United Nations Environmental Assembly

Committee Mandate

At the Rio+20 United Nations Conference for Sustainable Development, the international community called for a strengthening and upgrading of the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) such that it could better execute on its mandate.[1] UN Environment was created in 1972 at the UN Conference on Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden and had been run by a small Governing Council until 2013, when the Governing Council adopted resolution *27/2*, which expanded the Governing Council to universal membership and requested the General Assembly to change its designation to the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA).[2] The name change was made official in *A/RES/67/251* the same year.[3]

UNEA is the governing body of UN Environment and is the international community's highest-level decision-making body on environmental matters.[4] UNEA governs and sets policy for UN Environment, which works to develop environmentally friendly practices and policies both within the United Nations (UN) system and throughout the international community.[5] UN Environment has played a significant role in coordinating environmental policy and is the official body concerned with environmental issues in the UN.[6] It has helped in the drafting and execution of major environmental documents such as *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*, *Agenda 21*, the *Convention on Biological Diversity,* the *UN Framework Convention on Climate Change,* and the *Convention to Combat Desertification*.[7]

Membership

In 2013, UNEA replaced the former Governing Council of UN Environment, which was comprised of 58 members.[8] UNEA's membership includes all UN Member States and the UN's permanent observers are welcomed to its sessions.[9] UNEA's universal

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[1] United Nations General Assembly, *The Future We Want*, A/RES/66/288, 2012, p. 18.

[2] United Nations Environment Programme, *About the UN Environment Assembly*; United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, *Report of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment*, A/CONF.48/14/Rev.1, 1972.

[3] Ibid.

[4] United Nations Environment Programme, *UN Environment Assembly and Governing Council*, n.d.

[5] United Nations Environment Programme, *About UN Environment*, n.d.

[6] United Nations General Assembly, *Institutional and financial arrangements for international environmental co-operation*, A/RES/2997(XXVII), 1972; New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *United Nations Handbook 2017-18*, 2017, pp. 256-257.

[7] Johnson, *The First 40 Years*, 2012; Convention on Biological Diversity, *The Rio Conventions*, n.d.

[8] United Nations General Assembly, *Institutional and financial arrangements for international environmental co-operation* A/RES/2997(XXVII), 1972.

[9] United Nations Environment Programme, *Directory: Committee of Permanent Representatives to the UN Environment*, 2019, p. 4.

membership helps to strengthen the role of UN Environment in international affairs and increase the responsiveness of Member States in developing environmental policy.[10]

UN Environment has a Secretariat that is responsible for supporting UNEA and consists of a rotating President, three Vice-Presidents, and a Rapporteur.[11] There is also a Committee of Permanent Representatives, which is a permanent subsidiary body of UNEA that prepares for meetings, monitors the implementation of its decisions, and provides advice to UN Environment between the sessions of the Assembly.[12] The Committee is composed of all accredited Permanent Representatives to UN Environment and is an important link between the program and national governments.[13]

Reporting

UN Environment reports both to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).[14] UN Environment is headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya and has six offices dispersed globally that undertake projects on regional and local levels.[15] Each office holds yearly Regional Consultation Meetings with various civil society organizations (CSOs) and other stakeholders in order to engage in an environmental policy dialogue.[16] The offices then bring any concerns or ideas from these meetings to the next UNEA session for wider discussion.[17]

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[10] United Nations Environment Programme, *About the UN Environment Assembly*, n.d.
[11] United Nations General Assembly, *Change of the designation of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme*, A/67/784, 2013.
[12] United Nations Environment Programme, *Committee of Permanent Representatives: Overview*, n.d.
[13] Ibid.
[14] New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *United Nations Handbook 2017-18*, 2017, pp. 256-257.
[15] United Nations Environment Programme, *Civil society engagement*, n.d.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.

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United Nations Environment Assembly

The Role of Corporate Social Responsibility in Combating Climate Change

Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a standard business model used by companies around the globe in order to promote accountability to itself, stakeholders, and the global public. This standard includes tracking the impacts companies are having in the international community, including economically, socially and environmentally.[18] One of the leading causes of climate change is brought on by the excess burning of fossil fuels, which in turn leads to increased Greenhouse Gasses (GHG) in the atmosphere. Carbon dioxide (CO_2) being the main GHG rising global temperatures, we must look to creating more sustainable industry practices and collectively within the industrial community work to decrease the carbon footprint.

Human activity is the main cause of increased CO_2 in the air and the Climate Change we are seeing today.[19] Since the 1750s, the concentration of CO_2 in the atmosphere has increased by 50 percent and the global temperature has risen 1.1 degrees since the 1850s. This is directly related to the industrial revolution and the practice of burning fossil fuels. Looking at the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically goal 12, Responsible Consumption and Production, it highlights the need to reduce waste production, reduce fossil fuel projects and inefficient uses of fossil fuels, encourages businesses globally to implement sustainable practices, promote and educate the public, and more.

How businesses approach CSR will have a global impact, and there are several steps, pillars, and frameworks that member states and businesses in the international community can initiate in order to make a positive impact.[20]

Background

The concept of CSR has been floating around since 1953, when American economist Howard Bowen coined the term.[21] However, the idea gained recognition within the United Nations (UN) in 1999, during a speech made by then Secretary General Kofi Anan. During a speech at the World Economic Forum, he said: "I propose that you, the business leaders gathered in Davos, and we, the United Nations, initiate a global compact of shared values and principles, which will give a human face to the global market."[22] This then led to the creation of The Global Compact. This compact

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[18] "What is CSR?" UNIDO. N.d.
[19] "Myth Busters; The facts on climate and energy." United Nations. N.d.
[20] "Goal 12; Targets and indicators." United Nations. N.d.
[21] Rao, Shristi. "A brief history: How CSR came into existence?" The CSR Universe. N.d.
[22] Agudelo, Mauricio Andres Latapi et al. "A literature review of the history and evolution of corporate social responsibility." International Journal of Corporate Social Responsibility. 2019.

aims to work at global and local levels and in cooperation with UN programmes, governments, civil society and labour organizations, and businesses.[23]

Within the Global Compact, there are ten principles that have been derived from several UN documents and programmes. These principles have influence from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption.[24] These ten principles outline standards for maintaining human rights, good labour practices, combating corruption, and protecting the environment.

While they all interconnect with each other, in regard to sustainable development, the three principles under the environment category are the most relevant here. These principles are as follows: "Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges; Principle 8: Businesses should undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and Principle 9: Businesses should encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies."[25]

The precautionary approach is outlined in Principle 15 of the 1992 Rio Declaration. This states that "in order to protect the environment, the precautionary approach shall be widely applied by States according to their capabilities. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation."[26] Why should companies care about this? While it is true that preventative measures against environmental damage may cost more up front, repairing the damage after the fact can be even more expensive and detrimental to a company's reputation. Also, investing in non-sustainable methods and projects doesn't always have a long-term return in investment and improving environmental performance instead could mean less financial risk and helps uphold reputation with investors. Environmentally friendly products and practices can have significant long-term benefits.[27] Companies within the international community should develop things such as a code of conduct, managerial committees or steering groups that oversee the company's application of this principle, support relevant research, and things along the lines of industry-wide collaboration and knowledge sharing to handle the issue of precaution. These are just a few examples of how to best implement Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration.[28]

In chapter 30 of Agenda 21, it outlines the role of business and industry in the sustainable development field. It states, "Business and industry should increase self-regulation, guided by appropriate codes, charters and initiatives integrated into all

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[23] "The Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact." United Nations Global Compact. N.d.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] "Principle Seven: Environment." United Nations Global Compact. N.d.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.

elements of business planning and decision-making, and fostering openness and dialogue with employees and the public."[29] When using cleaner and more efficient processes means increased productivity, which in turn means needing less raw materials and lower costs. This section of Agenda 21 also spells out the different challenges for developing environmental strategies. These are things along the lines of policy, developing targets and indicators, sustainable production and consumption, measures to track progress, and more.[30]

The third and final principle in the Environment section of the Global Compact covers sound technologies. Also, in Agenda 21 of the Rio Declaration, this states that these technologies should strive to protect the environment, be less polluting, use all resources in a more sustainable manner, recycle more wastes and handle that waste in a more sustainable manner. This also includes cleaner production processes and pollution prevention technologies, and more.[31] The benefits of implementing these technologies help companies reduce the use of raw materials, promote innovation and new business opportunities, and help technologies run cleaner and more efficiently.

These three principles within the Global Compact highlight the creation of Corporate Social Responsibility and the essential benefits it offers to both the International Community and the environment as a whole.

Current Situation

There are many major players within the UN that strive to promote CSR and sustainable development. These include the United Nations Industrial Development Programme (UNIDO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), and the UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (UNOHCHR).

UNDP has recently released a paper titled 'Corporate Social Responsibility as an enabler of Green Growth and Climate Action'.[32] This paper, in partnership with Millenium Development Goals Carbon (MDG Carbon) outlines the role of UNDP and MDG Carbon to assist a host country establish a CSR Agency, Strategy, and a Fund for sustainable development. The initiatives, mainly for policy makers, regulators, and implementing agencies to reexamine the private sector initiatives under CSR as a driving force for green growth and climate action and much more. This paper is just one example of UN programmes and bodies incorporating CSR into their projects and initiatives in countries across the globe.

UNIDO is also essential to mention in the CSR field. UNIDO's approach to CSR is all about "spreading the core values of CSR across local business communities, learning from best practice examples and experiences of companies or institutions with

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[29] "Principle Eight: Environment." United Nations Global Compact. N.d.
[30] Ibid.
[31] "Principle Nine: Environment." United Nations Global Compact. N.d.
[32] "Corporate Social Responsibility as an enabler of Green Growth and Climate Action." United Nations Development Programme. 2016.

similar cultural, social and economic contexts."[33] The main focus points for UNIDO in regards to CSR and sustainable development are as follows; "environmental management, eco-efficiency, responsible sourcing, stakeholder engagement, labour standards and working conditions, employee and community relations, social equity, gender balance, human rights, good governance, and anti-corruption measures."[34]

It should be noted that, while CSR support continues to grow in efficiency and improve in messaging, the UN is constrained by its Charter to act only in an advisory capacity to corporations.[35] Imposition of more stringent standards is limited to the United Nations' role in the maintenance of international peace and security, particularly the activities of the UN Security Council.[36] Unsustainable corporate practices are not currently considered to rise to a threat level that would make more extreme action by the UN appropriate.

Corporate Social Responsibility and the Sustainable Development Goals

Much of the international effort to promote CSR in the last several years is connected to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.[37] The Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a straightforward framework for corporations to work within as they pursue more responsible policy. Many of the broad goals and practices of CSR can be implemented within the context of the SDGs.[38] The UN Development Programme (UNDP) is a critical component of the UN's support for corporations in this regard. The UNDP advocates for the positive benefits that corporations can reap by initiating sustainable practices while recognizing the fundamental role that the private sector must play in sustainable development.[39]

In addition to the tangible actions suggested by the SDGs, the framework of the 2030 Agenda sets a best practice for corporate reporting to meet CSR targets. CSR policy can be interpreted or dismissed as "greenwashing," a practice by which bad actors present themselves as sustainable using development language while continuing to engage in unsustainable behaviors.[40] The effective reporting scaffolding and specifically identified targets of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs can help corporations better present themselves as responsible members of global society and economy.[41]

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[33] "Regional CSR Projects." United Nations Industrial Development Organization. N.d.
[34] "What is CSR?" UNIDO. N.d.
[35] "Guidelines on a principle-based approach to the Cooperation between the United Nations and the business sector." United Nations. 2015.
[36] "Charter of the United Nations." United Nations. 1945.
[37] Shayan, Niloufar Fallah et al. "Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a Framework for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)." Sustainability. 2022.
[38] Ibid.
[39] "Corporate Social Responsibility as an enabler of Green Growth and Climate Action." United Nations Development Programme. 2016.
[40] Spors, Felicity. "How to spot greenwashing – and how to stop it." World Economic Forum. 2021.
[41] Oh, Judy. "3 paradigm shifts in corporate sustainability marks new era of ESG." World Economic Forum. 2021.

Future Outlook

The elevation of CSR to a more common phrase and concern in the UN is likely here to stay. Questions of sustainable development have made it more clear than ever that all actors, whether states, individuals, or corporations, have a role in securing our world for future generations. The UN, though limited to advocacy and advisory roles when engaging with corporate actors, provides important resources to ease and encourage corporation adoption of responsible and sustainable practices. Through initiatives like the 2019 UN Programme Finance Initiative's Principles for Responsible Banking, the UN will continue to clarify and model principles and practices that promote more responsible corporate governance and policy.

Focus Questions

- Does your country have domestic initiatives to promote CSR?

- What sectors does your country's economy rely on? What concerns are most pressing for CSR in those sectors?

- What is your country's current policy on economic intervention and economic growth? How much control does it exert on its domestic markets and international trade?

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"Principle Nine: Environment." United Nations Global Compact. N.d. https://unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/mission/principles/principle-9

"Principle Seven: Environment." United Nations Global Compact. N.d. https://unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/mission/principles/principle-7

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Agudelo, Mauricio Andrés Latapí et al. "A literature review of the history and evolution of corporate social responsibility." International Journal of Corporate Social Responsibility. 2019. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40991-018-0039-y

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Topic B: The Role of Ecosystems in Disaster Risk Reduction

Introduction

As the threat of climate change grows, extreme weather events have become more frequent and more devastating, posing greater impacts of an already global threat.[42] Vulnerabilities of human society and the natural environment are exacerbated by climate change and environmental degradation.[43] In the 1990s, the international community became increasingly concerned with addressing and lessening the effects of natural disasters. Global leaders and researchers became more aware of the increasing threats posed to our diverse world by climate change and growing disasters. Throughout the subsequent years, this concern prompted the creation of a number of international frameworks and organizations, including the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), the *Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World*, the *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015* (*HFA*), and the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*.

The UNDRR focuses on disaster risk reduction (DRR) through a number of goals to build resilient infrastructure, develop collaborative DRR strategies among Member States, and reduce natural disaster risk to communities. DRR measures aim to "reduce the damage caused by natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, droughts, and cyclones, through an ethic of prevention."[44] By anticipating and reducing risk of disaster, the international community works to reduce vulnerability and exposure of people, infrastructure, and the economy to disasters.[45] This can be achieved by taking steps laid out within the priorities of international agreements such as the *Sendai Framework*, which is the current international framework for DRR.[46] Though DRR efforts have often been centered around sustainability, the international community has begun to emphasize sustainable DRR practices in recent years, especially after the adoption of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.[47] Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable and SDG 13 on climate change are of particular importance for DRR, as they provide specific targets for sustainable and resilient infrastructure to promote DRR.[48] Efforts to stabilize ecosystems and make them more robust in the face of extreme disasters preserve diverse wildlife and incorporate sustainable DRR practices to better protect the natural environment from a changing climate.

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[42] United Nations Department of Public Information. UN News. "Disasters: UN report shows climate change causing 'dramatic rise' in economic losses." 2018.
[43] Ibid.
[44] United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. "What is Disaster Risk Reduction?" N.d.
[45] PreventionWeb. "Disaster risk reduction & disaster risk management." N.d.
[46] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. "What is the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction?" 2020.
[47] Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform. "Disaster Risk Reduction." N.d.
[48] Ibid.

Background:

Natural disasters were first addressed by the UN in the adoption of several resolutions on specific natural disasters in the 1960s.[49] This work continued in the 1970s with the creation of the United Nations Disaster Relief Office and a number of resolutions regarding assistance following a natural disaster.[50] The late 1980s saw the declaration of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, which led to the convening of the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction in Yokohama, Japan in 1994.[51] During the conference, the international community formulated the principles on which a disaster reduction strategy can be based.[52] The outcome document of this conference, *Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World*, was the first major international framework for DRR.[53] The plan to reduce the impact of disasters when they occur is undermined by gaps in development in five areas as outlined by the strategy. These areas include governance, risk identification, knowledge management and education, reducing underlying risk factors, and preparedness for effective response and recovery.[54] The principles laid out in the *Yokohama Strategy* were continuously strengthened, as new international agreements such as the *Millennium Declaration*, the *HFA*, the *Sendai Framework*, and the SDGs came into play on the international stage.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were the precursors to the SDGs which were put in place in 2000. The newly created UNDRR helped highlight the importance of DRR within these new, ambitious international goals. Shortly after the MDGs were adopted by the international community, the Secretary-General of the United Nations developed a roadmap for the implementation of the MDGs which included key DRR measures.[55] These measures included:

- Developing early warning systems, vulnerability mapping, technological transfer and training;
- Supporting interdisciplinary and intersectoral partnerships, improved scientific research on the causes of natural disasters and better international cooperation to reduce the impact of climate variables, such as El Niño and La Niña;
- Encouraging governments to address the problems created by megacities, the location of settlements in high-risk areas and other manmade determinants of disasters;

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[49] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. "History." 2020.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction. "Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation." 1994.
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[54] World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction. "Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation." 1994.
[55] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. "The link between Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and disaster risk reduction." N.d.

- Encouraging governments to incorporate disaster risk reduction into national planning processes, including building codes.[56]

The *HFA* was adopted in 2005 as the next major step in DRR preparedness. It acknowledged that disaster preparedness and prevention efforts should be integrated into policies, plans, and programs for sustainable development to be ensured.[57] It was the first 10-year plan on DRR and created a global blueprint for DRR efforts from 2005-2015.[58] The *HFA*'s goal was to reduce the lives lost to disaster as well as reduce the loss of social, economic, and environmental assets of communities and countries.[59] Action priorities from the *HFA* include:

- Ensuring that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation;
- Identifying, assessing and monitoring disaster risks and enhancing early warning;
- Using knowledge, innovation, and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels;
- Reducing the underlying risk factors; and
- Strengthening disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.[60]

While the *HFA* significantly impacted the establishment of national, regional, and international DRR policies, the UNDRR has identified challenges that were not addressed in the *HFA*, including increased impacts of climate change risk patterns; competing priorities and limited capacity of Member States; a lack of coordination and sharing of best practices; shifting from disaster response to disaster preparedness; and a lack of implementation of the *HFA*.[61] These roadblocks were taken into account during the creation of the next major DRR framework, the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction*. The *Sendai Framework* was adopted in 2015 as a successor to the *HFA* and is the current international framework for DRR.[62] It outlines four priorities for action to prevent new and reduce existing disaster risks. These areas include understanding disaster risk; strengthening disaster risk governance; investing in DRR for resilience; enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to "Build Back Better" in recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction.[63] The *Sendai Framework* is meant to guide the international community in best practices through to 2030 and builds upon the previous decades of work and lessons learned by the international community on DRR.

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[56] Ibid.
[57] World Conference on Disaster Reduction. "Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015." 2005.
[58] PreventionWeb. "Hyogo Framework for Action." N.d.
[59] Ibid.
[60] World Conference on Disaster Reduction. "Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015." 2005.
[61] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. "Progress and Challenges in Disaster Risk Reduction." 2014.
[62] PreventionWeb. "Hyogo Framework for Action." N.d.
[63] Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. "Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030." 2015.

Both priorities 1 and 3 of the *Sendai Framework* refer to our shared environment as an aspect of DRR.[64]

Current Situation:

In 2019, the sixth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GP2019) took place in Geneva, Switzerland.[65] The theme of GP2019 was "Resilience Dividend: Towards Sustainable and Inclusive Societies."[66] During the high-level dialogue, participants discussed localized DRR strategies, multi-hazard early warning systems (MHEWS), and the role of achieving inclusive climate and disaster resilience for cities.[67] Participants discussed actions to achieve international agendas such as the *Sendai Framework*, the *Paris Agreement*, and the *2030 Agenda* in a practical manner that focused on reducing vulnerability and poverty.[68] Participants heavily focused on the increased rate of urbanization and tracking demographic trends in order to adequately equip new and increasing populations with resilient and inclusive infrastructure.[69] GP2019 also took stock of the implementation of the *Sendai Framework*. It found that 116 countries are reporting through the Sendai Framework Monitor, which helps data collection and provides a better understanding of national, regional, and international DRR strengths and pitfalls.[70] UNDRR considers risk assessment and data collection as an integral part of DRR, and presentation and preparedness are important in reducing the need for disaster relief in the future.[71]

The seventh session of the Global Platform (GP2022) followed three years later.[72] Held in Bali, Indonesia, which provided a background that connects both fragile ecosystems and a region highly vulnerable to climate disasters, its was themed, "From Risk to Resilience in a COVID-19 Transformed World."[73] Its primary output took the form of the Bali Agenda for Resilience (BAR), comprised of seven points to continue improving DRR support an leadership at domestic levels while better implementing evaluation methods for components such as the *Sendai Framework*.[74] Among other conclusions, GP2022 also embraced the idea that "…ecosystems [are] critical infrastructure…" and set the objective of better incorporating nature into both disaster

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[64] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. "What is the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction?" 2020.
[65] PreventionWeb. "2019 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction." N.d.
[66] International Institute for Sustainable Development. "6th Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction." 2019.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. "Proceedings." 2019.
[71] World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction. "Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation." 1994.
[72] Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. "Key Documents." 2022.
[73] Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. "7th Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction." 2022.
[74] Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. "Flyer for the Bali Agenda for Resilience." 2022.

planning and post-disaster assessment, which can better unify sustainable planners and policy experts with climate activists involved in DRR processes.[75]

Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Action

The UNDRR has created the *Words into Action Guidelines* (*WiA*) with the goal of developing national disaster risk reduction through the implementation of the *Sendai Framework*.[76] The guidelines offer specific steps and advice to implement an achievable and people-centered approach to DRR.[77] The most recent *WiA* guidelines were published in 2020 to promote efficient operations and targets actors working to strengthen risk-informed DRR across sectors and administrative barriers.[78] The current *WiA* guidelines:

- Highlight the key principles and required actions outlined in the Sendai Framework to enhance disaster preparedness for effective response in action;
- Point to existing resources that provide more detailed explanations and guidance by theme or stakeholder; and
- Illustrate implementation with examples.[79]

The *WiA* also has an implementation guidebook for local governments. This guidebook serves to advise local governments on developing and implementing local DRR strategies that contributes to building resilience at local levels and build up the efficiency of the national DRR measures.[80] Since impacts of disasters are most immediately and intensely felt at the local level, localizing DRR helps to enhance the implementation of its processes and programs.[81] The 2020 *WiA* highlights the importance of understanding risk and investing in preparedness; having a DRR plan specific to regions that are susceptible to natural disasters; preparing for different types of disasters; engaging with key stakeholders such as the private sector and non-governmental organizations; creating inclusive DRR plans; and creating plans to "Build Back Better" through recovery, rehabilitation, and sustainable reconstruction.[82] The *WiA* also provides case studies on best practices of implementation of the *Sendai Framework* that demonstrate successful and well-informed preparedness measures that countries and communities have developed.[83]

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[76] PreventionWeb. "Words into Action guidelines: Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response." 2020.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.
[79] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. "Words into Action: Enhancing Disaster Preparedness for Effective Response." 2020.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.

Future Outlook:

António Guterres, current Secretary-General of the UN, has highlighted the importance of reversing the effects of climate change in order to minimize the risks of natural disasters and the increasing public will for action on climate change.[84] Environmental degradation and the increased intensity of natural disasters will also increase the prevalence of environmental refugees and internally displaced people – some of whom may be permanently displaced due to climate change.[85] Climate change and natural disasters will contribute to resource scarcity; intra-and inter-state competition for food and water; and increased frequency and severity of vector-borne diseases.[86] The international community's agenda will increasingly focus on climate change and DRR in the near future in order to sustainably address these concerns.

Focus Questions:

1. What types of disasters is your State susceptible to? Your region?
2. Does your State have a national or local disaster preparedness and response plan?
3. What sustainable development practices can your State and its cities benefit from in order to promote DRR?
4. What actions could build resilience in your State? In your region?

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[84] United Nations Office of the Spokesperson for the UN Secretary General. "Highlights of the Noon Briefing by Stephanie Dujarric, Spokesman for Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, Wednesday 15 May 2019." 2019.
[85] International Organization for Migration. "Disaster Risk Reduction and Environmental Degradation." N.d.
[86] Podesta. "The climate crisis, migration, and refugees." 2019.

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