability is often found to be questionable in the disaster recovery process. Though democratic processes should be accompanied by an inherent sense of responsibility, corrupt officials and inefficient bureaucracies tend to impede the implementation of disaster recovery efforts.

Beyond the internal issues of governments, several international organizations have faced disagreement in discussing the prioritization of human rights during the aftermath of natural disasters. In the context of these disasters, while an expeditious recovery period is critical in protecting basic rights, increased certainty safeguarding against future disasters is often not considered to be a right, even though the prevention of such atrocities pre-emptively protects human rights. The delineation of what is considered a basic right better allows governments to channel funding and aid to the most pertinent aspects of disaster reduction and prevention.

Possible Solutions and Controversies

Pre-Emptive Measures

In order to sustainably protect against potential natural disasters, pre-emptive measures must be put in place. This first step is for countries in the Caribbean to facilitate long-term infrastructural development of disaster risk shelters, early warning systems, drainage systems, and upkeep infrastructure with emerging technological improvements. Disaster mitigation employs both structural and logistical measures to limit the potential risks of catastrophe. Structurally, countries may opt to plant mangroves to reduce tidal surges; non-structurally, to

²² Daniel P. Aldrich and Michelle A. Meyer, Social Capital and Community Resilience, Research Article, October 1, 2014, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0002764214550299>.

integrate school-based education projects to raise awareness of climate change's pervasiveness. Moreover, governments can examine early warning systems that inform individuals of incoming disasters as early as possible, enabling families to prepare their households and giving humanitarian agencies sufficient time to gather resources.²³ However, countries will have to invest a significant amount of time and money into creating this infrastructure—funds that may not be readily available to many states.

Humanitarian Aid

Reconstruction and rehabilitation are most often carried out by setting up aid package distribution points across a country. These distribution camps should be, but often are not, evenly distributed throughout the country, allowing citizens of all localities the opportunity to access resources in times of distress. It is also crucial that governments and NGOs keep track of where the aid goes, as there are many cases of officials embezzling aid funding. However critical humanitarian aid may be, it is also important to note that aid is limited to short-term relief, given that humanitarian organizations rely on fickle public support. Thus, long-term solutions to prevent disasters ought to be considered alongside aid-based solutions. Finding a more sustainable solution is key to addressing this topic—humanitarian aid primarily serves as a crutch for nations to get back on their feet after a disaster. But without strong legs to stand on, it is easy for a state to get swept back down again. Solutions should aim to strengthen developmental pillars through self-reliance and preparedness development.

Insurance Programs

Especially in primarily-agrarian nations, natural disasters are often accompanied by significant economic damage, exacerbated by a general lack of insurance. While developed countries have approximately 30% of natural disaster related losses insured (in the period from 1980 to 2004), low-income states only have approximately 1% of such losses insured, exemplifying significant disparities between the economic security of the former and the latter.²⁴ Consequently, strengthening insurance policies for natural disasters mitigates certain economic risks, diminishing the magnitude of natural-disaster-induced economic setbacks. While certain states may lack sufficient funding for combatting disasters, expanded insurance would allow states to access more funds ordinarily put towards disaster preparedness measures.

The Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF), on a large scale, provides Caribbean governments with insurance coverage in light of hurricanes and earthquakes. Countries are able to access recovery funds for monetary losses in domestic production and goods. Not only does this lessen the impacts of catastrophe for both governments and communities, but it also makes the Caribbean less dependent on international humanitarian aid, which, although beneficial, is both inconsistent and slow. The increased stability in vulnerable states that is a by-product of all-encompassing insurance programs also leads to increased employment security, improving and stimulating overall economic development.²⁵

Local Empowerment

Local populations are best equipped to deal with local problems. When disaster strikes, each region of a country is affected differently and to different degrees—some might be dealing with inundated farmland while others

²³ Matilde Mordt and Ronald Jackson, "Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Action for Resilience," UNDP, November 14, 2017, <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/blog/2017/integrating-disaster-risk-reduction-and-climate-action-for-resil.html>.

²⁴ Michael Zissener, "Solutions for Those at Risk in Climate Disasters," United Nations University, March 19, 2011, <https://unu.edu/publications/articles/solutions-for-those-at-risk-in-climate-disasters.html#info>.

²⁵ Ibid.

face dangerous open power lines and mangled infrastructure. The unfortunate reality is that the diversity of needs to be fulfilled during a time of crisis is far too extensive to be met by a single or a handful of organizing parties. Unfortunately, this is the route that many countries and organizations have opted to take—a system of humanitarian aid spearheaded by a small group of NGOs and wealthy countries designed to lift a country out of the ashes of a natural disaster on the basis of the institution’s availability of funds. In order to achieve long-term sustainable resilience, however, it is essential that local populations are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to protect against and rehabilitate on their own after natural disasters. Providing citizens with the means necessary to prepare themselves for natural disasters, recognize common hazards that follow disasters, and proactively rebuild infrastructure will help local communities help themselves.

Government Responsibility

It is an unfortunate reality that many governments do not prioritize the development of DRR in their countries. As a result, it is difficult for long-term projects to receive public support and funding. Without a clear goal or instant payoff, many citizens fail to understand the rationale for supporting these preparedness measures over the proliferation of jobs or healthcare. Despite this, it is the responsibility of the UNDP to ensure that governments are making an effort to build an understanding of the benefits of DRR amongst citizens. The UNDP is also responsible for making sure countries are upholding both the treaties they ratify and the responsibility to their citizens to maintain safety and order in society. The UNDP must ensure that governments are held accountable when buildings are found to be inadequately prepared for a disaster or when a government shunts DRR to the bottom of its agenda. Although oftentimes challenging, DRR is a priority the UNDP must bring to the top of every country’s agenda.

Bloc Positions

Caribbean and Latin American States

This bloc includes many key players within the topic of disaster risk reduction, falling directly in the scope of discussion. Member states have pledged to promote a vision that increases disaster risk management comprehensively while acknowledging the limitations of the developing countries within this region. Policy enactments and investment plans rely on these countries’ willingness and institutional abilities to allow such reforms to occur. However, countries in this bloc do not always have sufficient capital or the social structures necessary to further DRR efforts. Delegates must consider the impacts that implementing solutions can have on the political, social, and economic climates of these nations.

In past natural disasters, such as the earthquake in Haiti in 2010 or Hurricane Sandy in 2012, these countries have worked closely together to mediate the impacts of natural disasters. Courses of action such as promoting surveillance and food security analysis, enhancing disaster risk reduction efforts, having been identified. Countries such as Antigua and Barbuda were heavily impacted by the 2017 hurricane that swept across the Caribbean; such events caused hundreds of casualties, the destruction of infrastructure, and setbacks in socioeconomic development. These countries exemplify the repercussions of natural disasters, attest to the initiatives that most effectively assist recovery, and advocate for pivotal reforms to current courses of action.

North American States

North American countries have had many experiences with floods, hurricanes, and various other natural disasters. As the United States is the number one humanitarian aid donor to countries that are facing crises, it is the primary base for funding assistance after disasters occur. Disaster relief funds established through the U.S.

and Canada support the empowerment of local governments, the rebuilding of homes, and investments in future disaster risk management programs.

North American states are also conscious of the possible misuse of aid given to areas affected by disaster. Investments made in Puerto Rico's energy grids following Hurricane Maria were wasted because the government failed to allocate investments effectively and rebuild infrastructure. The lack of coordination between governments and the mismanagement of funds highlights how "corruption can kill," as thousands of people lost their lives not because of the hurricane, but because of prolonged and ineffective emergency responses.

European States

The European Union is one of the largest supranational bodies that has been readily involved in protecting the Caribbean from natural hazards. The European Commission's Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid Operations launched the agenda for DRR, dedicating USD 238 million to over 500 DRR projects in Latin America and the Caribbean alone.²⁶ Being one of the key actors of the *Sendai Framework*, countries within the EU have been actively involved in aiding the efforts of Caribbean communities, particularly through infrastructural investment. The economic strength of these nations has enabled the EU to fund massive humanitarian projects and promote international cooperation.

Germany is a major partner country that offers both funding and practical assistance. The German Development Cooperation plan strengthens the capacities of Pacific island countries to combat climate change and carbon emissions. These countries focus specifically on key national sectors such as fisheries, energy, and forestry, making Germany a key contributor in aiding the disasters recovery efforts worldwide. Additionally, Sweden recently made the decision to enter into a long-term funding agreement within UNDP, exemplifying its commitment to assisting countries overwhelmed by the aftermath of natural disaster.

Asia-Pacific States

The Asia-Pacific is just as prone to natural disasters as the Caribbean. In 2011, Japan was hit by the largest earthquake in recorded history. Some nations are also incredibly prone to flooding, especially with the onset of global warming. Pacific island nations, however, have provided knowledge, expertise, and data from disaster risk management initiatives, establishing themselves as leaders in disaster-related risk modeling, financing, public expenditure, and geographic information.²⁷ In an attempt to address the onset of natural disasters that accompany climate change, Japan has established the Japan-Caribbean Climate Change Partnership (J-CCCP) with Caribbean countries to encourage multilateral action between similarly-affected communities. With Japan's support and funding, the Caribbean could be better equipped to enhance its infrastructure and pre-emptive measures. Problematically, the Asia-Pacific region also faces its own difficulties and needs to repair the damages left by its own natural disasters before it can fully devote aid to the Caribbean. As such, these regions lack the accountability and security needed to engage in long-term financial assistance and DRR development partnerships.

²⁶ Novacomm, "20 Years of Disaster Risk Reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean," October 13, 2016, https://ec.europa.eu/echo/field-blogs/stories/20-years-disaster-risk-reduction-latin-america-and-caribbean_en.

²⁷ The World Bank, "Pacific Islands: Disaster Risk Reduction and Financing in the Pacific," April 1, 2012, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2012/04/01/pacific-islands-disaster-risk-reduction-and-financing-in-the-pacific>.

Discussion Questions

1. What are the different responsibilities of developed and developing countries in fighting against disasters?
2. What are the different types of common disasters that occur? Do they affect countries in different ways and if so, in what ways do DRR efforts need to be adjusted?
3. To what extent have governmental responses to natural disasters been effective?
4. What are the roles of international and local organizations in combatting disasters? Private versus public?
5. How should short-term and long-term solutions in this topic be balanced?
6. What are the economic ramifications of natural disasters and how do the aforementioned solutions address them?
7. What are the similarities and differences between different internationally-established agendas and organizations?
8. To what extent are pre-emptive measures able to mitigate the effects of natural disasters?

Additional Resources

United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction:

<https://www.unisdr.org/who-we-are/what-is-drr>

The Hyogo Framework for Action:

<https://www.preventionweb.net/drr-framework/hyogo/>

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction:

<https://www.preventionweb.net/drr-framework/sendai-framework/>

The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency:

<https://www.cdema.org/>

The Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility:

<https://www.ccrif.org/>

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Fair Elections in Emerging Democracies

Overview

For many emerging democracies and post-colonial states, an election is the first step to establishing a stable and peaceful democratic state. For much of the developing world—specifically Africa, the Balkans, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America—political instability is a consequence of imperialist exploitation by colonial powers and oppressive foreign rule. In many of these countries, well-established authoritarian regimes have been unseated as a result of various revolutions, uprisings, and coups. As such, the citizens of these nations look towards democracy as a means of reforming the government and relieving their countries of economic difficulties, human rights offences, and unaccountable leadership. With the affluence, stability, and security that have accompanied Western democracies, representative government holds the promise of a brighter future for those who have lived in poverty, conflict, and misrule for so long.

Selecting a new leader is the principal stage of democratization, yet for countries emerging from dictatorships and one-party rule, attempts to execute credible elections have often been far from true democracy. This form of government requires the participation of the people, but numerous obstacles prevent elections from accurately representing their will. As poverty is rampant in many of the countries striving towards democracy, buying votes is a commonly-employed tactic; by bribing the poor with monetary compensation and physical goods, candidates are able to manipulate opinion in their favour.²⁸ Furthermore, illiteracy, indifference towards politics, and a general lack of access to information renders citizens in rural areas uninformed; thus, in turn, more susceptible to vote buying and undemocratic practices.

Loyalties to the previous regime, almost always found in the military and the elite, serve as another hurdle to a legitimate election; violence, or the threat of violence, is used to intimidate potential voters and skew the vote in a party or candidate's favour. When citizens recognize the impacts of these factors and the general population deems an election illegitimate, elections that were meant to represent a step towards peaceful democracy instead result in chaos, violence, and civil unrest.²⁹ Delegates must seek solutions that address every aspect of the issue, while still catering to the unique political situations of individual countries. Executing credible elections is an issue that extends far beyond democratic transitions; democracies who have insufficiently addressed this issue may face similar hindrances in the near future.

Timeline

1948 — The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* asserts that “everyone has the right to take part in the government;” “the will of the people is the basis of the authority of government;” and that this will “shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections.”³⁰

²⁸ "Vote Buying," Korruptsioon. The Estonian Patent Office, <http://www.korruptsioon.ee/en/forms-corruption/vote-buying>.

²⁹ "On the Prevention of Election Violence," United States Institute of Peace, March 30, 2015, <https://www.usip.org/the-prevention-of-election-violence>.

³⁰ "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," United Nations, <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>.

August 1953 — The United States, through the financing of the Iranian military, organizes a coup to oust Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq and consolidate power in the hands of the Shah of Iran. Consequently, the Shah signs over 40 percent of Iran's oil fields to American companies.³¹

1974 — The “Third Wave of Democratization,” during which countries in Europe and Latin America undergo democratic transitions, begins with the Carnation Revolution in Portugal.

November 2004 — The Ukrainian election is marked by Russian and Western interference; Russia is accused of directly funding a candidate's campaign, while the United States is charged with financing the protests and civil disobedience that followed the election.³²

2006 — The European Council-United Nations Development Programme Partnership on Electoral Assistance is established.³³

December 2007 — The Kenyan general election, with the two candidates belonging to different dominant ethnic groups, results in large-scale, targeted ethnic violence and hundreds of casualties.

August 2009 — Afghanistan's second election since the fall of the Taliban is characterized by low voter turnout due to a lack of security. Violence leads up to the election, attacks on voting stations are reported during it, and mass casualties follow in the aftermath of the vote.³⁴

2010–2012 — The Arab Spring takes place, during which a wave of revolutions sweeps the Middle East and North Africa, demanding democratic rights and attempting to direct their governments towards democracy.³⁵

January 2014 — With the largest opposition group boycotting the election and dampening voter turnout, Bangladesh's general election is marred by limited participation. As a result, more than half of all representatives are elected without opposition.³⁶ Disregarding the accurate reporting of results, the election is viewed as illegitimate and widespread violence ensues.

2015 — The UNDP implements the 2030 Agenda with 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Goal 16, peace, justice, and strong institutions, holds a focus on “developing electoral institutions, to building partnerships, legal frameworks and processes and for support to elections in non-mission settings.”³⁷

July 2018 — Zimbabwe carries out its first election since the resignation of its long-time authoritarian ruler, Robert Mugabe. However, the election is marred by widespread vote buying, voter intimidation, and post-election violence.

³¹ "CIA-assisted Coup Overthrows Government of Iran," History.com, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/cia-assisted-coup-overthrows-government-of-iran>.

³² Stephen Schulman and Stephen Bloom, The Legitimacy of Foreign Intervention in Elections: The Ukrainian Response, Report, The University of Pennsylvania Law School, The University of Pennsylvania. <https://www.law.upenn.edu/live/files/6454-1-schulman-and-bloompdf>.

³³ "The EC-UNDP Partnership on Electoral Assistance," EC-UNDP JTF, <https://www.ec-undp-electoralassistance.org/about-us/>.

³⁴ Bruce Riedel, "The Taliban and the Afghan Election,," The Brookings Institution, July 28, 2016, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/the-taliban-and-the-afghan-elections/>.

³⁵ "Arab Spring," Encyclopædia Britannica, January 14, 2015, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Arab-Spring>.

³⁶ Farid Ahmed, "Bangladesh Ruling Party Wins Elections Marred by Boycott, Violence," CNN, January 07, 2014, <https://www.cnn.com/2014/01/06/world/asia/bangladesh-elections/index.html>.

³⁷ "Chapter II: B. Maintenance of International Peace and Security," United Nations Secretary-General, <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/chapter-ii-b-maintenance-international-peace-and-security>.

Historical Analysis

In the past, imperial powers such as Britain, France, Belgium, and Portugal, hungry for resources, land, and influence, sought to establish colonies in less developed regions of the world. Although these expansionist nations encouraged trade and helped modernize these regions, their desire for economic exploitation came at the cost of other nations' cultures, beliefs, and values. Colonial rule, especially in its extractive form, was characterized by inhumane and often brutal measures to maximize profits from colonies. Colonial powers would, for example, play off ethnic divides and pit groups against one another to prevent opposition from forming. By the time colonial nations had relinquished their power, inequality, segregation, and conflict had become widespread and deeply ingrained in society. Although liberation from these oppressive colonial regimes was meant to signal a new era of egalitarianism and fair governance, these post-colonial states lacked the internal structures, institutions, and guidance necessary to establish stable systems of government.³⁸ Newly-sovereign states continued to be plagued by the same ethnic rivalries, human rights violations, and discriminatory practices characteristic of colonial rule.³⁹ These transitions can be characterized as those of power, not necessarily in a positive manner, but rather towards a different form of the same oppression. The general population, however, viewed the prospect of autonomy as synonymous with political freedom, which would, in turn, translate into economic benefit. Few citizens anticipated the turbulent period of continued oppression, civil wars, and political unrest that would follow independence. From the chaos that ensued, authoritarian, semi-authoritarian, and military regimes emerged as a trend in post-colonial states.

Out of the ashes of colonialism, many authoritarian leaders established their regimes by banning opposition parties and establishing one-party states, or by employing powerful armies to establish military dictatorships. Some countries experienced periods of both civilian and military rule, with each transition marked by suspensions of constitutions and decreased stability. These unceasing cycles were demonstrative of the inability of such leaders to retain control over their countries: a clear sign of political instability. Such instability and lack of continuity typically stem from mistrust from the general population. With the recurrence of short, ineffective regimes, citizens often see their governments as impotent entities unable to alleviate economic hardships, reduce inequality, or lead the country towards prosperity. The political climate of these countries is one that does not instill democratic beliefs or values.

On the opposite end of the spectrum are countries which have remained under the same, or similar, authoritarian regimes for extended periods of time. The trend for these postcolonial governments has been single-party states with leaders that have firm grasps on their respective countries. Although opposition parties may have existed during the emergence of independence, these countries needed unity; for the sake of such, opposition parties were sometimes absorbed into ruling parties. On the other hand, opposition parties were sometimes outlawed altogether as a means of managing the political differences rooted in ethnic, racial, religious, or linguistic groups.⁴⁰ Competitive politics were deemed to be a luxury unavailable to countries emerging from decolonization, which, in turn, laid the foundations for authoritarianism.⁴¹ Often ruling through fear and

³⁸ Sandra Marker, "Effects of Colonization," Beyond Intractability, November 2003, <https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/post-colonial>.

³⁹ "Freedom from Empire: An Assessment of Postcolonial Africa," Encyclopædia Britannica, September 24, 2010, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Freedom-from-Empire-An-Assessment-of-Postcolonial-Africa-1707631>.

⁴⁰ Robert A. Dahl, "Democracy," Encyclopædia Britannica, May 25, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/democracy/The-value-of-democracy>.

⁴¹ Sahr John Kpundeh, *Democratization in Africa: African Views, African Voices: Project on Democratization; Summary of Three Workshops* (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1992). <https://www.nap.edu/read/2041/>.

intimidation, these leaders have typically led their nations to stagnant, if not worsened, economic states that have resulted in little-to-no improvement in citizens' quality of life.

Regardless of the forms they took, authoritarian regimes undermined the status of civil society necessary for democracy to thrive. For years, citizens were helpless, waiting for liberation but paralyzed to act for themselves. Thus, when resistance movements arose in one country, they quickly caught on in neighbouring countries and spread across entire regions. Inciting incidents include the Carnation Revolution of 1974 in Portugal, which gave way to the global trend known as the Third Wave of Democracy, the 1986 People Power Revolution of the Philippines, which paved the path for developing countries in Asia, uprisings in Poland in 1989, from which the Revolutions of 1989 in Central and Eastern Europe began, and the Tunisian Revolution of 2010, which ignited the Arab Spring in the Middle East and North Africa.⁴² However, from all of these revolutions, Tunisia emerged as the only democracy to remain so until the present day. Although not all revolutions lead to full-fledged democracies, resistance movements are signs of progression as they challenge well-established authoritarian ideologies. Even for the most successful of revolutions, the removal of an oppressive ruler is only the beginning of the path towards democratization.

Specifically, resistance movements and revolutions can depose authoritarian regimes and force dictators to step down, thus enabling nations to direct themselves towards democratic transitions. The concept of a multiparty democracy is key to political reform in developing countries. More broadly, a government that is responsive to the needs of the people and is held accountable for its actions can provide the framework necessary for a country to recover from decades of economic strife, corruption, and hardline governance. To achieve such goals, it is necessary to carry out legitimate elections in the window of time that follows the overthrow of an authoritarian regime. Elections that lack credibility in the eyes of citizens can propel a country into a state of disorder and destabilize the country; countries can enter a vicious cycle of uprisings and instability with each unsuccessful reform. Nigeria, for example, has been plagued by coups and a "revolving door" of leaders. Since independence in 1960, Nigeria has been governed under four different republics and has shifted from democratic to military rule numerous times.⁴³

Elections are a turning point for many emerging democracies, but far too many nations have also been subject to electoral manipulation and interferences that have backtracked a country's democratic progress. Only by examining past examples of failed elections and democratic transitions is the precarious nature of elections discernible; the extent of an election's influence on democracy is of the utmost importance in the transition to democracy.

Past UN/International Involvement

The United Nations has provided electoral assistance to 67 countries within the past 2 years.⁴⁴ Defined as "the legal, technical and logistic support provided to electoral laws, processes and institutions," electoral assistance encompasses the administration of elections, access to financial resources, and election observation alongside non-governmental organizations (NGOs).⁴⁵ These efforts do not directly interfere with or prevent electoral manipulation; rather, they are aimed at recording and reporting instances of electoral fraud. Although these

⁴² Martin Shaw, "The Global Democratic Revolution: A New Stage," OpenDemocracy, March 07, 2011, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/martin-shaw/global-democratic-revolution-new-stage>.

⁴³ "Nigeria : History," The Commonwealth, <http://thecommonwealth.org/our-member-countries/nigeria/history>.

⁴⁴ "Ensuring Genuine and Credible Elections: The UN Role," Atavist. United Nations Department Of Political Affairs, October 30, 2015, <https://dpa-ps.atavist.com/ensuring-genuine-and-credible-elections-the-un-role>.

⁴⁵ "Electoral Assistance," ACE Project, <https://aceproject.org/ace-en/focus/focus-on-effective-electoral-assistance>.

measures have not been of great consequence, these actions have been carried out in consideration of the 1991 General Assembly Resolution 46/137 (*A/RES/46/137*), in which the UN resolved that electoral assistance must be provided with “respect for the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States in their electoral processes.”⁴⁶ By adhering to these principles, the UN has limited its activities regarding electoral assistance. In this respect, electoral assistance from the UN can only be provided at the request of member states, in an objective and impartial manner that is tailored to the situations of individual countries, without reference to other “models” of democracy. Despite the restricted nature of the framework for electoral assistance, these guidelines are imperative to guaranteeing the national sovereignty of all states. The UN’s future initiatives regarding electoral assistance must be governed by the same fundamental principles.

Numerous electoral assistance partnerships have emerged between developed and developing countries. The European Commission-United Nations Development Programme (EC-UNDP) Partnership on Electoral Assistance, for instance, takes funding, resources, and expertise from the European Union to dispatch task forces to foreign elections. These task forces offer technical assistance prior to and during elections in developing countries. Having offered electoral assistance to numerous countries in Africa and the Middle East, the EC-UNDP Partnership’s work also encompasses guidance towards establishing democratic institutions. Another advocate for election legitimacy and democratic governance, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), emphasizes expanding political participation through localized electoral observation projects and increasing political awareness by educating eligible voters. USAID also provides monetary aid to political parties in a few foreign countries.⁴⁷ Foreign aid has remained controversial, however, as many developing countries fear that monetary assistance equates to foreign interference.

Typically, electoral assistance is only provided prior to pivotal elections. Each time a major election is set to take place, electoral management bodies offer electoral assistance, but treat each election as an isolated event.⁴⁸ This discontinuous cycle of aid accompanying an election-centred approach disrupts the democratic progress of developing countries. Many electoral assistance initiatives are provided on the basis of “quick-fixes,” inhibiting the amalgamation of electoral assistance through constitution-building and aspects of democratic governance beyond fair elections. A significant amount of progress still needs to be made to augment dialogue between agencies that offer electoral assistance and partnering governments. The UN’s current electoral assistance initiatives provide an adequate foundation for addressing the legitimacy of elections; however, a plethora of improvements needs to be made to tackle the systematic issues that continue to plague electoral systems.

Current Situation

Today, a mere 4.5 percent of the global population lives under a “full democracy,” while the rest of the population lives under “flawed democracies,” hybrid, or authoritarian regimes.⁴⁹ A decline in participation in politics, diminishing trust in institutions, and growing cynicism surrounding elections has contributed to the decline of democracy.⁵⁰ Only by promoting fair and credible elections through increasing political involvement, upholding the notion that the government can be held accountable, and electing representatives who are responsive to the

⁴⁶ “Resolutions Adopted by the General Assembly at Its 46th Session,” United Nations Library, <https://research.un.org/en/docs/ga/quick/regular/46>.

⁴⁷ “Supporting Free and Fair Elections,” U.S. Agency for International Development, September 06, 2018, <https://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/democracy-human-rights-and-governance/supporting-free-and-fair-elections>.

⁴⁸ “Electoral Assistance,” ACE Project, <https://aceproject.org/ace-en/focus/focus-on-effective-electoral-assistance>.

⁴⁹ Democracy Index 2017. Report. http://pages.eiu.com/rs/753-RIQ-438/images/Democracy_Index_2017.pdf.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

needs of the people, can the state of democracy be improved. Aside from blatant vote manipulation, vote buying, and electoral violence mar the legitimacy of elections while threatening the stability of transitioning democracies.

Vote Buying

Vote buying is the exchange of a vote for monetary compensation, goods and services, or favours. With the prevalence of vote buying in developing countries and emerging democracies, this form of electoral fraud can vary greatly in the ways it manifests itself. At its most basic level, one-party states or political parties employ individuals to monitor voting stations and record voters. Those who voted could receive benefits for voting in the party's favour or retribution for voting against the party. Almost one in five Nigerians claim to have personally received an offer to sell their vote, illustrating the practice's pervasiveness.⁵¹ More sophisticated forms of vote buying are widespread in countries that have yet to fully embrace democracy. In Argentina, for example, there is the acknowledged presence of "brokers," members of local communities who have been recruited to offer goods, services, and monetary compensation in exchange for votes on behalf of a political party.⁵² This "clientelism" has thrived for decades and remains pervasive in Argentina because of its efficacy; by taking advantage of the widening gap between rich and poor, affluent political figures are able to further the wealthy's influence in politics, perpetuating the vicious cycle that subjects ordinary citizens to the offers of brokers.

At the core of vote buying is poverty—because so many citizens in developing countries lack the economic means for survival, the rather-more-esoteric right to political participation is a worthwhile trade-off for increased financial security. For well-to-do autocrats and political parties, the exploitation of poverty is an easy way to secure power. The pervasive nature of vote buying has adverse effects on democracy as it not only misrepresents the people's wants and needs, but also undermines democratic values and denies the human right of political participation to those who are economically disadvantaged.

Electoral Violence

Electoral violence encompasses the intimidation of voters, while political violence covers the civil unrest that may follow an illegitimate election. Election-related violence can be carried out by both authoritative figures and citizens, both making use of violence or threats to sway votes. In Afghanistan, the Taliban has used death threats to intimidate potential voters and attacked voting stations to suppress voter turnout. The pernicious threat of violence and the lack of security to quell such fear that prevents citizens from voting jeopardizes the legitimacy of election results.⁵³ Electoral violence infringes upon the political rights of citizens as well as their abilities to collectively express their views. The far-reaching implications of post-election violence, however, compromise the safety of citizens and unhinge the very foundations of countries. When a general population deems the proceedings of an election to be illegitimate, citizens often respond with riots and insurgency; in retaliation, leaders deploy military and police forces—inevitably, bloodshed and casualties ensue.

Occasionally, age-old tensions fester into violence as a by-product of contentious election results. The 2007 Kenyan general election, for example, resulted in over 1,000 deaths and the displacement of over 600,000 people. Because the election was contested between two candidates from two of the largest ethnic groups in Kenya, rivalry motivated the two groups to engage in targeted ethnic violence. Following the announcement of election results, the two groups either interpreted the results as a threat to their ethnic identity or perceived others'

⁵¹ Michael Bratton, "Vote Buying and Violence in Nigerian Election Campaigns," *Electoral Studies* 27, no. 4 (June 2008), [http://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/publications/Working papers/afropaperno99.pdf](http://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/publications/Working%20papers/afropaperno99.pdf).

⁵² "Electoral Fraud," Wikipedia, September 11, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electoral_fraud#Argentina.

⁵³ Eltaf Najafizada, "Afghan UN Envoy Worries That Rigging and Taliban Attacks Will Mar Elections," Bloomberg, September 24, 2018, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-09-24/afghan-un-envoy-predicts-rigging-taliban-attacks-will-mar-poll>.

discontentment with the election as an attack on their newfound superiority.⁵⁴ Post-election violence is a by-product of a deeply-rooted lack of trust for electoral processes; by rejecting election results, citizens demonstrate that it has become ingrained in society to question the credibility of elections. As such, illegitimate elections, or even a history of such elections, can escalate existing tensions and breed instability and insecurity. Post-election violence reveals the interminable effects of illegitimate elections, and how their social ramifications elections cannot simply be eradicated by a valid one.

Case Study: Zimbabwe

On November 14, 2017, Zimbabwe's military staged a coup d'état to remove Robert Mugabe from the presidency. Mugabe first obtained power in 1980, when he became Zimbabwe's first democratically-elected president. However, his democratic rule quickly transformed into authoritarianism.⁵⁵ In 2008, Mugabe blocked the electoral commission from announcing his defeat in the general elections, thereby signalling the shift of Zimbabwe's once-democratic government into a hardline regime that clings to power through sham elections. For the past 40 years, Mugabe's policies have single-handedly dismantled Zimbabwe's economy while undermining the human rights of its citizens.

Emmerson Mnangagwa, once Mugabe's vice-president, temporarily succeeded Mugabe after the coup. Mnangagwa, whom many citizens feared would only sustain Mugabe's oppressive policies, has promised to bring economic reform, democratic practices, and improvements to Zimbabwe's international image. In advance of the 2018 Zimbabwean general election, Mnangagwa assured the international community that the poll would be carried out in a credible manner, even inviting previously-banned Western observers to scrutinize the proceedings.⁵⁶ Mnangagwa's expressed commitment to election credibility sparked excitement and enthusiasm from citizens, hopeful that the election would signal a new era for a country finally free from political oppression. Many hoped that the election would remove Mugabe's and Mnangagwa's party from power entirely, and instead elect Nelson Chamisa, a young liberal, into office. Voting started out largely peacefully, but reports of intimidation, harassment, and violence soon ensued. The promised international observers were present in urban centres, but in rural areas, traditional strongholds for the ruling party, signs of electoral fraud became increasingly prevalent. Long-established vote buying tactics continued to jeopardize the legitimacy of the election.

With the announcement of election results postponed, citizens grew wary. Outraged by the possibility of electoral manipulation, many took to the streets to protest. As these protests grew violent, military forces interceded and hunted down supporters of the opposition. Mnangagwa was declared the winner of the election, but many international observers criticized its legitimacy. Zimbabwe needed a fair election, but in just 48 hours, the hopes of citizens were dashed, replaced with scenes of violence and unrest reminiscent of Mugabe's despotic rule. This election was supposed to be historic, marking Zimbabwe's long-awaited transition towards democracy; however, the prevalence of electoral fraud not only catapulted Zimbabwe into a state of disorder and instability, but also prevented the restoration of democratic values in a beleaguered country. As citizens continue to convey a lack of trust in the system and members of the opposition continue to be harassed, stability in Zimbabwe is precarious, this marred election impugning the prospect of electoral, political, economic, and human rights reforms.

⁵⁴ James Brownsell, "Kenya: What Went Wrong in 2007?" Al Jazeera, March 03, 2013, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/03/201333123153703492.html>.

⁵⁵ Becky Little, "The Rise and Fall of Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe's Longtime Dictator," History. A&E Television Networks, November 15, 2017, <https://www.history.com/news/the-rise-and-fall-of-robert-mugabe-zimbabwes-longtime-dictator>.

⁵⁶ Brian Latham and Michael Cohen, "How Zimbabwe's First Election After Mugabe Went Wrong," Bloomberg, August 5, 2018, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-08-05/how-zimbabwe-s-first-election-after-mugabe-went-wrong-quicktake>.

Possible Solutions and Controversies

Democracy Promotion

Vote buying is deeply rooted in poverty, which breeds the desperation that leaves citizens susceptible to electoral manipulation tactics. In this sense, the only comprehensive solution to vote buying addresses poverty and the fundamental socio-economic issues of a country. While eradicating poverty is not necessarily a fully-feasible solution, increasing political awareness through education is a tangible possibility that could yield similar effects. For many citizens in developing countries, political freedom is the least of their worries; their day-to-day struggles overshadow their concern for politics or the democratic state of their nation. Moreover, because of limited access to media and traditional censorship in emerging democracies, citizens are often uninformed and easily swayed by perpetrators of electoral manipulation. This indifference towards politics is what vote buyers exploit and what enables vote buying to thrive. Changing this attitude could be accomplished by increasing citizens' access to information, especially in rural areas, and enlightening citizens on the value of exercising their right to vote. Only by instilling a sense of importance for their votes will citizens even consider declining offers for their votes. Effective only if well-executed, delegates will have to work around the restrictions on press freedom in transitioning democracies and widespread illiteracy in developing countries.

Electoral Assistance

Foreign aid and electoral assistance are essential to ensuring the legitimacy of elections; emerging democracies may not have the expertise or resources necessary to properly execute them. A central component of countering electoral manipulation is the strengthening of electoral management bodies. Electoral management bodies oversee aspects of elections, such as voter registration and the tabulation of votes, essential to ensuring their legitimacy and credibility. For these bodies to achieve objectivity, they must become self-sufficient and independent from incumbent governments. Foreign aid and assistance are necessary to replace the funding or support of the government. In doing so, electoral management bodies are more readily able to address the pertinent electoral issues in their countries.

Currently, the UN's prescriptive, generalized take on electoral assistance leaves little room for foreign aid to be adapted to the context of the country in question.⁵⁷ Donor countries and organizations should engage in more active dialogue with developing countries so that foreign aid is allocated to a country's specific areas of need. Beyond electoral management bodies, a greater overall effort could be made to develop institutions critical to sustaining democracy. Foreign expertise could assist developing countries in remodelling constitutions, advancing the authority of legal bodies, and restructuring economies. Above all, more bilateral cooperation is necessary to efficiently make use of foreign aid where it is needed most.

Election Monitoring

To specifically tackle vote rigging and electoral fraud, methods such as exit polls and Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) can be employed to assess the credibility of official election results. In 1986, the Philippine National Citizen Movement for Free Elections pioneered PVT as a form of election monitoring. PVT is an election observation method that uses voting statistics from a representative sample of voting stations, and independently tabulates these results. This process is carried out parallel to official counts: thus, if the disparity between official results and projected results is statistically significant, it can be concluded that some sort of electoral

⁵⁷ Maarten Halff, The United Nations Approach to Electoral Management Support, Paper, September 2017, <https://ecpr.eu/Filestore/PaperProposal/46d31859-750d-4d33-8fc4-215c80b5b137.pdf>.

manipulation has taken place. This method has increased transparency in democratic proceedings by providing evidence for a population's rejection of fraudulent election results.⁵⁸ Exit polls differ in that they directly question voters instead of using official results. Although PVT methodology is more precise, it is only feasible in situations where the government is relatively complaisant, whereas the application of exit polls is possible in a greater range of circumstances. Although this is not an all-encompassing solution, failing to address voter intimidation and the intricacies of vote buying, it is an advantageous strategy that could be expanded upon to generate a comprehensive solution combatting illegitimate elections in emerging democracies.

Regional Considerations

A key factor to consider is the extensive range of political climates and socioeconomic circumstances in developing countries. Issues pertinent to countries of a certain region may be completely irrelevant in those of another. Afghanistan, for example, exemplifies the pertinence of gender inequality in undermining election legitimacy. As a result of repressive attitudes towards women, there is a disproportionately low turnout of women in Afghan elections.⁵⁹ Due to these social stigmas, many women are forced to vote through proxies; men cast votes on their behalf, depriving women of political agency and increasing the risk of electoral manipulation. Democracy does not discriminate, and to fully consolidate democracy through election legitimacy, all citizens, regardless of gender, should be enabled to exercise their right to vote. Delegates must be mindful of cultural, ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic complications that may stand in the way of legitimate elections.

Bloc Positions

Western Liberal Democracies

Western democracies are the main source of funding, expertise, and resources for ensuring the legitimacy of elections in emerging democracies. Emerging democracies generally require electoral assistance and would be comparatively lost in the process of democratization without the guidance of Western nations. Yet, election-related aid tends to be concentrated in the Middle East, a high-conflict area in which many Western states maintain strategic interests. With fairly politically-motivated agendas for international aid, these countries may see electoral assistance as an opportunity to impose their country's understanding of democracy on the proceedings of another country. The foreign policies of these countries may be heavily influenced by politically-driven principles, but Western democracies must remain mindful of the task at hand: enabling democracy to flourish, regardless of the intricacies of practice.

Transitioning Democracies

Transitioning democracies like Zimbabwe desperately need legitimate elections in order to quell disorder and ease instability. Any election, regardless of its flaws, is the first step towards democratization, but elections that do not represent citizens' views will not appease the people's desire for democracy in the long run. Although these countries should consider implementing long-term undertakings addressing large-scale problems contributing to election legitimacy, they are primarily concerned with the most pressing issue at hand: the stability of their country hinging on the public's perception of an upcoming election. It is in these countries' best

⁵⁸ "30 Years of the Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT)," OPORA, July 05, 2016, <https://www.oporaua.org/en/news/42847-30-years-of-the-parallel-vote-tabulation-pvt>.

⁵⁹ Carlotta Gall, "Intimidation and Fraud Observed in Afghan Election," *The New York Times*, August 22, 2009, <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/23/world/asia/23afghan.html>.

interests to seek efficient and effective solutions that will signal to the people a commitment to progress and accountability.

Illiberal Democracies

The West's idea of democracy ideologically pairs free and fair elections with constitutional liberalism—the rule of law and respect for basic human rights.⁶⁰ The emergence of countries that have democratic mechanisms in place but lack civil liberties has created a new classification: illiberal democracies. These countries exhibit declines in the rule of law with signs of weakening democratic institutions. Leaders in illiberal democracies may engage in sham elections, abolish term limits, or impose restrictions on the liberties of citizens. Illiberal democracies encompass a continuum of systems of government, ranging from Argentina's and Hungary's illiberal political ideals and authoritarian tendencies to Iran's restrictions on the power elected leaders hold.⁶¹ As such, these countries may have somewhat credible elections, but systemic issues plague election legitimacy and democratic governance. To appease political unrest and ensure the stability of individual nations, it is beneficial for countries to establish more democratic practices that will generate credibility towards elections. These countries may, however, be less inclined to implement systematic changes that contradict their fundamental political values; their interpretations of democracy, to varying degrees, are not aligned with the goal of legitimate elections in the developing world, as the goal itself stands for the principals of a liberal democracy. Illiberal democracies may adopt a stance that favors moderate changes that do not drastically impact their current policies.

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways do elections contribute to the stability and wellbeing of countries?
2. What is the difference between a credible election and a legitimate election? How can credibility and legitimacy be achieved simultaneously?
3. How can countries enable the political involvement of poverty-stricken and rural populations?
4. How does the presence or availability of security contribute to voter turnout and the prevalence of post-election violence?
5. To what extent does a donor country have the right to influence the politics of an emerging democracy or impose its interpretation of democracy onto a developing country?
6. How can solutions be framed in a way that caters to the specific social, economic, and political needs of individual countries?

Additional Resources

The UNDP's Focus on Democratic Governance and Peacebuilding:

<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/democratic-governance-and-peacebuilding.html>

⁶⁰ Fareed Zakaria, "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy," *Foreign Affairs*, November 01, 1997, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/1997-11-01/rise-illiberal-democracy>.

⁶¹ Jason Dozier, "What Exactly is 'Illiberal Democracy'?" *Global Risk Insights*, May 28, 2016, <https://globalriskinsights.com/2016/05/what-is-illiberal-democracy/>.

Overview of Electoral Fraud:

<https://www.ifes.org/issues/electoral-fraud-and-malpractice>

The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century by Samuel P. Huntington:

<https://www.ned.org/docs/Samuel-P-Huntington-Democracy-Third-Wave.pdf>

The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2017:

<https://www.eiu.com/topic/democracy-index>

Democratization in Africa:

<https://www.nap.edu/catalog/2041/democratization-in-africa-african-views-african-voices>

How a Peaceful Election in Zimbabwe Turned Violent:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jtNEkRCJssc>

The Rise of Illiberal Democracy:

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