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The evolution of global disaster risk assessments: from hazard to global change

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The perception of disaster risk as a dynamic process interlinked with global change is a fairly recent concept. It gradually emerged as an evolution from new scientific theories, currents of thinking and lessons learned from large disasters since the 1970s. The interest was further heighten, in the mid-1980s, by the Chernobyl nuclear accident and the discovery of the ozone layer hole, both bringing awareness that dangerous hazards can generate global impacts. The creation of the UN International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) and the publication of the first IPCC report in 1990 reinforced the interest for global risk assessment. First global risk models including hazard, exposure and vulnerability components were available since mid-2000s. Since then increased computation power and more refined datasets resolution, led to more numerous and sophisticated global risk models. This article presents a recent history of global disaster risk models, the current status of researches for the Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction (GAR 2013) and future challenges and limitations for the development of next generation global disaster risk models.