EDITORIAL

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Natural Disasters in a Changing World: From Emergency Response to Resilient and Sustainable Development

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Natural disasters are no longer exceptional interruptions to development. Floods, droughts, landslides, wildfires, storms and extreme heat increasingly interact with rapid urbanisation, ecosystem degradation, poverty, weak infrastructure and unequal access to health services. Their consequences therefore extend beyond immediate physical destruction: they interrupt education, displace communities, threaten food and water security, amplify disease risks and reverse years of social and economic progress.

The central challenge is not only to respond faster after disaster strikes, but to reduce the conditions that transform natural hazards into human catastrophes. Disaster-risk reduction must be embedded in land-use planning, environmental governance, public-health preparedness, resilient infrastructure and community education. Scientific evidence should be translated into accessible early-warning information and practical decisions that reach the people most exposed.

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Africa illustrates both the urgency of this agenda and the strength of locally grounded solutions. Community knowledge, citizen participation, ecosystem restoration and interdisciplinary research can complement technological forecasting and institutional response. Schools, universities, municipalities, health systems and civil-society organisations all have a role in building a culture of prevention.

JEERESD invites research that connects hazard assessment with sustainable development, environmental education and public action. We particularly encourage studies that document under-reported disasters, evaluate interventions, integrate One Health perspectives and demonstrate how evidence can strengthen resilience in vulnerable communities. Moving from reaction to preparedness is not simply a technical choice; it is an ethical commitment to protect lives, reduce inequality and safeguard the future.