

LECTURE 9: INTERNATIONAL AID

A. Humanitarian aid:

When there are extreme situations, **aid agencies** such as *Oxfam* or *Medecins Sans Frontieres* play an important role. These situations include war, **natural disasters** such as earthquakes or floods, and **famine** - when people do not have enough to eat, for example following **crop failure**. **Emergency relief** is provided in the form of supplies, medical assistance, and so on. This is part of **humanitarian aid**.



B. Development aid:

Aid agencies and donor countries also give **development aid**, and so contribute to economic development through specific **development projects**. These projects may use **intermediate technology** - equipment and machinery suited to local conditions that local people can operate and maintain.

Some of these projects are designed to improve infrastructure - a country's water supplies, roads, etc.

Some provide **seed money** for small businesses - the money they need to start up until they become **viable** and able to develop by themselves.



C. The aims of aid:

Development aid often comes from **donor countries**. Some countries are more **generous** than others, giving a higher proportion of their national **wealth**. The places to which aid is sent and the uses to which it is put are influenced by **pressure groups** and **NGOs - non-governmental organizations** - such as the aid agencies mentioned above.

Governments receiving aid are **recipients**. Some donors require the recipients to use the money to purchase equipment, etc. from them - this is **tied aid**.

Many would say that the purpose of aid is **poverty reduction**. But there is a lot of discussion about how this can be achieved. Some experts say that the best use of aid is to invest in projects that contribute to economic development.

9.1. Complete the sentences with appropriate forms of expressions from A and B opposite.

1. In Ethiopia in the mid-1980s, many people did not have enough to eat. This was one of the most severe.....of recent times.
2. In 1999, Pakistan produced much less cotton than it normally does because of unusual climate conditions. This is an example of a damaging.....
3. Helping people in India after the earthquake there in 1999 is an instance of and
4. Sometimes only a little.....is required to get projects going - they can become quite quickly.
5. The hurricanes and flooding in central America in 2002 were one of the worst of the last few years. 6 Small wind turbines to generate electricity on farms is one example of

9.2. *Read the article relating to the ideas in B opposite. Then say if the statements below are true or false, identifying the phrase or sentence from the article that confirms your answer. (The first one has been done for you.)*

<i>The great aid debate</i>		
<p>Several factors have brought the question of overseas aid to the fore. Public opinion is one, helped by some very effective lobbying by pressure groups, especially on the issue of debt relief for the poorest countries. Ultimately though aid has forced its way to the top of the agenda because political leaders have realized that global security and prosperity depend on an inclusive international economy. Letting poor countries fall further behind is dangerous. Making aid work is now a central but sensitive issue. In the past both</p>	<p>donors and recipients have tended to hijack the debate for their own purposes. Recipients tend to bristle at the idea that they waste aid money. That accusation, they say is a distraction from the basic problem that the donors are not generous enough. There is no doubt that rich countries are often reluctant to deliver on their promises to the developing world. Whether it be money for aid or the elusive open markets they continue to argue will help poor countries most. But there is considerable evidence now</p>	<p>– and from a wide range of sources – that suggests that poor countries need to take more responsibility for their own problems and that by doing so they could ensure aid helps deliver what they need. Research by the World Bank has shown that aid can be effective in reducing poverty, but only when given to countries with sound economic management and government institutions. In countries with weak economic management, the evidence suggests foreign aid does little to reduce poverty.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>The economist.</i></p>

1. A number of things have made overseas aid a topical issue.
True - several factors have brought the question of overseas aid to the fore.
2. The influence of pressure groups has produced results, especially in relation to debt relief.
3. Donors and recipients have until now taken control of the discussion for their own advantage.
4. Recipients accept the idea that aid money is sometimes wasted.
5. Aid can reduce poverty only when economic management in a country is good.

9.3. *Over to you:* Find out about an organization involved in a particular development project and make a presentation or write a report about it.