

2013

UNDP 2013

BACKGROUND GUIDE

MIT MODEL UNITED NATIONS
CONFERENCE V



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LETTER FROM THE DAIS

Hello, Delegates!

Welcome to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in MITMUNC 2013! My name is Coyin Oh, and I am a junior at MIT majoring in Biological Engineering. After being part of the MITMUNC Secretariat and doing only behind-the-scenes work in the past two years, this year I will be chairing the UNDP and finally getting to interact with delegates like you! My co-chair, Will Conway, is a freshman here at MIT joining MITMUNC for the first time. We are both very excited to meet all of you in February!

This year, the UNDP will be addressing two topics that are at the forefront of many UN discussions today. One of them is “Disaster risk reduction: are natural disasters truly natural?” As a result of recent natural disasters, several UN sub-organizations have been formed to reduce their impact and to help vulnerable communities lower the risk of catastrophic damages. Much of the fiscal loss could have been avoided had nations been better prepared in the face of these disasters. In MITMUNC 2013, we will attempt to develop a more comprehensive approach to help governments build resilience against natural disasters.

Another topic we will be examining is HIV/AIDS rights protection. The UNDP has worked with many governments in the past and has led numerous HIV/AIDS projects to address the discrimination against those with HIV/AIDS. However, this is still a prevalent issue in many

countries, as no formal international treaties nor laws have been enacted to protect the basic human rights of HIV/AIDS-affected communities. To address this, we will focus on encouraging cooperation among nations and providing an international legal framework to ensure the protection of those inflicted with HIV/AIDS.

This background guide is here to help you focus on research areas that are relevant for your nation pertaining to these two topics. As you prepare for MITMUNC in these upcoming months, we hope that you will discover (if you have not already!) how integral these topics are in our day-to-day life. Both Will and I are really looking forward to reading everybody’s position papers and working with you in the committee sessions. This is a great learning experience for us, and we hope it will be the same for you too. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions or if you need any advice during your preparation. Remember to have fun in MITMUNC 2013!

See you in February!

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Topic 1:**DISASTER RISK
REDUCTION: ARE
NATURAL DISASTERS
TRULY NATURAL?****Introduction**

On March 11th, 2011, the world was shocked by a massive 9.0 magnitude earthquake that struck Japan. This earthquake triggered a giant tsunami that subsequently resulted in several cases of nuclear disasters, as well as about 20,000 casualties. The World Bank considered the Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami as the most expensive natural disaster in the world's history, with estimated economic damages of around US\$235 billion.

This was not an isolated incident. Historically, natural disasters have long caused severe socioeconomic setbacks on a nation's development. Over the period of 2000-2011, the total financial loss inflicted by natural disasters was more than US\$1.3 trillion (Appendix: Figure 1). Despite hydrometeorological disasters accounting for 88% of the total natural disasters in 2011, less than 30% of the economic losses in that year were due to these weather-related incidents.

This means most of the financial damage was due to socioeconomic factors that can be broadly classified into two groups: exposed population and value at risk. With this finding, governments and scientific communities across the world are forced to reflect on the issue: Are natural disasters truly natural? How can we

prepare ourselves in reducing the risks of natural disasters?

Problem Statement

Since 1980, disaster-related economic damage per capita is growing more than GDP per capita, especially in Asia-Pacific countries. A prime example is Hurricane Luis; Hurricane Luis in 1995 caused around US\$330 million of economic damage to Antigua, which was about 66% of the country's GDP at the time.

In the past, the UNDP has shown that when it comes to rebuilding communities, we have been reasonably successful in assisting with the recovery process of affected regions. While this kind of assistance is crucial in helping nations regain their foothold, a more effective approach for reducing disaster impacts is actually helping nations reduce their vulnerability to natural disasters, especially in terms of social and economic resources. Many nations often struggled with returning to their original economic growth after being struck by a major disaster. This process of recovery is even more difficult for nations who are hazard-prone and vulnerable to economic damages. As such, we are in dire need of developing a comprehensive framework to help governments prepare for natural disasters in the planning process of developing communities.

Past and Current Actions

The UN first formally recognized this need of disaster risk reduction in 2005. Following this, the Hyogo Framework of Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience

of Nations and Communities to Disasters was established. After almost eight years, it is now time for the UNDP to review the progress we have made in the Hyogo Framework of Action since 2005.

Since the 1990s, an increasing number of countries have been enacting new legislations or updating existing legislations on disaster risk management. In the Philippines, since a disaster risk management agency was launched in 1995, there have been no casualties due to natural disasters in the past 17 years (excluding 2006 and 2011). In Bangladesh, the UNDP has been providing a tremendous amount of support in helping the nation develop a substantive plan in disaster risk management since the 1980s. It is now one of the world's leaders in disaster risk reduction. With the consolidation of the Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme in Bangladesh, the number of deaths due to natural catastrophes has sharply decreased (Appendix: Figure 2).

Last year, the UNISDR founded the Disaster Risk Management Center in Cape Town, South Africa to serve as a regional leader to encourage governments prioritize disaster risk reduction in their national fiscal planning. Earlier in April 2012, when an 8.6 magnitude earthquake hit Banda Aceh, Indonesia, it did not cause any casualties or major damage. This success can be attributed to the early warning systems and evacuation drills set up by the UN Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission after the devastating 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami.

Country Blocs: Vulnerability to Impacts of Natural Disasters

Natural disasters may have significant economic impacts on a country's progress. Developing countries and developed countries usually recover from natural disasters at different rates. The impact of a natural disaster is often exacerbated by the socioeconomic vulnerabilities of a nation. Establish your country's position by considering both how disaster-prone your country is and how vulnerable it is in terms of socioeconomic factors. The Natural Disasters Economic Losses Index published by Maplecroft provides a good reference point for each nation's position.

Highly vulnerable states

According to the World Bank, developing countries show high strains of vulnerability to natural disasters and their impacts. Disasters and poverty are at times inseparable in these nations. They often experienced a major setback in development after a disaster. Among these countries, Asia-Pacific countries are the most vulnerable as emerging economies in the most disaster-prone region in the world. Small island developing states are also particularly prone to economic fallout following a natural catastrophe. Some examples of highly vulnerable states are Bangladesh, the Philippines, the Dominican Republic, Myanmar, India, Viet Nam, Honduras, Laos and Haiti.

Less vulnerable states

These are usually developed nations that are highly industrialized, such as Switzerland, the United Kingdom,

Finland, Norway, Qatar and Canada. They tend to experience greater direct financial losses following a disaster, but insurance for damage losses greatly help to lessen this impact on a local level. There are also well-developed resources to avoid casualties, and in case of an emergency, there is readily available medical care for the people.

For instance, the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami caused an estimated \$470 million loss in Maldives, which accounted for around 62% of the small island state's GDP. On the other hand, although Japan suffered a US\$235 billion of economic loss, this loss was only less than 10% of its GDP per capita. A year after the Tōhoku earthquake, Japan has now recovered its economic levels and growth forecasts prior to the disaster.

Important Questions for Research

Is your country considered a high-risk or a low-risk state in terms of vulnerability to natural disasters?

What were the social, economical, and environmental impacts of past natural disasters on your country?

What has your country done in response to past natural disasters?

Has the UNDP been involved in disaster relief efforts of your country?

Many governments still balked at the idea of investing money in disaster risk reduction consider these natural disasters might only happen once every few

decades. Is your country doing anything to prevent potential future disasters?

If yes, how successful has it been so far? Can similar policies be implemented in other countries?

If not, why not? Are there any plans of doing so?

Are natural disasters truly natural? How is climate change – sometimes means more extreme weather incidents – impacting communities in your country?

What can the UNDP do to help nations build resilience against natural disasters?

What is the role your country can play on the international level to help reduce the risk and impact of natural disasters? You can consider this by taking your country's vulnerability to natural disasters into account.

Committee Goals

- To identify the underlying risk factors of natural hazards.
- To conclude whether natural disasters are truly natural, and determine which category some past major natural disasters fall into.
- To consolidate a comprehensive framework to help governments build communities that are resilient to natural disasters. Recommended subsections in this framework include national leadership,

establishment of institutions and policies, training of human resources, society engagement.

- To develop guidelines for governments to be proactive in risk reduction instead of passively administering disaster relief.

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Further Readings

<http://www.economist.com/node/21542755> A good introductory paper to the economic cost of natural disasters.

<http://www.cred.be/publications> Publications by the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) that provide review and analysis of past major natural disasters across the world.

<http://www.emdat.be/database> A database maintained by CRED on the disaster profile of each country.

<http://www.cdmp.org.bd/index.php> This may be useful for you when developing the framework in your resolution. It is the website of the Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme launched by the government of Bangladesh.

<http://maplecroft.com/themes/nh/> A report on the quantitative analysis of the economic impact of natural hazards on countries.

<http://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/hfa> Information on the Hyogo Framework for Action.

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/reports/2012/3/natural%20disaster%20review%20ferris/03_natural_disaster_review_ferris.pdf One of the best overall reviews on natural disasters in 2011.

http://www.adpc.net/v2007/Downloads/2010/Sept/Disaster%20Proofing%20MDGs_Brocure.pdf This is a good document on how disasters impact the Millennium Development Goals.

<http://www.preventionweb.net/posthfa/> Towards a post-2015 framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

<http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/GHA-Disaster-Risk-Report.pdf> Disaster Risk Report (A good source on the economics of natural disasters in terms of aid).

<http://www.interacademies.net/File.aspx?id=10292> Disaster risk reduction from a scientific perspective.

http://www.preventionweb.net/files/18197_midterm.pdf Midterm review of the Hyogo Framework of Action.

<http://www.unisdr.org/partners/countries> Disaster risk reduction efforts of different countries.

<http://www.ehs.unu.edu/file/get/9018> World Risk Report 2011. Provides data on how risk is calculated in four different parameters for each country.

APPENDIX A

Figure 1: The economic and human impact of disasters in the last 12 years

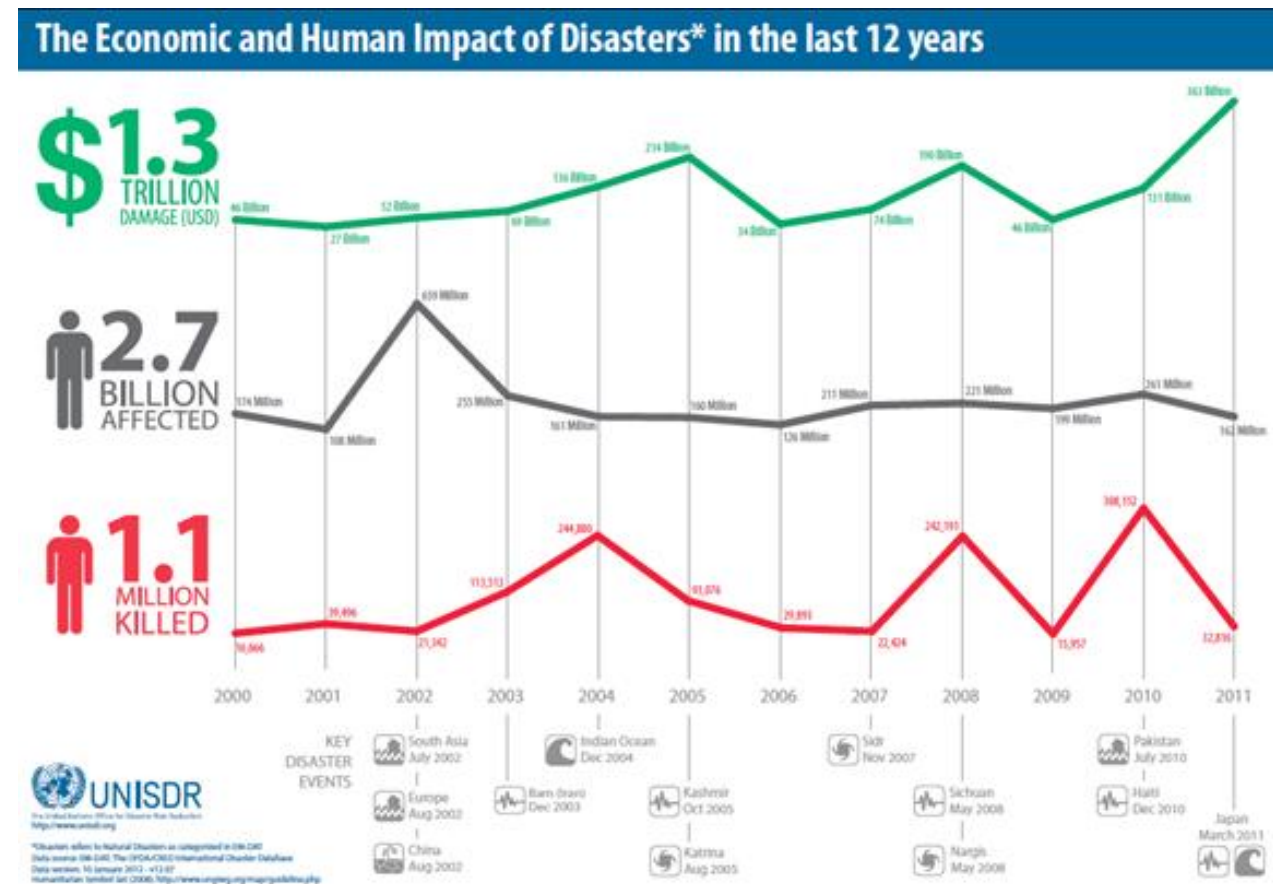
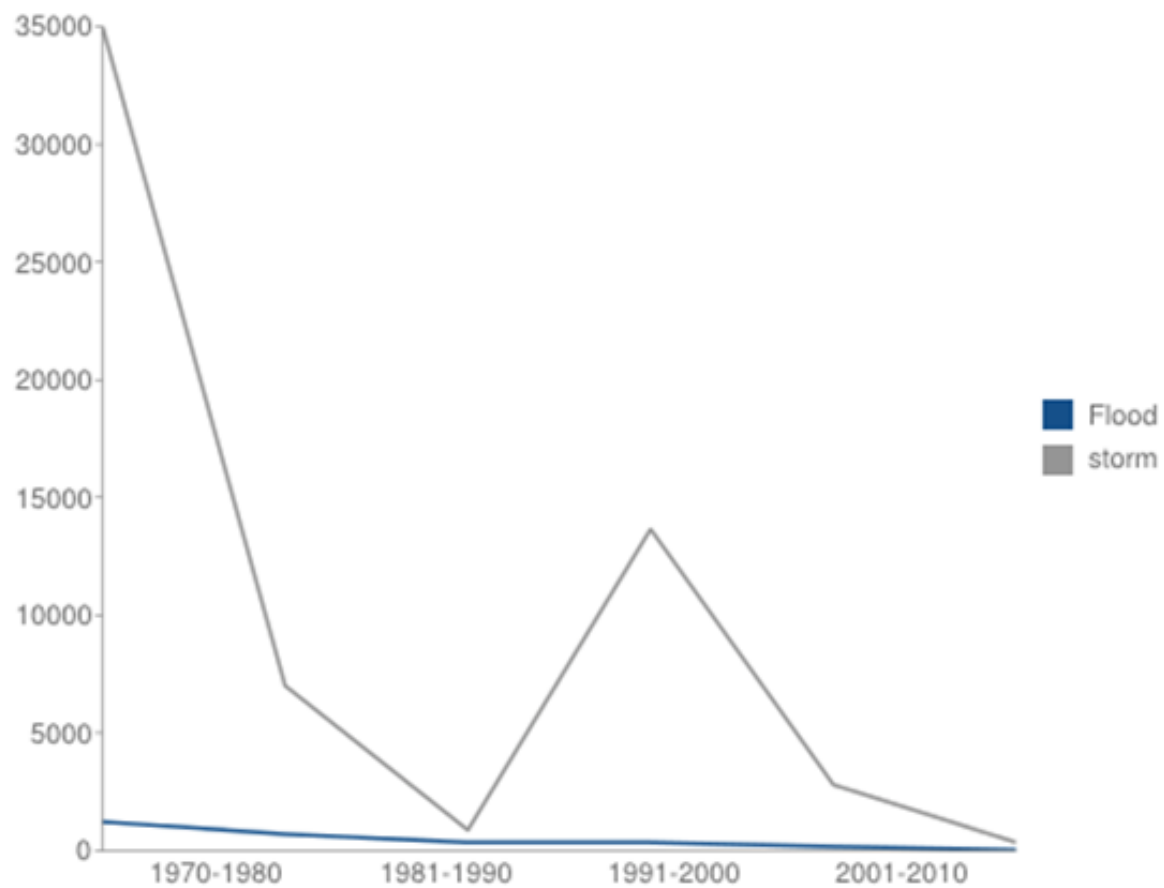


Figure 2: Total number of deaths by floods and cyclone in Bangladesh

Total Number of deaths by floods and cyclone, 1970 to 2010

Source: Created from EM-DAT



Topic 2:**HIV/AIDS RIGHTS
PROTECTION****Overview of HIV/AIDs Globally**

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is a virus that attacks CD4 cells. CD4 cells coordinate the immune systems' response to foreign organisms within the body. HIV is spread through bodily fluids. Exchanges of bodily fluids can occur during sexual activity, blood transfusions, sharing needles and from mother to child during birth. HIV can be diagnosed using a simple antibody test; however, this diagnosis requires confirmation with a more extension Western Blot test.

AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is a progression of HIV. An individual is classified as having AIDS after his/her CD4 count falls below 200. Individuals with AIDS are at greater risk of infections and death from disease already present in their environments. Common diseases afflicting those with AIDS include tuberculosis, salmonella, meningitis, and candidiasis.

Globally, some 34 million men and women are HIV positive as of 2011. 1.7 million deaths were attributed to AIDS in 2011. These numbers have fallen from 2005, when 2.3 million deaths were attributed to AIDS. Sub-Saharan Africa suffers the most severely from AIDS. 1 in 20 individuals in Sub-Saharan Africa are HIV positive. This rate is almost 25 times the rate of AIDS in Asia. 2.5 million new cases of HIV were diagnosed in 2011, down from 3.4 million new diagnoses in 2001.

New treatments for HIV/AIDS show some promise; however, there is currently no cure for HIV. These new treatments can reduce the virus to undetectable levels for up to 48 weeks after the treatment period. These treatments can, therefore, increase the life expectancy of those with HIV by delaying the onset of AIDS. Despite these advances, the disease remains incurable. Moreover, those with HIV can still spread the disease to others while undergoing these treatments.

Overview of Rights Abuses

Globally, those who are HIV-positive face discrimination across the globe. These forms of discrimination come from both legislation and from social pressures. Sixty countries have criminalized transmitting HIV to another person. Individuals have been convicted of transmitting HIV in twenty four of these countries, including the United States. These practices deter individuals from undergoing HIV testing and taking steps to control the spread of the disease, as individuals do not wish to face incarceration for transmitting the disease to a partner.

Further legal structures often prevent the employment of practices to reduce the spread of HIV. Many nations criminalize sex trade and practices to reduce harm to injecting drug users. While these laws may deter individuals from engaging in these trades, they prevent governmental involvement to reduce the spread of HIV.

Comparatively, nations that legalize sex trade and engage in processes to reduce harm to injecting drug users and halt the spread of HIV through needle exchange

have seen significant reductions in the spread of the disease.

Additionally, many nations lack significant structures to protect women against violence and provide adequate sexual education. When nations fail to protect women from domestic violence and rape, HIV spreads more rapidly as women as exposed to the disease through nonconsensual, unprotected sex. Similarly, when individuals lack access to contraception, they cannot engage in safe sex practices that prevent the spread of HIV.

While laws to protect those infected with HIV are on the books in many nations globally, nations often lack the resources to adequately enforce these laws and protect individuals with HIV. Moreover, not all forms of discrimination can be criminalized. Forms of social stigma often times cannot be effectively criminalized. The child of a sex-worker vulnerable to HIV-infection will face discrimination at school regardless of legislation.

Stigma against those with HIV, however, often reaches far beyond the disease itself. Those with HIV are often members of groups that already face discrimination within their society. These groups include drug users, sex workers, homosexual men, transgender individuals and prisoners. Individuals in these populations are at higher risk of HIV-infection. These forms of discrimination often prevent individuals in these populations from receiving treatment as providers will not give them access to resources to prevent the spread of and treat the disease.

Previous International Action and Ongoing Challenges

While individuals afflicted with HIV/AIDS face discrimination across the globe, little international action has been taken to reduce stigma and discrimination. Most progress has been taken on national levels. This progress consists of rewriting laws that heighten stigma and discrimination against those with HIV/AIDS and high risk populations.

In 2009, India removed sections of its law that criminalized homosexuality. Similarly, in 2011 Guyana and Fiji rejected the criminalization of HIV/AIDS. While these laws represent significant steps towards a more positive international policy on the prevention of HIV/AIDS, much work remains to be done on the international level.

The UNDP has partnered with national governments to work to understand how socioeconomic development in the developing world contributes to the spread of HIV/AIDS. Through these partnerships, the UNDP has worked to protect the economic wellbeing of individuals afflicted with HIV/AIDS. Through partnerships with the UNHCR, UNDP has worked to support those afflicted with HIV/AIDS in humanitarian crisis.

In a broader sense, the UNDP is engaged in a variety of programs to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS. In the pursuit of halting violations of the human rights of those with HIV/AIDS, the UNDP has worked to halt the spread of the disease. Through collaboration with the global

fund, the UNDP has worked to provide 403 million individuals with contraception to prevent the spread of HIV, counseling to seven million individuals and treatment to 1.1 million individuals. These efforts have allowed 12% of individuals with HIV/AIDS in low and middle income countries to receive lifesaving treatment.

The UNDP continues to be challenged by a lack of national and international cooperation on HIV/AIDS rights protection. Due to national sovereignty, the UNDP cannot directly enact laws to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. The UNDP must therefore continue to work with national governments to enact more favorable policy to protect the rights of those with HIV/AIDS.

Blocs

United States

The United States remains unwilling to take broad national action to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS. In 37 of 50 states, it is a crime to transmit HIV to another individual. Such criminalization heightens stigma and prevents effective prevention of HIV/AIDS.

European Union

The EU has undergone international policy to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS within Europe, however few laws are on the books to prevent the abuse of individuals with HIV/AIDS.

Africa

While Sub-Saharan Africa faces high rates of HIV/AIDS infection, the legal

structure in many Africa nations continues to facilitate the transmission of HIV/AIDS. 31 African nations have criminalized the transmission of HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, 28 African nations do, however, have laws criminalizing discrimination against those with HIV/AIDS. 23 million individuals in Africa are afflicted with HIV/AIDS.

Asia

44 Asian nations have criminalized discrimination against those with HIV/AIDS. 4 millions individuals in Asia are afflicted with HIV/AIDS.

South America

All South American nations have criminalized discrimination against those with HIV/AIDS. 2 million individuals in South America are afflicted with HIV/AIDS.

Committee Goals

This committee will seek to:

1. Ensure greater cooperation between international agencies and national governments to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS.
2. Reverse laws that contribute to the spread of HIV/AIDS
3. Create an international legal environment for the protection of individuals with HIV/AIDS

Conclusion

In sum, national legislation has prevented the effective treatment of HIV/AIDS by criminalizing the spread of the disease thereby heightening stigma and discrimination against its victims. While progress has been made towards creating a more supportive legal environment for victims of HIV/AIDS, little to no international action has been taken to halt human rights abuses occurring against those afflicted with HIV/AIDS.

This committee will seek to create more effective cooperation between international and national governments to reverse the spread of HIV and prevent discrimination against victims.

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"Handbook on HIV and Human Rights for National Human Rights Institutions." OHCHR/UNAIDS, 2007. Web. 5 Dec. 2012.

"Global Commission on HIV and the Law: Risks, Rights and Health." UNDP HIV/AIDS Group, July 2012. Web. 5 Dec. 2012.

"HIV Infections Fall, U.N. Says Ending AIDS 'feasible'" Chicago Tribune. Reuters, 20 Nov. 2012. Web. 5 Dec. 2012.

"HIV/AIDS." Mayo Clinic, 2012. Web. 5 Dec. 2012.

Further Reading

<http://www.aids.gov/>

A general overview of the US governments role in preventing AIDS domestically and internationally

<http://www.unaids.org/>

Summary of the UN's progress towards AIDS prevention; includes past and current UN action

<http://www.avert.org/>

A general description of the challenges faced by HIV+ individuals and steps being taken to prevent the spread of the disease

<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/hiv-aids/>

UNDP's document library for HIV/AIDS. Contains all of their documentation about the disease and their past efforts

<http://www.ohchr.org>

UN Human rights committee. Contains overviews of UN interventions in comparable instances to provide a comparison for UN action on HIV.