

D.A.V.

MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE



DELEGATE INVITE

23th – 24th October, 2019

DAV MUN 2019

FOURTH EDITION

Honorable delegates, faculty advisors and distinguished dignitaries,

Greetings!

Model UNs bring together students to explore global concerns, engage their young minds and learn through sharing and researching. This futuristic practice will foster their analytical and reasoning skills.

We at DAVMUN offer an exceptional opportunity for students to engage in paramount levels of debates, exciting discussions, formulate opinions and arrive at viable outcomes on subjects that have gripped the global community. It is a unique platform for the young people to learn about diplomatic negotiation processes and peaceful dialogues.

I hope it becomes a memorable experience for each individual who attends the conference. Looking forward to welcome you for the two marvelous days of debating and networking on 23rd and 24th October 2019. On behalf of my team, I invite you to be a part of the DAV Model United Nations Conference, 2019

Regards,
Shweta Kathuria
(Teacher Mentor)

DAV MUN 2019

FOURTH EDITION

We see global issues being discussed in various platforms around the globe, United Nations is the biggest platform to discuss these issues and come up with solutions. Students must be encouraged to become active members of society by participating in MODEL UNITED NATIONS.

They can be transformed into leaders only if they are infused with a vision and a vision is possible only if one's learning combines the understanding and appreciation of the nuances of the world.

With this perspective, DAV Public School is ready to organize its MUN Conference this year with this promise of providing a practical learning experience where students get to reflect on their ideas and connect knowledge to life outside the school.

MUN not only develops skills and boosts confidence of students, the young minds bring out some very innovative solutions to global issues. Along with portraying their diplomatic skills, analyzing various perspectives, asking thought provoking questions and finally arriving at plausible explanations and solutions.

Regards,
Charvi Singh
(Teacher Mentor)

BACKGROUND GUIDE

UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL (UNSC)

AGENDA:

International Cooperation in combating terrorism with special emphasis on Pulwama Attack

OVERVIEW OF TERRORISM

Terrorism, the systematic use of violence to create a general climate of fear in a population and thereby to bring about a particular political objective. Terrorism has been practiced by political organizations with both rightist and leftist objectives, by nationalistic and religious groups, by revolutionaries, and even by state institutions such as armies, intelligence services, and police.

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy on 8 September 2006. The strategy is a unique global instrument to enhance national, regional and international efforts to counter terrorism.

Through its adoption, all the Member States have agreed the first time to a common strategic and operational approach to fight terrorism, not only sending a clear message that terrorism is unacceptable in all its forms and manifestation but also resolving to take practical steps individually and collectively to prevent and combat it. Those practical steps include a wide array of measures ranging from strengthening state capacity to counter terrorist threats to better coordinating United Nations system's counter-terrorism activities.

FOUR PILLARS

The General Assembly reviews the Strategy every two years, making it a living document attuned to Member States' counter terrorism priorities. The fourth review of the Strategy took place in June 2014 and was preceded by a report from the United Nations Secretary-General that included an overview of the evolving terrorism landscape, recommendations to address challenges and threats, and a compilation of measures taken by Member States and United Nations entities to fight against terrorism.

The Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in the form of a resolution and an annexed Plan of Action is composed of four pillars:

1. Addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism.
2. Measures to prevent and combat terrorism.
3. Measures to build states' capacity to prevent and combat terrorism and to strengthen the role of the United Nations system in that regard.
4. Measures to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis for the fight against terrorism.

Guided by Security Council resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1624 (2005), the CTC works to bolster the ability of United Nations Member States to prevent terrorist acts both within their borders and across regions. It was established in the wake of the 11 September terrorist attacks in the United States.

UNSC urges international community to actively co-operate with India in dealing with terrorism.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373, adopted unanimously on 28 September 2001, is a counter-terrorism measure passed following the 11 September terrorist attacks on the United States. The resolution was adopted under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, and is therefore binding on all UN member states.

Role of Pulwama Attack In UN

The Terror Attack in Pulwama that killed 40 CRPF officials played a vital role in the UN Security Council's decision to designate Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) chief Masood Azhar as a global terrorist.

World Body United Nations and countries across the globe, including the US, Russia, Australia, France, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, have condemned the brutal Pulwama Terror Attack carried out by Pakistan-based terror group Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), and extended their support to India in the fight against terrorism.

United Nations

The listing of Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Masood Azhar as a global terrorist by the UN Security Council has been termed as a "significant achievement" by the member nations in holding perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of acts of terrorism accountable.

It was a huge victory for India after a decade of restless efforts to ban the mastermind of several terror attacks against India, including the deadly Pulwama attack against Indian security forces. The listing subjects Azhar to an assets freeze, travel ban and an arms embargo.

Germany and Poland, who had also co-sponsored the proposal to blacklist the JeM chief, termed the listing of Azhar as a significant achievement by all members of the Security Council.

Measures To Address The Conditions Conducive To The Spread Of Terrorism

UNSC resolves to undertake the following measures aimed at addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, including but not limited to prolonged unresolved conflicts, dehumanization of victims of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, lack of rule of law and violations of human rights, ethnic, national and religious discrimination, political exclusion, socio-economic marginalization, and lack of good governance, while recognizing that none of these conditions can excuse or justify acts of terrorism:

1. To continue to strengthen and make best possible use of the capacities of the United Nations in areas such as conflict prevention, negotiation, mediation, conciliation, judicial settlement, rule of law, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, in order to contribute to the successful prevention and peaceful resolution of prolonged unresolved conflicts. UNSC recognizes that the peaceful resolution of such conflicts would contribute to strengthening the global fight against terrorism.
2. To continue to arrange under the auspices of the United Nations initiatives and programmes to promote dialogue, tolerance and understanding among civilizations, cultures, peoples and religions, and to promote mutual respect for and prevent the defamation of religions, religious values, beliefs and cultures. In this regard, UNSC welcomes the launching by the Secretary-General of the initiative on the Alliance of Civilizations. UNSC also welcomes similar initiatives that have been taken in other parts of the world.
3. To promote a culture of peace, justice and human development, ethnic, national and religious tolerance, and respect for all religions, religious values, beliefs or cultures by establishing and encouraging, as appropriate, education and public awareness programmes involving all sectors of society. In this regard, UNSC encourages the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to play a key role, including through inter-faith and intra-faith dialogue and dialogue among civilizations.
4. To reiterate our determination to ensure the timely and full realization of the development goals and objectives agreed at the major United Nations conferences and summits, including the Millennium Development Goals. UNSC reaffirms their commitment to eradicate poverty and promote sustained economic growth, sustainable development and global prosperity for all.
5. To pursue and reinforce development and social inclusion agendas at every level as goals in themselves, recognizing that success in this area, especially on youth unemployment, could reduce marginalization and the subsequent sense of victimization that propels extremism and the recruitment of terrorists.
6. To consider putting in place, on a voluntary basis, national systems of assistance that would promote the needs of victims of terrorism and their families and facilitate the normalization of their lives. In this regard, we encourage States to request the relevant United Nations entities to help them to develop such national systems. We will also strive to promote international solidarity in support of victims and foster the involvement of civil society in a global campaign against terrorism and for its condemnation. This could include exploring at the General Assembly the possibility of developing practical mechanisms assistance to victims.

Measures to Prevent and Combat Terrorism

Following are the measures to prevent and combat terrorism, in particular by denying terrorists access to the means to carry out their attacks, to their targets and to the desired impact of their attacks:

1. To refrain from organising, instigating, facilitating, participating in, financing, encouraging or tolerating terrorist activities and to take appropriate practical measures to ensure that our respective territories are not used for terrorist installations or training camps, or for the preparation or organization of terrorist attacks intended to be committed against other states or their citizens.
2. To ensure the apprehension and prosecution or extradition of perpetrators of terrorist acts, in accordance with the relevant provisions of national and international law, in particular human rights law, refugee law and international humanitarian law. We will endeavour to conclude and implement to that effect mutual judicial assistance and extradition agreements, and to strengthen cooperation between law enforcement agencies.
3. To intensify cooperation, as appropriate, in exchanging timely and accurate information concerning the prevention and combating of terrorism.
4. To strengthen coordination and cooperation among States in combating crimes that might be connected with terrorism, including drug trafficking in all its aspects, illicit arms trade, in particular of small arms and light weapons, including man-portable air defence systems, money laundering and smuggling of nuclear, chemical, biological, radiological and other potentially deadly materials.
5. To encourage States to implement the comprehensive international standards embodied in the Financial Action Task Force's Forty Recommendations on Money Laundering and Nine Special Recommendations on Terrorist Financing, recognizing that States may require assistance in implementing them.
6. To cooperate fully in the fight to encourage States to implement the comprehensive international standards embodied in the Financial Action Task Force's Forty Recommendations on Money Laundering and Nine Special Recommendations on Terrorist Financing, recognizing that States may require assistance in implementing them. terrorism, in accordance with our obligations under international law, in order to find, deny safe haven and bring to justice, on the basis of the principle of extradite or prosecute, any person who supports, facilitates, participates or attempts to participate in the financing, planning, preparation or perpetration of terrorist acts or provides safe havens.

Measures to Build States' Capacity to Prevent and Combat Terrorism and To Strengthen the Role of The United Nations System on This Regard

1. To encourage Member States to consider making voluntary contributions to United Nations counter-terrorism cooperation and technical assistance projects, and to explore additional sources of funding in this regard. UNSC also encourages the United Nations to consider reaching out to the private sector for contributions to capacity-building programmes, in particular in the areas of port, maritime and civil aviation security.
2. To take advantage of the framework provided by relevant international, regional and sub-regional organizations to share best practices in counter-terrorism capacity-building, and to facilitate their contributions to the international community's efforts in this area.
3. To consider establishing appropriate mechanisms to rationalize States' reporting requirements in the field of counter-terrorism and eliminate duplication of reporting requests, taking into account and respecting the different mandates of the General Assembly, the Security Council and its subsidiary bodies that deal with counter terrorism.
4. To encourage measures, including regular informal meetings, to enhance, as appropriate, more frequent exchanges of information on cooperation and technical assistance among Member States, United Nations bodies dealing with counter terrorism, relevant specialized agencies, relevant international, regional and sub-regional organizations, and the donor community, to develop States' capacities to implement relevant United Nations resolutions.
5. To encourage the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee and its Executive Directorate to continue to improve the coherence and efficiency of technical assistance delivery in the field of counter-terrorism, in particular by strengthening its dialogue with States and relevant international, regional and sub-regional organizations and working closely, including by sharing information, with all bilateral and multilateral technical assistance providers.

BACKGROUND GUIDE

WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION (WTO)

AGENDA:

Future Of Free Trade In Light Of Globalization Vs Protectionist Measures

General Overview And History

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is the only global international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations. At its heart are the WTO agreements, negotiated and signed by the bulk of the world's trading nations and ratified in their parliaments. The goal is to ensure that trade flows as smoothly, predictably and freely as possible. The WTO has many roles: it operates a global system of trade rules, it acts as a forum for negotiating trade agreements, it settles trade disputes between its members and it supports the needs of developing countries. All major decisions are made by the WTO's member governments: either by ministers (who usually meet at least every two years) or by their ambassadors or delegates (who meet regularly in Geneva).

The WTO agreements are lengthy and complex because they are legal texts covering a wide range of activities. But a number of simple, fundamental principles run throughout all of these documents. These principles are the foundation of the multilateral trading system.

- **NON-DISCRIMINATION:** A country should not discriminate between its trading partners and it should not discriminate between its own and foreign products, services or nationals.
- **MORE OPEN:** Lowering trade barriers is one of the most obvious ways of encouraging trade; these barriers include customs duties (or tariffs) and measures such as import bans or quotas that restrict quantities selectively.
- **PREDICTABLE AND TRANSPARENT:** Foreign companies, investors and governments should be confident that trade barriers should not be raised arbitrarily. With stability and predictability, investment is encouraged, jobs are created and consumers can fully enjoy the benefits of competition — choice and lower prices.

- **MORE COMPETITIVE:** Discouraging ‘unfair’ practices, such as export subsidies and dumping products at below cost to gain market share; the issues are complex, and the rules try to establish what is fair or unfair, and how governments can respond, in particular by charging additional import duties calculated to compensate for damage caused by unfair trade.
- **MORE BENEFICIAL FOR LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES:** Giving them more time to adjust, greater flexibility and special privileges; over three-quarters of WTO members are developing countries and countries in transition to market economies. The WTO agreements give them transition periods to adjust to the more unfamiliar and, perhaps, difficult WTO provisions.
- **PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT:** The WTO’s agreements permit members to take measures to protect not only the environment but also public health, animal health and plant health. However, these measures must be applied in the same way to both national and foreign businesses. In other words, members must not use environmental protection measures as a means of disguising protectionist policies.

From the early days of the **Silk Road** to the creation of the **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)** and the birth of the WTO, trade has played an important role in supporting economic development and promoting peaceful relations among nations.

Trade and foreign policy have been intertwined throughout history, with foreign policy often tailored to promote trade interests. In the 3rd century BC, during the Han Dynasty, China used its military power to maintain the Silk Road for its value for trade. In the year 30 BC, Rome conquered Egypt in large part to have a better supply of grain.

However now, it is seen through a single page of text from 1941, how the desire for peace and security has become a powerful reminder that drives the creation of today’s global economic system. The global rules that underpin our modern multilateral economic system were a direct reaction to the Second World War and a desire for it to never be repeated.

Timeline of WTO

- The lead negotiators for the creation of the GATT (The general agreement on tariffs and trade) profoundly disagreed on the level of ambition to be achieved but finally overcame their differences in 1947.

- From 1948 to 1994, the GATT provided the rules for much of world trade and presided over periods that saw some of the highest growth rates in international commerce. It seemed well-established but throughout those 47 years, it was a provisional agreement and organization.
- The WTO's creation on 1 January 1995 marked the biggest reform of international trade since the end of the Second World War. Whereas the GATT mainly dealt with trade in goods, the WTO and its agreements also cover trade in services and intellectual property. The birth of the WTO also created new procedures for the settlement of disputes.
- 1998 marked the 50th anniversary of the multilateral trading system.
- **The Doha Round** was launched in 2001 to achieve major reform of the international trading system through the introduction of lower trade barriers and revised trade rules. A fundamental objective of the Doha Development Agenda is to improve the trading prospects of developing countries.
- Over the past 20 years, WTO members have agreed major updates to the WTO rulebook to improve the flow of global trade. The WTO's membership has expanded to 164 members, representing over 98% of international trade. In 2015, the WTO reached a significant milestone with the receipt of its 500th trade dispute for settlement.
- The Ministerial Conference is the highest decision-making body of the WTO and usually meets every two years. The WTO's first Ministerial Conference was held in Singapore in December 1996. It's most recent — the 11th — was held in Buenos Aires in December 2017.
- The first Director-General of the GATT was Eric Wyndham White, who held office from 1948 to 1968. The current Director-General of the WTO is Roberto Azevedo, who began a second four-year term in September 2017
- In 2015, the WTO commemorated its 20th anniversary. During the year, a series of events were held, such as book launches, conferences, exhibitions and other specially organized activities, focusing on various aspects of the WTO's work over the past two decades.

Globalization

Globalization is the process of interaction and integration among people, companies, and governments worldwide. As a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, globalization is considered by some as a form of capitalist expansion which entails the integration of local and national economies into a global, unregulated market economy.

Globalization is widely seen as a powerful engine that has the potential to promote growth and development but concerns have been raised about the effects of globalization on jobs and wages.

Recent survey evidence in European countries, for instance, indicates that in most countries a majority of respondents believe that globalization provides opportunities for economic growth but increases social and economic inequalities. A German Marshall Fund (2007) survey shows that about half of Americans and Europeans think that “freer trade” results in more job loss than job creation. Globalization has also been blamed for the recent financial crisis and its effects on employment.

The anti-globalists also claim that globalization is not working for the majority of the world. “During the most recent period of rapid growth in global trade and investment, 1960 to 1998, inequality worsened both internationally and within countries. The UN Development Program reports that the richest 20 percent of the world's population consume 86 percent of the world's resources while the poorest 80 percent consume just 14 percent.”

However, Globalization does simplify business management in the world. This is due to the advancement in technology, transport, communication, education, and regulations of trade that makes trade fair to all parties. This attracts more people to engage in international business and international trade.

Managers engaging in global trade face a lot of challenges due to high competition in the industry and hence good decisions must be taken on their part in order to satisfy and maintain their customers and attract more customers for their products. Companies enjoy economies of scale in the business due to reduction of cost in the management. And consumers also benefit due to the increased choices of goods in the market.

The integration of the world economy that is Globalization has brought with it an interdependence. As countries co-operate in trade with each other, they get to know each other and grow into the habit of resolving disputes by negotiation and agreement instead of by armed conflict. The 19th Century French economist Frederic Bastiat expressed this pithily: "Where goods do not cross frontiers, armies will."

So, in the end the opinion on Globalization varies due to the different trade policies, past developments, current resources and state of economy of any country. Globalization is neither absolutely good nor absolutely bad and it eventually lies on the countries to decide for themselves whether to adopt different degrees of globalization or completely abandon it.

Related Terms and Issues

1. The Bretton Woods Conference
2. Cultural and Political Globalization
3. Globalization and Gender

4. Capital Market Integration

Protectionism

Protectionism is the policy of protecting domestic industries against foreign competition by means of tariffs, subsidies, import quotas, or other restrictions or handicaps placed on the imports of foreign competitors.

Government-levied tariffs are the chief protectionist measures. They raise the price of imported articles, making them more expensive (and therefore less attractive) than domestic products. Protective tariffs have historically been employed to stimulate industries in countries beset by recession or depression.

Protectionism may be helpful to emergent industries in developing nations. It can also serve as a means of fostering self-sufficiency in defense industries. Import quotas offer another means of protectionism. These quotas set an absolute limit on the amount of certain goods that can be imported into a country and tend to be more effective than protective tariffs, which do not always dissuade consumers who are willing to pay a higher price for an imported good.

Moreover, people worry that free trade deals can lead to a lowering of standards. Such deals might require them to let in goods and services even though they don't meet their standards, which might then be cheaper than those made by domestic industries. For example, some people have been worried recently that a free trade deal with the US might let in imports of chlorine-washed chicken. There might also be pressure to reduce their standards for workers' rights or environmental protection so that their companies can compete with companies in countries that have lower standards.

But in the long term it is believed that trade protectionism weakens the industry. Without competition, companies within the industry have no need to innovate. Eventually, the domestic product might decline in quality and be more expensive than what foreign competitors produce.

As domestic producers don't need to worry about foreign competition, they have no incentive to innovate or spend resources on research and development (R&D) of new products and hence the consumers have access to fewer goods in the market. Consumers also will need to pay more without seeing any significant improvement in the product.

Lastly, it often leads to political and cultural isolation, which, in turn, leads to even more economic isolation. This isolation itself defeats the purpose of United Nations.

Still, the belief that a government can make a nation more prosperous by regulating trade and using tariffs and other protective measures to favor domestic industries is widely supported, and is not totally wrong. Just as in case of Globalization, Protectionism too is

not an assured tool to root out trade fallacies and disputes completely but undoubtedly it does play a crucial role at many levels.

To be precise, Globalization as well as Protectionism both are true in different senses to bring on development. And as **Galileo Galilei** once said-

“*Two truths cannot contradict one another for a rational mind.*”

Measures To Resolve Trade Disputes And Improve Global Economy

1. **Diversify economies:** Development strategies are not implemented overnight. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a 15-year global endeavor and the African Union's Agenda 2063 spans half a century. Planning for such distant horizons requires a stable source of financing. Many developing countries that depend on only a few commodities are deprived of that luxury. Without diversification, they are highly susceptible to price shocks and shifts in investment cycles.
2. **Stem the rise of inequalities:** In 2017, the International Monetary Fund estimated that around 10 per cent of income in advanced economies went to just 1 per cent of the population. Rising inequalities not only disrupts social cohesion, but also threatens long-term growth and hampers progress on the SDGs.
3. **To sustain economic expansion and move forward on the Global Goals,** countries will have to urgently raise the living standards of the most deprived and address the inequality of opportunities in the long term. These investments will not only improve the quality of growth but increase its longer-term potential.
4. **Make finance sustainable:** The cost of achieving the universally agreed SDGs is estimated at several trillion dollars every year through 2030, with public funds able to cover no more than \$1 trillion per year. The need for the private sector to chip in is obvious, but a multi-trillion-dollar gap can hardly be covered by charitable side-projects. A fundamental shift is required in the way business is done.
5. **The world's financial and capital markets handle in excess of \$300 trillion in assets.** The world needs a new financial architecture that would gradually shift these trillions away from transactions focused on short term profits and towards

long-term investments in research and development, machinery and equipment, infrastructure, human capital and healthcare.

6. Improve institutions: Weak governance and political instability remain fundamental obstacles to achieving the SDGs and economic growth in many parts of the world. In 2017, capital started flowing back to the developing countries, but it may pull out again at the very first sign of trouble, unless states can improve their legal institutions, administrative capacities, transparency and business environment.
7. Enabling inclusive growth: Fostering an environment that supports small- and medium-sized entity growth. Creating a secure and digital-ready investment environment; and collaborating for a coherent international tax system.
8. Developing smarter regulation: Developing and adopting consistent, comprehensive, and high-quality regulation. Creating a coherent, transparent global regulatory environment that limits divergence; and implementing internationally-accepted standards to enhance confidence and stability in the global financial system.
9. Increasing transparency: Strengthening governance in the public and private sectors and embracing integrated reporting. Enhancing public sector financial management; and collaborating to tackle corruption.

“ The future of the WTO and the global trading system is in the hands of today’s youth. We need to enhance their knowledge of global challenges and make them active stakeholders of the global trading system. As future leaders, young people will participate in the decisions taken to shape tomorrow’s world. This is why this programme is more than valuable

”

- **Pascal Lamy, Former WTO Director General, 14 April 2012**

BACKGROUND GUIDE

THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF)

AGENDA:

Impact Of Climate Change And Environmental Degradation On Children

General Overview And History

Today in this fast-moving world, our countries and communities are at a very blatant risk by the disastrous climate changes. Every day we see forests burning and people throwing chemicals into the water and cutting trees. In many countries, children and young people face very poor sanitation, health care and environmental conditions. When we build indiscriminately, dump our garbage into waterways, slash and burn our forests, and practice unsustainable agriculture, these actions lead to floods, soil erosion, landslides, desertification, rising sea levels, melting ice caps, severe weather events and drought. With its dramatic and harmful effects on the environment, climate change threatens the basic elements of life for people throughout the world, harming health and the environment and limiting access to water, food and land.

While climatic disasters are devastating for anyone who experiences them, children are the most vulnerable, due to their small size and relative inability to care for themselves. As escalating droughts and flooding degrade food production, children do and will bear the greatest burden of hunger and malnutrition. As temperatures increase, together with water scarcity and air pollution, children will feel the deadliest impact of water-borne diseases and dangerous respiratory conditions. As more extreme weather events expand the number of emergencies and humanitarian crises, children are most likely to pay the highest price in the end. As the world experiences a steady rise in climate-driven migration, children's lives and futures will be the most disrupted. These are the threats that children face today. Unless we act forcefully to stem the climate crisis now, the danger will only escalate. It is a prospect so painful to imagine that many people would rather not think about it.

For instance, what had happened during Hurricane Harvey is difficult to forget. According to Save the Children, 3 million children were affected that by the hurricane. Of the approximately 34,000 people in shelters – an estimated 8,500 were children.

In UNICEF's 2016 annual report, the organization says that poor and disadvantaged children were disproportionately affected by humanitarian disasters in year 2015 – including particularly damaging climate change-related disasters in Africa, Asia and the Pacific. The report highlights how severe tropical cyclone Pam barreled through the Pacific island state of Vanuatu in March of last year, demolishing schools, health care facilities and water supplies, and traumatizing children and their families.

Floods, landslides and other natural disasters combined with unrest in Myanmar created a critical situation in 2015, displacing hundreds of thousands of children from their homes.

Today globally, children are estimated to bear 88% of the burden of disease due to climate change, with the poorest disproportionately affected. In 2015, deaths in children <5 years old accounted for 38%, 65%, and 48% of global deaths due to diarrhea, malaria, and nutritional deficiencies, respectively. The projected increase in these diseases due to climate change corresponds to a considerable burden of preventable child deaths, particularly in low-income countries.

As pediatricians say “children are not little adults”. Children often have trouble verbalizing their feelings, depend on adults for their safety, and have immature coping mechanisms to deal with extreme stress and trauma. Their bodies and their minds are not fully developed, and it is difficult for them to tolerate the increasing demands climate change will impose on their emotional and physical health. The challenge imposed by environmental instability starts before the child is even born. Exposure to extreme heat, air pollution, and increased rates of infection during pregnancy has been associated with poorly developed lungs, prematurity, stillbirth, brain abnormalities, heart abnormalities, and increased incidence of neuro-developmental disorders.

This situation emphasizes the value and need of education in the context of a sustainable environment and energy supply. Young people at every stage of their education should be informed about the dangers of environmental degradation, overuse of fossil energies and the prospects of renewable energy. Therefore, it is necessary to urge educators to include environment and energy-related topics in the curriculum and start work for a healthy environment at the ground level.

Natural Disasters

Today in this fast-moving world, our countries and communities are at a very blatant risk by the disastrous climate.

The frequency and severity of natural disasters have been increasing, and experts point to climate change as one of the culprits. While an average of 12 disasters took place per

year in the first half of the 20th century, that number reached an astounding 350 in 2004. The human suffering caused by natural disasters is most profoundly felt in developing countries, particularly poverty-stricken nations that lack the resources to cope with their aftermath.

It is true that the effects of natural disasters are faced by everyone but it is the children who bear the most brunt of these horrendous phenomena. Children are more likely than adults to perish during natural disasters or succumb to malnutrition, injuries or disease in the aftermath. Natural disasters may force children out of their homes – or even their countries. They may become orphaned or separated from their families, and may be preyed upon by opportunistic adults.

As disasters have the greatest impact on the vulnerable (that are children), their needs must be specifically addressed by response strategies, and vulnerable people should participate in preparing these strategies to ensure their relevance. The various steps that could be taken are: -

- Children must be the first priority in risk-reduction efforts. Specific risks that exist for children and their caregivers, and the actions that might be taken to counter those risks, should be determined in addition to risk-reduction strategies for populations at large.
- Risk-reduction initiatives should be designed to educate families and children about simple and practical actions that can protect life and personal property in the event of natural disaster. Effective awareness programmes in schools, homes and communities can create a culture of prevention and empowerment.
- To ensure effective, timely and dependable responses, emergency preparedness measures, oriented specifically to children and women, must be in place. Children, families, communities and basic-service providers must be ready to meet health, nutrition, education and security needs when a disaster occurs
- Since poverty often prevents people from taking preventive measures – and given that it is not the disaster alone but also vulnerability levels that determine the impact of any crisis – the underlying vulnerability of families must be reduced through poverty reduction and other measures.

Diseases

By altering weather patterns and disturbing ecosystems, climate change has significant implications for human health. Many of the main global killers of children, including malaria, diarrhea and malnutrition, are sensitive to climatic conditions such as flooding.

Lethal and debilitating diseases, including malaria and dengue fever, are highly susceptible to changes in the climate. Changes in temperature, precipitation and humidity have a direct effect on the reproduction and survival of the mosquitoes that transmit these diseases. Similarly, stagnant water from increased rainfall, floods or extreme weather events that disrupt and contaminate water systems can influence the spread of cholera and meningococcal meningitis and other food-borne diseases, including diarrhea. Warm temperatures alter parasitic development rates, and increase bite rates and transmission. Overcrowded urban areas that have standing water and poor access to sanitation are at particular risk also.

However, effects of global climate change are likely to be most pronounced in those areas bordering current disease transmission zones. Temperate countries including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan have lately seen evidence of a resurgence of malaria. In addition, factors that play a role in climate change, such as emissions from vehicles and factories, significantly harm children's health. Deaths from asthma, which is the most common chronic disease among children, are expected to increase by nearly 20 per cent by 2016 unless urgent action is taken.

Household (or indoor) air pollution contributes to 4.3 million deaths each year, and 13 per cent (534,000) of these are deaths of children under 5. 1 More than 50 per cent of deaths among children in this age group are due to pneumonia caused by particulate matter (soot) inhaled from household air pollution.² Exposure to household air pollution also has fatal consequences on pre-natal health leading to increased risk of stillbirth and low birthweight.³ Promoting clean cooking technologies and fuels as well as cleaner sources of light can support substantial health benefits for children.

Water Scarcity

Parched, cracked earth cannot nourish a child. When an already impoverished nation experiences drought, its ramifications are severe and far-reaching: barren fields, dying cattle, skeletal children, empty classrooms.

Throughout the globe, a decline in global freshwater resources profoundly threatens health and livelihoods. Increasing contamination, over-pumping of aquifers and degradation of freshwater catchment areas is exacerbating an already precarious situation.¹³ Fierce competition for a shrinking water supply has resulted in over-extraction for industry and agriculture, falling groundwater levels and failing domestic water sources. At the same time, pollution from industry, agriculture and improper management of human waste threatens previously safe water sources. In already dry regions such as North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean, climate change is expected to exacerbate the decline in water quality and quantity.

Careful management of water and sanitation services is key. New groundwater sources may have to be developed with the anticipated behavior of aquifers in mind, and new methods and technologies should be developed to safely exploit and protect water

resources. Water recycling and reuse may become not only more cost-effective, but imperative. Protecting and managing the water environment is an enormous task, requiring commitment, effective monitoring, changing practices, and specific interventions at regional, national, intermediate and community levels but it is a quite possible one.

Food Security

Climate change threatens the nutrition and health of the world's poor. Changes in weather patterns can lead to flooding and drought – both of which can decimate a region's food supply. Scientists project that rising temperatures and shifting rains are likely to reduce crop productivity in many vulnerable regions. In developing countries, this will likely leave hundreds of millions without the ability to produce or purchase sufficient food.

In regions where livelihoods depend upon rain-based agriculture and animal husbandry, droughts and floods – and the crop failures that result – seriously undermine the survival and nutrition of children and mothers. Changes in climate will also affect land areas suitable for farming and crop yields. In addition, climate-related ecosystem changes are making it harder to find some wild sources of food, as people's knowledge of where and when to hunt, fish and gather food plants becomes less reliable.

Deforestation and Importance of Afforestation

“ When we plant trees, we plant the seeds of peace and seeds of hope. ”

- **Prof. Wangari Maathai, 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate**

Trees shade us from the heat of day, bear fruit for our tables and add beauty to the landscape. From an environmental perspective, they are even more essential: The life-giving oxygen produced by trees removes air pollution, lowers temperatures and adds moisture to the air. By holding the soil in place and reducing run-off from streams, trees prevent soil erosion, control avalanches, mitigate desertification, protect coastal areas and stabilize sand dunes.

Birds and other wildlife need trees for shelter and food – and so do children. Indeed, trees form the foundations of many natural systems. Forests are the most important repositories of terrestrial biodiversity, sheltering up to 90 per cent of known species.

Trees absorb carbon dioxide and form vital carbon sinks.¹⁵ The UN Environment Programme estimates that the world's forests store 283 gigatons of carbon in their biomass alone and that the carbon stored in forest biomass, dead wood, litter and soil together is roughly 50 per cent more than the carbon in the atmosphere.

Environmental conservation through tree planting is one of the foundations of development. According to recent reports, as part of Ethiopia's millennium celebration, the Ethiopian Government increased its commitment to a greener environment by setting the goal of planting 20 million trees. UN agencies worked closely with the government to mobilize the public, especially children and young people, to take part in the challenge. The programme, which taught children and youth the basics of planting and nurturing seedlings, played a key role in raising public awareness about environmental conservation.

The loss of natural forests across the globe contributes more to carbon emissions each year than the transport sector. Curbing carbon deforestation is an effective way to reduce emissions. Cutting down trees for fuel leads to deforestation and desertification and is linked to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. In addition, it is a gender and health issue. Women and girls spend increasing numbers of hours each day fetching wood for fuel, and they are disproportionately exposed to indoor smoke from cooking fires.

Planting Trees of Hope

The United Nations Environment Programme has launched a major worldwide tree-planting campaign called 'Plant for the Planet: Billion Tree Campaign', which encourages people, communities, business and industry, civil society organizations and governments to enter tree-planting pledges online. The objective is to plan at least 1 billion trees worldwide during 2007.

UNICEF supports the Billion Tree Campaign by making possible the participation of children in youth and education programmes in developing countries and through programmes sponsored by National Committees in industrialized countries.

Psychological Stress

Children are especially vulnerable to both the immediate and long-term impacts of climate-fueled natural disasters. Surviving a dangerous major hurricane or other extreme weather event and living with the damage it leaves behind can take a very real toll on anyone's well-being – especially a child's. "People coping with severe weather conditions can experience serious mental health symptoms, including posttraumatic stress, depression, and anxiety," **the Union of Concerned Scientists explains.**

And depending on their age and development, children may not have the emotional or cognitive tools to understand less tangible climate concerns, leading to extreme distress and other psychological effects.

"The social foundations of children's mental and physical health are threatened by the specter of far-reaching effects of unchecked climate change, including community and global instability, mass migrations, and increased conflict," **AAP notes.**

Advocating The Cause

While the accelerating deterioration of the global environment has its most profound effect on children and young people, environmentally aware and empowered children and adolescents are potentially the greatest agents of change for the long-term protection and stewardship of the earth

Young people's knowledge of water, environment and health is a largely untapped resource. They are the next generation of water users and environmental stewards in households and communities. The capacity of these young people to live in harmony with nature and to manage and maintain local water, air and land resources effectively is absolutely vital.

Community-based monitoring and advocacy activities in selected countries have begun to create opportunities for young people to participate in actions that reduce the incidence of water-related disease and deforestation, as well as clean up degraded community environments and watershed areas to improve living conditions for themselves and their families. Children's participation in these activities has succeeded in raising awareness about their role as agents of change. But experience tells us that more must be done to influence the opinion of adults so they regard children as partners in a shared mission.

Based on the premise that what children learn today will shape the world tomorrow, instilling environmental awareness at a young age is an effective way to protect the environment. Programmes that improve the availability and quality of environmental education are key interventions for long-term change. While schools – and especially primary schools – are ideal platforms for increasing children's environmental knowledge, the most effective learning programmes go beyond schools and into local communities.

Reforms That Can Be Taken To Safeguard Our Children's Future And Their Rights

1. Cut greenhouse gas emissions so that global temperature increases are limited to a maximum of 2°C, and ideally to 1.5°C.
2. Make the needs of the most vulnerable, including children, central to climate change adaptation.
3. Reduce inequity among children now to promote their future resilience to climate change.
4. Listen to and act on children's perspectives on climate change.

5. Provide children and youth with climate change education, awareness raising and training.
6. Scale-up proven approaches to address the changing needs of children
7. Align and coordinate work on climate change adaptation, preparedness and disaster risk reduction
8. Put in place measures to protect children who have been displaced, migrate or are refugees as a result of climate change or climate-related impacts
9. Invest in children when implementing national climate plans on mitigation and adaptation.
10. Everyone should get involved that is each individual should hold up the moral responsibility to contribute their bit to stop the destructive climatic changes by bringing forth difference from the grassroots level.

Children deserve to live in a world free from the life-threatening effects of climate change. Given the overwhelming scientific evidence on the dangers and causes of climate change, failing to take action is an injustice to all children. But there are concrete steps that can and must be taken to safeguard our children's rights and future - if we act now.