



# ARIZONA MODEL UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL RESEARCH GUIDE

## COMMITTEE WEBSITE

<https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/>

## ABOUT THE COMMITTEE

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is one of the six main organs of the United Nations. As a governing body, it is responsible for a number of UN entities, including regional economic and social commissions, specialized agencies, programs, and funds for development around the world. Delegates will represent one of 54 member countries.

## TOPIC ONE: STREAMLINING METHODS OF DISASTER RELIEF AND ASSISTANCE

Disasters, by definition, are sudden and unpredictable. Conceptually, disasters cover a wide variety of events, from storms that drown cities to human-induced famines to mass acts of violence. As a result, frameworks and other models of response should be flexible and open, and should consider the range of individual and community responses to disaster. Disaster relief operations and aid may come from a diverse array of sources, depending on local context and the nature of an event. Constellations of factors may lend themselves to particular kinds of international intervention. For example, the 2004 Sumatra earthquake and its resulting tsunami was an international event, devastating people and property throughout Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, and Thailand. Sri Lanka and Indonesia in particular are less developed countries and already subject to considerable foreign aid. This made a coordinated international aid response both necessary and feasible, and included the delivery of aid packages and the arrival of international aid groups such as the International Red Cross and Red Crescent. In recent years, however, such groups have faced harsh criticism, particularly in their role in rebuilding the country post-disaster. Haiti's 2010 earthquake and its aftermath are an important test case in the ability of disaster relief and assistance to save lives in the short term and to help build infrastructure for recovery in the medium- to long-term outlook. Examining critiques of major cases such as that of Haiti will be necessary in understanding the flaws of contemporary disaster relief coordinating mechanisms.

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

What has ECOSOC (and related UN bodies) done towards addressing disaster relief? How can these efforts be improved upon?

What categories of disasters should be considered in designing responses? What are immediate and long-term concerns (for example, public health or economic recovery) that may result from a disaster?

What are some frameworks that can be created to help with disaster relief and assistance? What types of technologies may facilitate these frameworks?

How can the UN best partner with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as the Red Cross to best provide disaster relief and assistance?

#### **FURTHER READING**

[http://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/center-for-refugee-and-disaster-response/publications\\_tools/publications/\\_CRDR\\_ICRC\\_Public\\_Health\\_Guide\\_Book/Chapter\\_1\\_Disaster\\_Definitions.pdf](http://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/center-for-refugee-and-disaster-response/publications_tools/publications/_CRDR_ICRC_Public_Health_Guide_Book/Chapter_1_Disaster_Definitions.pdf)  
<http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/beneficiary-communications/haiti-case-study/>

## **TOPIC TWO: PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), sometimes referred to as chronic diseases, are diseases that are not transmitted from person to person. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), NCDs kill 38 million people a year, the majority of which occur in low- and middle-income countries. Cardiovascular diseases, cancers, respiratory diseases, and diabetes make up 82% of all NCD deaths, again according to the WHO. While a significant amount of money and attention are placed on spectacular communicable diseases such as ebola, NCDs continue to threaten lives around the world, particularly as certain diets, ways of life, and urban transformations continue to occur in developing countries. In that way, NCDs hint at broader structural problems in the same way that communicable diseases do. Thus, NCDs should be important consideration in planning, development, and investment. How might non-communicable diseases be considered in economic, urban, and social transformations? What role does the United Nations have in facilitating certain visions that promote what some call a healthy lifestyle? How can experts and professionals better integrate local knowledge to produce recommendations that effectively stem the growth of NCDs?

#### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

How are NCDs tied to socioeconomic status? How can member countries of ECOSOC work to mitigate this?

What are some ways to raise awareness or facilitate prevention of these types of illnesses?

How would efforts to combat NCDs differ from efforts to combat diseases that can be transmitted from person to person?

What are some efforts that ECOSOC (and related bodies) have already made towards combating the effects of NCDs? How can these efforts be improved on?

#### **FURTHER READING**

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs355/en/>  
<http://www.wma.net/en/20activities/30publichealth/10noncommunicablediseases/>  
[http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=E/RES/2016/5](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/RES/2016/5)