



*American Model United Nations*

**Economic and Social Commission  
for Asia and the Pacific**

**Report to the Economic and Social Commission  
for Asia and the Pacific on Building resilience to  
cross-border disasters**

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# 1 Executive Summary

2 On 22 November 2021, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) discussed  
3 the topic of *Building Resilience to Cross-Border Disasters*. This agenda should be brought forward to the Economic  
4 and Social Council to review the deliberations and resolutions made by this commission.

5 The commission discussed improving mechanisms on avoiding natural disasters, developing sustainable infras-  
6 tructure, sharing relevant data and research through global weather institutions, addressing vulnerable populations  
7 that are affected by cross-border natural disasters, finding ways to finance preventative measures for natural disas-  
8 ters, recognizing the effects that disasters have on international trade and showing how disasters negatively affect  
9 the environment, a consequence which will continue to be exacerbated by climate change.

10 The committee on environment discussed making investments in a Disaster Management Fund. This would  
11 reduce economic costs to the Asia-Pacific region from the natural disasters they face. This fund would also contribute  
12 to the education of domestic leaders on the nature of climate change and mitigation strategies that can be adapted to  
13 each specific country. Educating the domestic leaders of specific countries would illustrate the relationship between  
14 climate change and the increase of natural disasters across the world.

15 The vulnerable populations committee has expressed that they would like larger Member States to consider  
16 accepting more refugees, supplying more resources in terms of medicine as well as temporary housing and working  
17 with international organizations, form disaster response training, using the UN Relief Fund, making recovery easily  
18 accessible for displaced women and children and recognizing that disasters might displace citizens in other States.

19 The data collection and research committee focused on voluntary sharing of data and information between  
20 Member States. These topics of information can include suggestions about tracking software and updates, emergency  
21 communication systems, contingency plans and post-disaster reviews of preventative measures. Additionally, this  
22 committee emphasized the need for effective early-warning and tracking systems among countries in the Asia-Pacific  
23 region, specifically ensuring access to these systems in rural and less developed areas.

24 The funding committee discussed multiple avenues of financing the various projects that this commission  
25 deliberated on. Intergovernmental organizations, nongovernmental organizations and State banks are potential vehi-  
26 cles that could be used for financing the development of various projects. The broad funding suggestions are meant  
27 to show the options that States have for their unique situations and preferences.

28 The committee on international trade and finance emphasized free trade and the facilitation of trade and  
29 finance both during and in the aftermath of natural disasters. The body reported that any emergency personnel  
30 would also assist in trade, any and all essential goods should not be subject to tariffs, increasing sustainable energy  
31 development, putting limits on foreign aid to prevent infringement of national sovereignty and private banks offer  
32 low-interest loans in times of natural disasters.

33 The first chapter of this report shows the suggested resolutions on the topic that the Economic and Social  
34 Commission for Asia and Pacific discussed and asks for those resolutions to be brought to the Economic and Social  
35 Committee for voting.

36 The second chapter details the discussions from the commission on cross-border disasters. The commis-  
37 sion worked in several sub-committees to discuss the wide range of issues attached to cross-border disasters. The  
38 Commission developed many potential solutions to each of these diverse issues.

39 **Matters calling for action**

40 **ESCAP II/1**

41 *Acknowledging* the advancements in data collection on natural disasters through the World Meteorological  
42 Organization, the Typhoon Committee and others global organizations,

43 *Acknowledging also* the advancements in data collection on natural disasters through the Asian Pacific  
44 Partnership, the Asian and Pacific Center for the Development of Disaster Information Management and other  
45 regionally-based, regionally-focused organizations,

46 *Recalling* the Regional Road Map for Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia  
47 and the Pacific, particularly the dedication to transboundary infrastructure networks,

48 *Bearing in mind* the importance of early response to prevent spillover of disasters from local areas to a  
49 broader region,

50 1. *Encourages* that natural disaster tracking technology be used to follow natural disasters in the region,  
51 noting frequency, size, and which countries would be most affected by impending natural disasters:

52 (a) Tracking the path of natural disasters along with the area of effect to predict countries are likely  
53 to be most affected by these natural disasters and aid with necessary preparations and evacuations;

54 (b) Using collected data to determine infrastructure improvements with other aid needed to help  
55 the affected regions;

56 (c) Ensuring that all natural disaster tracking technology also be applied to rural and impoverished  
57 areas;

58 (d) Limiting the tracking of data to only climate-related matters to respect national sovereignty;

59 2. *Suggests* that more funding be allocated to Member States most affected by impending natural disasters  
60 as predicted through tracking technology;

61 3. *Considers* the use of past data to shape responses and preparedness:

62 (a) Providing resources to countries to create evacuation and contingency plans for promoting citizen  
63 safety;

64 (b) Post-disaster reviews shared between countries to discuss the effectiveness of plans in use and  
65 suggest modifications;

66 (c) Countries may consider utilizing the Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems  
67 (RIMES) to share data.

68 **ESCAP II/2**

69 *Acknowledging* the four priorities of the Sendai Framework with particular emphasis on Priority 4: Enhancing  
70 disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction,

71 *Recognizing* that the Asia and Pacific regions are particularly vulnerable to natural disasters such as earth-  
72 quakes, hurricanes, tsunamis, sand and dust storms and wildfires,

73 *Alarmed by* the hundreds of billions of dollars in economic loss each year as a result of natural disasters,

74 *Noting* that cross-border cooperation is essential to protecting the region as a whole but that each state has  
75 the right to administer disaster response within their borders,

76 *Recognizing* the efforts of the Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems (RIMES) to alert  
77 citizens in low-income areas during cross-border disasters,

78 *Considering* the disparity between wealthier Member States regarding existing monitoring technology and  
79 smaller, less-developed Member States without the capability to operate technology required to provide accurate and  
80 timely information,

81 1. *Suggests* Member States to undertake infrastructure improvements to facilitate regional databases in  
82 which Member States can freely share, of their own accord, information relating to the early response and research  
83 of natural disasters;

84 2. *Supports* Member States to seek funding for and initiate digital and physical city mapping efforts in areas  
85 at-risk of experiencing natural disasters to establish and enhance evacuation and emergency relief procedures;

86 3. *Encourages* Member States to research nuclear energy and other clean alternatives to fossil fuels under  
87 the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA) inspections and regulations;

88 (a) This would be intended to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and work towards the 2050 carbon  
89 neutrality goals in order to help prevent natural disasters;

90 4. *Recommends* Member States to implement a regional education program to instruct citizens on prepared-  
91 ness and recovery measures;

92 5. *Advises* Member States within the Asia-Pacific region to support advanced response and alert systems to  
93 warn of coming storms that could threaten the entire region following the established precedent of Regional Integrated  
94 Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems (RIMES);

95 6. *Reminds* Member States to utilize stormwater intervention tunnels to control flooding by changing the  
96 speed of water drainage, as well as other effective flood prevention strategies utilized by Member States in the region;

97 7. *Also Encourages* Asian-Pacific States to share technology, software and education to help lesser-developed  
98 nations in the region have access to modern natural disaster detection devices and data.

## 99 **ESCAP II/3**

100 *Affirming* that the Member States in the Asia-Pacific region are disproportionately affected by natural  
101 disasters, as it contains a great number of developing nations,

102 *Recognizing* the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on international trade and global supply  
103 chains,

104 *Alarmed by* the vulnerability of Asian Member States to natural disasters and other destructive acts of  
105 nature,

106 *Noting with concern* that impacted communities in the Asia-Pacific Region do not have adequate access to  
107 financial aid and short-term loans during times of crisis,

108 *Emphasizing* the need for strong economic ties between Member States in the Asia-Pacific region, especially  
109 during times of emergency,

110 *Aware of* the many benefits of free trade and its contributions to economic growth,

111 1. *Recommends* that Member States prioritize the delivery of emergency supplies, including food, water,  
112 medical supplies and construction materials, to ports during times of emergency;

113 2. *Suggests* Member States to give aid to other member states in need, but to limit that aid to only what is  
114 required and to respect that nation's sovereignty;

115 3. *Expresses its hope* that domestic banks in Member States will grant low interest temporary loans to  
116 communities most impacted by a natural disaster, promoting development among destruction;

117 4. *Further recommends* that Member States exchange valuable items such as technology and equipment to  
118 help prevent future natural disasters and warn local communities of impending acts of nature;

119 5. *Supports* Member States to form groups of regional dock workers to assist Member State's ports at times  
120 of emergency, ensuring regional cohesion and preventing the disruption of international trade;

121 6. *Encourages* Member States to lower tariffs on essential goods during temporary natural disaster emergency  
122 periods, lasting no more than three weeks, in order to facilitate a free flow of emergency supplies to member states  
123 and their communities affected drastically by destructive acts of nature.

124 **ESCAP II/4**

125 *Reaffirming* the work of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the United Nations Office for  
126 Disaster Risk Reduction and the United Nations Environmental Program,

127 *Acknowledging* that climate change exacerbates the intensity and frequency of natural disasters,

128 *Encouraging* all Member States to ratify and/or become a signatory to existing UN commitments on climate  
129 change adaptation, such as the Paris Climate Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction,

130 *Reiterating* that developing States often lack adequate resources for adapting to climate change and prevent-  
131 ing the devastating effects caused by natural disasters in the region,

132 1. *Invites* the Economic and Social Council to consider the importance of funding and the creation of disaster  
133 risk management initiatives when considering the effects of climate change in the Asia-Pacific region;

134 2. *Recommends* the establishment of a program in which domestic leaders, as well as citizens of Member  
135 States, can be educated on the effects and prevention of climate change:

136 (a) This consultative program would provide case-by-case guidance to States seeking to better adapt  
137 their disaster prevention systems to climate change;

138 (b) This program would also include disaster response training programs for citizens in rural areas;

139 (c) This disaster response training would include education on how to identify a possible natural  
140 disaster before it strikes and on evasion tactics should one be caught within a natural disaster;

141 3. *Encourages* the Economic and Social Council to collaborate with existing regional banks and NGOs when  
142 working towards the improvement of disaster risk management systems.

143 **ESCAP II/5**

144 *Recognizing* the disproportionate effect environmental, economic, social, and political crises have on econom-  
145 ically and socially vulnerable populations,

146 *Understanding* that humanitarian disasters can cause persons to flee homes and become refugees,

147 *Reaffirming* a Member State's Responsibility to Protect (R2P),

148 *Acknowledging* developed Member States with robust industry have heavily contributed to worldwide climate  
149 change,

150 *Bearing in mind* that Member States with larger area and economy have a greater capability to take refugees  
151 from under-developed regions impacted by natural disasters,

152 1. *Appeals* that Member States develop robust systems to take refugees;

153 2. *Suggests* Member States to take proper response after a humanitarian disaster has occurred:

154 (a) Providing training to volunteers or workers to aid and assist in disaster relief;

155 (b) The training should include, but not be limited to; medical aid, food aid and infrastructure  
156 rebuilding;

157 (c) Use of the United Nations Relief Fund to support the economy should be a major source of  
158 income;

159 3. *Recommends* that Member States attempt to use preventative infrastructure to limit damages inflicted  
160 upon communities:

161 (a) Implementing previous Bangladeshi policies of;

162 (i) Early warning systems;

163 (ii) Government preparedness programs;

- 164 (b) Building homes and buildings with sustainable materials;
- 165 4. *Invites* Member States funnel resources towards rural communities after humanitarian disasters to make  
166 sure such communities get proper support:
- 167 (a) These resources should include, but not be limited to;
- 168 (i) Food, water, medicine, clothes and temporary housing;
- 169 (ii) Government support for permanent housing;
- 170 (iii) Resources from international and domestic non-governmental organizations that provide essen-  
171 tial supplies;
- 172 5. *Calls upon* Member States to assist refugees transitioning to normal life after humanitarian disaster:
- 173 (a) Providing temporary shelter to refugees seeking asylum in other countries;
- 174 (i) Ensuring refugee settlements meet the standards of human life;
- 175 (b) Providing income opportunities to refugees;
- 176 (i) Creating programs that address environmental and humanitarian concerns of Member States;
- 177 6. *Also Recommends* Member States to create Income programs similar to Bangladesh's program for Ro-  
178 hingya Muslim refugees, which provides training and employment opportunities to refugees;
- 179 7. *Expresses its hope that* Member States who cannot provide such settlements to instead ensure safe passage  
180 through other Member States.

## 181 Consideration of the status

### 182 Data Collection Deliberations

183 Representatives from Mongolia, Turkmenistan, Indonesia, Thailand, the Republic of Korea, the United King-  
184 dom and the United States met to discuss data collection and research relating to cross-border disasters. Consensus  
185 was established about the importance and urgency of creating systems to aid in the early-warning and rapid re-  
186 sponse of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) Member States to disasters that  
187 cross international borders. For the purposes of this document, the above listed nations will be referred to as “The  
188 Research Group.”

189 The Research Group noted first the importance of maintaining national sovereignty in the context of inter-  
190 national cooperation and data sharing. While the sharing of information and technology is key to strategic planning,  
191 we must respect each Member State’s sovereignty. It was suggested by some Member States that transparency of  
192 funding for cross-border disasters be established in a way that does not infringe upon a State’s self-governance. The  
193 Research Group agreed that we must establish frameworks to facilitate the creation of solutions that work for all  
194 countries involved in cross-border disasters.

195 This body deliberated the importance of utilizing storm tracking technology, collection and research of  
196 various natural disasters in a similar manner as past global organizations. These global organizations include the  
197 Typhoon Committee established in 1968, the World Meteorological Organization established in 1950, the United  
198 Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction established in 1999, and the Asia-Pacific Disaster Resilience Network.  
199 Tracking of meteorological events and natural disasters allows for countries to better predict the extent of future  
200 natural disasters. This has the benefit of creating more accurate predictions across an entire region if neighboring  
201 countries choose to share information and data processing.

202 These deliberations should be considered with the understanding that these are not blanket solutions to  
203 cross-border disasters, but are instead relevant discussions on possible suggestions to alleviate the issues. The Research  
204 Group noted that many other suggestions do exist, but those iterated above are considered the most attainable and  
205 applicable for the disparate needs created by geographical and environmental differences.

### 206 Environment Deliberations

207 There has been a rise in the number and severity of natural disasters worldwide, and this is a direct result of  
208 climate change. To address these natural disasters, it is essential to address the effects climate change has on these  
209 events. The Asia and Pacific region is at an intersection of the factors related to natural disasters and climate change  
210 which all largely increase the damage caused by flooding, limit access to freshwater, increase the severity of climate  
211 disasters and cause other deleterious effects on the region. This environmental sub-committee finds it essential to be  
212 proactive in mitigating the effects climate change has on the natural disasters that ravage the region.

213 Member States within the environmental sub-committee shared the particular disasters that often displace  
214 their populations and destroy their existing infrastructure. It became clear within this sub-committee’s deliberations  
215 that no one type of disaster affects the region. Myanmar, Mongolia, Pakistan, Hong Kong and India shared with  
216 the sub-committee that floods are a recurring concern. Member States also shared that dzuds, inter alia, monsoons,  
217 cyclones, droughts, landslides, earthquakes and rising sea levels often ravage any existing infrastructure within the  
218 Asia-Pacific region. Member States recognized also that developing States often lack adequate resources for adapting  
219 to climate change and preventing the devastating effects that natural disasters in the region cause. All Member  
220 States in this committee also acknowledged the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and its transnational  
221 nature. Therefore, any recommendations seeking to better equip Member States to combat cross-border disasters,  
222 should also keep this in mind.

223 Recognizing the increasing threat of climate change and its ability to create an increased number of catas-  
224 trophic short and long-term natural disasters, Member States are working to create solutions to lessen the impact  
225 of said disasters. Investment in a Disaster Management Fund for Asia and the Pacific would prove beneficial to this  
226 committee, as it would reduce economic impacts on countries that are largely affected by disasters. Many countries  
227 in this committee have been facing an increasing number of natural disasters that often cause a need for a larger  
228 amount of financial resources than are previously set aside by said countries. This fund would be a beneficial resource  
229 in combating the negative impacts natural disasters have on Member States.



230 Another possible function of this fund would be the education of domestic leaders on the imperative nature  
231 of climate change and possible mitigation strategies they can implement within their own specific countries. The goal  
232 of this strategy is to educate leaders on the relationship climate change has with the increase of natural disasters  
233 across the world. It is the hope of this fund that upon receiving this education individual countries will be apt to  
234 adopt more sustainable operations. Not only that, consultants may be implemented by this fund for countries who  
235 are unaware on how to start with this process and be provided with case specific assistance based on their individual  
236 needs. In addition, representatives from Viet Nam expressed interest in disaster response training programs for  
237 citizens living in rural areas. These programs could serve as one aspect of disaster risk management improvement.

## 238 **Infrastructure Deliberations**

239 Representatives from China, Iran, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Australia, Japan, Sri Lanka and the Republic  
240 of Korea, hereby known as the “Infrastructure Group”, met to discuss the infrastructure solutions to cross-border  
241 disasters exacerbated by climate change . We discussed infrastructure improvements and solutions that our countries  
242 have implemented domestically and considered areas for potential cross-border collaboration.

243 The Infrastructure Group discussed physical infrastructure, such as disaster-resistant buildings and drainage  
244 systems, streamlined evacuation and city-mapping measures. It is also of the utmost importance to provide disaster  
245 education to equip citizens with the knowledge to protect themselves and their communities. More sustainable energy  
246 alternatives were discussed such as nuclear power, but some countries had concerns about the potential for facility  
247 abuse.

248 The Infrastructure Group also would like to recognize that while there is significant need for cooperation  
249 within the region to combat natural disasters, each country has the best information and insight into how they  
250 can best support their own citizens and as such would like to reiterate our belief that State sovereignty be firmly  
251 protected within any cross-border responses.

252 The group acknowledges the challenges regarding energy production and consumption that reduce carbon  
253 emissions. We encourage the developed nations to lead the way when it comes to clean energy. This group recom-  
254 mends pursuits in cleaner energy options and sees the potential positive long term effects of nuclear energy. Pursuing  
255 a future with low carbon emissions as well as a productive global energy sector is the best path forward. With  
256 countries like China leading the path, the group encourages developing nations to combine efforts in offering land for  
257 developed nations through diplomacy to begin production for cleaner energy that would provide long term benefits  
258 for the Asian and Pacific region.

259 The majority of the Infrastructure Group was in agreement concerning State sovereignty, regional coopera-  
260 tion, climate action, and safe, sustainable nuclear energy. We support efforts to improve both domestic and regional  
261 infrastructure to better protect all those who live in the Asia-Pacific region.

262 The Infrastructure Group acknowledged that there is disparity between developed and developing nations  
263 in the necessary technology for disaster prevention. More economically developed countries (MEDCs) are better  
264 equipped in acquiring and affording the technology. The idea of a trickle-down system was discussed, which allows  
265 developing countries to access up-to-date technology.

## 266 **Trade and Finance Deliberations**

267 The delegations of Fiji, Hong Kong, Nepal, Singapore and the Philippines extensively discussed international  
268 trade and finance in relation to resilience against cross-border natural disasters. Overall, the representatives high-  
269 lighted the importance of free trade and the facilitation of trade and finance during and in the aftermath of natural  
270 disasters.

271 Initially, the representative of the Philippines stressed the importance of continuing trade and facilitating  
272 trade through land and waterways transportation after natural disasters. The representative explained that individual  
273 States should encourage their own domestic emergency personnel, such as firefighters, to maintain safe routes for  
274 trade to continue in the wake of these disasters.

275 Likewise, Fiji advocated for free trade within the Asia-Pacific region, placing special attention to essential  
276 goods, such as water, food, and construction materials. The delegation suggested that, especially during natural  
277 disasters, these goods should not be subject to tariffs or any other limits on trade between States. Because Asia has

278 many developing economies, delegations in this area all agreed that economic activity should be minimally affected  
279 by natural disasters.

280 Singapore contributed their concerns regarding economic development due to international influence on trade.  
281 In less than 50 years, Singapore has transformed itself through heavy emphasis on state sovereignty, echoed by Hong  
282 Kong. As an area of only 250 square miles, Hong Kong requires high-density energy importation to support economic,  
283 social, and cultural development. Furthermore, Singapore recognizes the importance of increasing sustainable energy  
284 development by fomenting trade in the region.

285 Hong Kong suggested that limits should be placed on foreign aid in order to avoid States with large influence  
286 from sending military aid that could infringe upon national sovereignty . As a Member State subject to many foreign  
287 influences, Hong Kong expressed concerns of States with larger economies and militaries gaining disproportionate  
288 influence when smaller countries found themselves in vulnerable situations.

289 The representative from Nepal discussed the role of finance in international disasters. The representative  
290 suggested that ESCAP recommend to States that private banks offer low-interest loans in times of natural disasters.  
291 While this is a domestic policy, all delegates agreed that it should be a globally recognized effort.

292 The delegate from the Philippines spoke about the progress that the international trade and finance subgroup  
293 had focused on. In response, the delegate from Australia brought forth the concern that suspension and temporary  
294 decreases in tariffs, specifically on food products, had the potential to negatively affect farmers in rural areas of low  
295 income countries. The Philippines expressed that no other countries had voiced this concern and clarified that any  
296 changes to tariffs would merely be a temporary measure.

297 The Philippines and Hong Kong discussed this issue further, noting that a short span in the suspension of  
298 tariffs would not have significant effects on rural economies. The delegates also agreed that should any suspensions  
299 or limits of tariffs occur, the small harm would not outweigh the gains of providing necessary assistance to those in  
300 need.

301 **Adoption of the Report**

302           At its meeting on 23 November 2021, the draft report of the commission was made available for consider-  
303 ation. The commission considered the report, and with no amendments, adopted the report by consensus with no  
304 abstentions.

305           Passed by consensus with no abstentions.

Passed by consensus, with 0 abstentions