



Human Cost of Disasters 2000-2019: UNDRR

Why in News

In a new report “**The Human Cost of Disasters 2000-2019**”, the United Nations pointed out that climate change is largely to blame for a near doubling of natural disasters in the past 20 years.

- The report is published by the [United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction \(UNDRR\)](#). The report **did not touch on biological hazards and disease-related disasters** like the coronavirus pandemic.
- **International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction** is observed on **13th October** every year.

Key Points

- **Findings:**
 - **7,348 major disaster** events had occurred between 2000 and 2019, **affecting 4.2 billion people** and **costing** the global economy some **USD 2.97 trillion**.
 - The figure is **far more than the 4,212** major natural disasters recorded between **1980 and 1999**.
 - **6,681 climate-linked disasters** had been recorded in the period 2000-19, up from 3,656 during the previous 20-year-period.
 - Climate-related disasters include disasters categorized as meteorological, climatological, or hydrological.
 - There had also been an **increase in geophysical events** like earthquakes and tsunamis that are **not related to climate** but are particularly deadly.
 - **Major floods** had more than doubled to 3,254, there had been 2,034 major storms up from 1,457 in 20 years.
 - **India** is the **2nd most affected country by floods** after China.
 - Extreme heat is proving especially deadly. **Heatwaves of 2015 in India** resulted in 2,248 deaths.
 - The **deadliest single disaster** in the past 20 years was the **2004 Indian Ocean tsunami**, with 2,26,400 deaths, followed by the **Haiti earthquake** in 2010, which claimed some 2,22,000 lives.
 - The data showed that **Asia** has suffered the **highest number of disasters** in the past 20 years with 3,068 such events, followed by the Americas with 1,756 and Africa with 1,192.
 - In terms of affected countries, **China** topped the list with 577 events followed by the **United States** with 467 and **India** (321 events).
- **Concern:**
 - Governments are not doing enough to prevent climate hazards.
 - A **temperature increase of 3°C** of the global climate is estimated to **increase the frequency of potentially high impact natural hazard events** across the world. This could render **current national and local strategies** for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation **obsolete** in many countries.

- **Shifting rainfall patterns and greater variability** in precipitation poses a **risk to the 70% of global agriculture** that is rain-fed and the 1.3 billion people dependent on degrading agricultural land.

▪ **Recommendations:**

- The concentrated impact due to a single disaster in some countries provides an opportunity for a more focused approach on disaster risk reduction. However, **Covid-19** demonstrates the need for a systemic, multi hazard approach in an increasingly globalized and interconnected world.
- There is a requirement for **strengthening disaster risk governance** to manage disaster risk with clear vision, competence, plans, guidelines, funding and coordination across sectors and in a manner, which takes account of the increasingly systemic nature of disaster risk.
- **Public and private investment** in disaster risk prevention and reduction through **structural** and **non-structural measures** needs to be stepped up to create disaster resilient societies.

United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

- The UNDRR was **established in 1999** as a dedicated secretariat to facilitate the implementation of the **International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR)**.
- It is headquartered in **Geneva, Switzerland**.
- It is mandated to serve as the focal point in the United Nations system for the coordination of disaster reduction and to ensure synergies among the disaster reduction activities.
- It is an **organisational unit of the UN Secretariat** and is led by the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction (SRSG).
- **UNDRR's Strategic Framework 2016-2021** has a vision to substantially reduce disaster risk and losses for a sustainable future with the **mandate to act as the custodian of the Sendai Framework** (India is a signatory).

Indian Scenario

- The **National Disaster Management Authority** (NDMA) is the apex statutory body for disaster management in India.
- The NDMA was formally constituted in 2006, in accordance with the **Disaster Management Act, 2005** with the Prime Minister as its Chairperson.
- **National Disaster Management Plan** (NDMP) defines the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders including Central Ministries/ Departments, State Governments, UT Administrations, District Authorities and local self Governments.
 - Primary responsibility of disaster management rests with the **States**.
 - The **Central Government** conducts regular mock drill, community training and awareness programmes to prepare the civilian populations for disasters.

Source: TH