Disasters happen all of the time. These disasters can occur due to either natural causes or man-made causes, or possibly even a mixture of the two. Although disasters are inevitable, they often occur somewhat randomly. This is why it is imperative that countries have some sort of protocol for disaster preparedness as well as some strategy to deal with the disaster after it occurs. Two very notable disasters that occurred in the recent past are the events that took place in Haiti and Chernobyl. In Haiti, the disaster was natural. A major earthquake occurred that caused huge amounts of damage to the country. In Chernobyl on the other hand, the disaster was man made. A meltdown occurred in the nuclear reactor that led the city to abandonment.

In the case of Haiti, there was very little done to mitigate the effects of a major disaster. Although there was a very good chance that an earthquake would occur, funds were not allocated towards such an event. Prior to the disaster, the chief of Haiti's Bureau of Mines and Energy said, “Better not even to talk about it, there’s no need to panic. But it would be a catastrophe” (Battistoni 2010). The issue is that it was hard for Haiti to set funds aside for such an event because it was unknown whether such an event would actually occur. Haiti is not a wealthy country, so funding for the possibility of a disaster seemed like a poor use of limited resources.

Haiti was not at all prepared for earthquake that shook the entire country. Haiti is a very impoverished country with a poor governing body. There was little to no effort to prepare the country for such a disaster. There was also very little help from other countries. While other countries are quick to help after a disaster, they often do not help countries to prepare for a disaster. This left Haiti with a country filled with buildings and other types of infrastructure that were extremely prone to the damage caused by the shock of an earthquake. In a more developed country, a magnitude 7 earthquake would have caused much less damage, but due to the lack of preparedness in Haiti, the scale of the damage was huge.

After the events in Haiti, there was a huge global response. Over 9 billion dollars were donated to help the country for relief. Rescue teams from around the world came to help the country. The Red Cross played a huge role in helping out the citizens. Efforts were made to clean up debris, rescue individuals, and provide food, medical support, and shelter to those affected by the disaster. UN officials were sent in to keep order.

As relief and rescue continues the time for recovery would require even more help and assistance for other countries. With one in five jobs being lost, financial aid would be a huge necessity for the recovery of the country. Money was raised by The United States, The European Union, Brazil, The United Kingdom, France, Italy, Canada and many more. Six months after the quake as much as 98 percent of the rubble remained unclear. Most of the capital was still impassable and thousands of bodies remained in the rubble. 1.6 million people have remained in relief camps of tents and tarps since the quake and almost no transitional housing had been built. Most of these relief camps had no electricity, running water, or sewage disposal, and the tents were beginning to fall apart. There was widespread crime in the camps, many times against women and girls. By May 2010, enough aid had been raised internationally to give each displaced family a check for $37,000. After investigating why little to no progress had been made, CNN learned that about 85% of the residents in the city were living in homes that they had not officially registered and/or did not own. In September 2010 there were over one million refugees still living in tents. By the end of 2010, more than 3,333 had died at a rate of about 50 deaths a day and very little progress had been made. 10 months after the disaster, cholera rapidly
began to spread throughout the country only making recovery even harder. By January of 2012, nearly a half a million Haitians remained homeless, still living under tarps and in tents. As time continued to fly by, more natural disasters had occurred though none were nearly as big as the earthquake. Very little progress had been made and countries who worked hard to raise money for the efforts were disappointed by the countries attempts to recover.

The tragic disaster in 2010 had left 220,000 people dead, 300,000 others injured and rubble nearly everywhere. In the end about $13.5 billion of donations were made for both relief and recovery. Five years later the city is finally back to normal. Currently the country is struggling with their government because of the struggles within the government during the disaster. Since the earthquake, new homes have been built that may be able to shield the inhabitants from small storms but they would likely collapse in the event of another earthquake. Today Haiti still works to improve upon their government and economy. The country has really struggled to recover from the disaster especially because the country was very unstable to begin with. It is sad to see that whether the earthquake was a level 7 or not, that if people had invested more in building safer and more structurally sound homes and buildings the disaster may never have become so horrific. Although this was a natural disaster there were human errors that could have been prevented just like those in the case of the Chernobyl disaster.

Unlike the disaster in Haiti, the incident that occurred in Chernobyl was not a natural disaster. Since the days of the catastrophic meltdown at the nuclear power plant in Chernobyl, Ukraine, many regulations have been placed on the safety of nuclear power around the world. The technology available in the mid-1980s pales in comparison to what is available today, meaning not as much could have been done to prevent accidents such as the meltdown of Chernobyl. This doesn’t mean the Ukrainian physicists completely ignored the dangers of nuclear power however. The engineers were actually testing the whether or not the turbines could produce sufficient energy to keep the coolant pumps running in the event of a loss of power until the emergency diesel generator was activated. To test this they turned off the safety systems of the reactor. They initially tried to lower the power output of the reactor to 25 % capacity but it went down to below 1%. They tried to slowly raise the power but there was an unexpected surge causing the fuel elements to burst. A massive explosion followed blowing the 1000 ton sealing cap off of the reactor, causing temperatures of over 2000 degrees celsius. This heat ignited the graphite lining the reactor and burned for 9 days to follow, releasing nuclear waste into the atmosphere. So basically the whole accident that ensued was caused by engineers trying to make the plant safer in the first place, however this preparation caused them to fail catastrophically.

After the event happened measures needed to be taken to avoid further problems to the environment and people near the reactor. The immediate concern was not the radiation that was spreading, it was the massive fires. 600,000-800,000 firefighters and emergency workers came from all over the former Soviet Union to put out the fire.

For over two years, these people toiled to put out the fire, followed by the burial of radioactive equipment, homes, storage facilities and anything else that would retain the radiation. To this date 350,000 people have been relocated to prevent health issues. Today, Chernobyl's soil, water, and air are among the most highly contaminated on Earth. The reactor sits at the center of a 1,000-square-mile “Exclusion Zone,” a quarantined no-man's land complete with border guards, passport control and radiation monitoring. Inside the Zone are hundreds of unmarked (and un-mapped) burial sites where machinery from the cleanup after the 1986 accident was dumped. These days, Ukraine's four other nuclear power plants also dispose of their spent fuel inside the Zone. No improvements have been made to the disaster site since the initial
attempts to clean up. Many creepy stories have been told about what the area is like today but it has been recorded that 130 women still live in the zone.

Natural and man-made disasters can be hard to overcome but with the help of the disaster lifecycle, countries are able to attempt to recover and get back to how they were before the disaster. Sadly in the two cases we discussed no improvements were made to the country since the accidents but you can still follow the steps of the lifecycles that have occurred over time.

http://www.npr.org/blogs/goatsandsoda/2015/01/12/376138864/5-years-after-haiti-s-earthquake-why-aren-t-things-better
http://world.time.com/2014/01/12/four-years-later-haitis-troubled-recovery-haunts-its-future/
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alyssa-battistoni/haiti-earthquake-shows-ne_b_435052.html
http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/up-front/posts/2010/01/14-haiti-aid-winthrop
http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/ks3/geography/physical_processes/plate_tectonics/revision/7/