

Distinguishing Among Natural Event, Hazard and Disaster

Introduction: There is a tendency for persons to use the terms interchangeable or to refer to the same thing. It must however be noted that they are actually not the same. We will look further into this!

There is a hurricane on the eastern coast of Barbados, this is being televised to the Jamaican populous. In this context, the hurricane in and of itself is an event, the fact that it poses an impending threat to Barbados makes it a hazard. If or when the hurricane makes impact and Barbados is damaged and sustained then we say it is a natural disaster.

Difference between Hazard and Disaster

- Earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, wildfires, landslides, droughts and volcanic eruptions are natural hazards that cause a lot of destruction. But they are termed as disasters when they occur in places that are heavily inhabited areas where it has an effect on lives and resources. When any of these hazards takes place in an area that is desolate, it causes no harm to human lives or property and hence is *not called a disaster* though technically it is the same phenomenon that would have raised an alarm had it taken place in an area that was thickly populated.