Who Responds First?

How UN bodies and independent groups respond to a crisis

SS24.CWI.5 "Describe the roles of international governmental organizations (IGOs) and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in addressing international issues and crises..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each UN body, agency, or fund and an action it can take. Circle the NGO and an action it can take, then write B beside one NGO benefit and L beside one NGO limit.

After the Cyclone

1. When a cyclone destroys roads and clinics in a coastal country, its government may ask for help. The United Nations (UN) brings member states together, but its parts have different jobs. In the General Assembly, all member states can debate a response and approve the UN budget. The Security Council can make binding decisions about threats to international peace, though its five permanent members can veto major decisions. The Secretariat, led by the secretary-general, carries out the UN's daily work. Its emergency coordination office helps relief groups share information so supplies can reach communities with the greatest needs.

2. Other UN-linked organizations bring specialized skills. The World Health Organization (WHO) is a specialized agency with its own governing body. During a disease outbreak after the storm, it can help health officials track cases and advise on safe treatment. UNICEF, the UN Children's Fund, is a UN fund rather than a specialized agency. It can deliver clean water supplies and support children who have lost access to school. These groups work with the affected country's government rather than replace it. WHO guidance does not itself force a government to act, and supplies can still be delayed if roads are blocked.

3. Doctors Without Borders (MSF) is a nongovernmental organization (NGO), not a UN office. Its medical teams can set up temporary clinics and treat people, including those far from functioning hospitals. Because it is not directed by a government, it can speak publicly about unmet needs. Yet its access still depends on safe routes and permission to operate, and its staff and supplies are limited. It cannot order a border to open or make countries fund relief. UN bodies, national officials, and NGOs may coordinate, but each has different authority and resources.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. If a dispute over aid routes threatens international peace, how could the General Assembly and Security Council respond differently?

2. How could WHO and UNICEF address different needs after the cyclone, and how do their places in the UN system differ?

3. How could the Secretariat's emergency coordination office help MSF without directing its work?

4. Explain one benefit and one limit of MSF's role in this crisis.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

An earthquake drives families across a border, and crowded shelters face a disease outbreak. In five sentences, propose a response involving one UN main organ, WHO or UNICEF, and an NGO; explain one NGO advantage and one limit on what it can do.

Who Responds First?

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each UN body, agency, or fund and an action it can take. Circle the NGO and an action it can take, then write B beside one NGO benefit and L beside one NGO limit. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	If a dispute over aid routes threatens international peace, how could the General Assembly and Security Council respond differently?	**The General Assembly could debate a response and approve a budget. The Security Council could make a binding decision, though a permanent member could veto it.**
2	How could WHO and UNICEF address different needs after the cyclone, and how do their places in the UN system differ?	**WHO, a specialized agency, could help officials track disease and advise on treatment. UNICEF, a UN fund, could deliver clean water supplies and support children's schooling.**
3	How could the Secretariat's emergency coordination office help MSF without directing its work?	**The office could share information about needs and relief efforts. MSF could use that information while making its own decisions as an NGO.**
4	Explain one benefit and one limit of MSF's role in this crisis.	**As an independent group, MSF can speak publicly about unmet needs. It cannot order a border to open.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The UN Secretariat could help aid groups share reports about shelter needs across the border. WHO could advise health officials on tracking the disease outbreak and protecting people in crowded shelters. An independent medical NGO could run mobile clinics and speak publicly when shelters lack basic care. Its independence could help it address neglected needs without waiting for a government to direct its work. However, it cannot require either country to open a border, and unsafe roads could prevent its teams from reaching families.

Accept other passage-supported examples of each organization's role. For the open response, check that the five sentences assign distinct roles to a UN main organ, WHO or UNICEF, and an NGO, and explain a plausible NGO advantage and limit.