

World Health Organization(WHO)



Topic: Managing Global Infectious Disease Outbreaks

Director: Tanya Sankhla

October 10th, 2020

To Delegates of CHSMUN Novice 2020

Dear Delegates,
Welcome to CHSMUN Novice 2020!

It is our highest honor and pleasure to welcome you all to our 2020 online novice conference here at Cerritos High School. On behalf of the Cerritos High School Model United Nations program, we are proud to host our very first virtual novice conference, where you will become more knowledgeable on international issues, participate in intellectually stimulating discussions, and create new and everlasting friendships.

The CHSMUN program continues to compete around the world as a nationally ranked MUN program. Our delegates utilize diplomacy in order to create complex solutions towards multilateral issues in the global community. Our head chairs are selected from only the best seniors of our program, undergoing a rigorous training process to ensure the highest quality of moderating and grading of debate. Furthermore, all the topic synopses have been reviewed and edited numerous times. We strongly believe that by providing each and every delegate with the necessary tools and understanding, he or she will have everything they need to thrive in all aspects of the committee. We thoroughly encourage each delegate to engage in all of the facets of their topic, in order to grow in their skills as a delegate and develop a greater knowledge of the world around them.

Although this wasn't what we expected, our advisors and staff have put in countless hours to ensure delegates have an amazing experience at the online conference. Our greatest hope is that from attending CHSMUN 2020, students are encouraged to continue on in Model United Nations and nevertheless, inspired to spark change in their surrounding communities. CHSMUN Novice 2020 will provide a quality experience for beginner delegates to develop their speaking and delegating skills.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact us! We look forward to seeing you at CHSMUN Novice 2020!

Sincerely,

Anjali Mani and Karishma Patel

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Secretary-Generals

A Note From The Director

Delegates,

My name is Tanya Sankhla and I am beyond excited to serve as your Director for the World Health Organization (WHO) Committee this year! I am currently going into my 5th year as an MUN delegate. MUN has always been a passion of mine and I can't wait to see everyone demonstrate their skills in a new online format. Some of my hobbies include tumbling, baking, reading, and playing with my dog. I truly enjoy debating and learning from conferences which is what I hope you all will experience in this committee. I have chosen topics very prominent today in the real world so discussions will be very insightful and interesting! I look forward to meeting you all.

Sincerely,

Tanya Sankhla

Director, WHO

Committee Introduction

Originally created on April 7, 1948 (World Health Day), the World Health Organization (WHO) works with 194 Member States, across six regions, in order to direct and coordinate international health work through collaboration. The United Nations (UN) committee acts as an overseer for international public health to better health systems currently set in place, created response strategies for non communicable and communicable diseases, and support national healthcare frameworks through international cooperation. WHO originally set up headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, and has since expanded to have six regional offices with more than 7000 people working in 150 country offices. A remarkable accomplishment of WHO was leading a global immunization campaign in response to the contagious outbreak of Smallpox. Their campaign had led Smallpox to be the only infectious disease outbreak completely eradicated. WHO has also made efforts to combat noncommunicable diseases such as cancer, diabetes and heart disease, which now account for 70% of all deaths, through prevention and control efforts. In response to current circumstances with the Coronavirus Pandemic, WHO has been working on prevention, surveillance, containment, treatment, coordination and much more to support its member states. Though these mark only a few significant accomplishments, WHO is constantly evolving and collaborating with the international community to better healthcare worldwide.

Topic: Managing Global Infectious Disease Outbreaks

Background:

With the world's current capabilities of global interconnectedness, diseases that spark in a single region have the potential to spread further and faster than ever before. In doing so, these diseases create global pandemics, harming many nations in the process. In order to manage global infectious disease outbreaks, we must first understand their origin and dangers. According to the UN, a global pandemic can be defined as a “worldwide spread of a new disease.” Pandemics cross international boundaries to affect a wide range of people compared to epidemics which normally reside in a single region. Without proper regulations, epidemics can quickly turn to pandemics and spread like wildfires across the globe. The origin of pandemics is most commonly associated with an animal influenza virus. Normally, animals contain viruses that don't spread to humans, but considering that these viruses are constantly evolving, occasionally they find a host in vulnerable human bodies. This new host body then acts as a cellular factory to manufacture more viruses, helping to replicate and spread the virus. In this case, symptoms such as coughing or sneezing encourage bacteria to spread onto other hosts. Once this process has begun, it escalates at an exponential rate in the absence of immediate response, leading to a global infectious disease outbreak. The threat of global pandemics is one that humankind has dealt with since long ago. From 1346 to 1353, the Black Death, commonly referred to as the Bubonic Plague pandemic, had taken root and spread across Europe. The plague had occurred as a result of *Yersinia pestis* bacteria, usually found in small mammals and their fleas. Many rats acted as a host for infected fleas, spreading the plague across continents to create one of the deadliest pandemics of all time. During the fourteenth century, the Black Death had caused over 50 million deaths in Europe. In the present day, this disease could easily be treated with antibiotics. Though, through the example of the Black Death outbreak, it is evident that lack of standard preventative measures could escalate the threat of new diseases immensely. Another notable virus that had been labeled a global pandemic was the Ebola haemorrhagic fever, or Ebola virus disease. Ebola, put simply, originated in animals and spread through humans with the transfer of bodily fluids. Though it was first discovered in 1976, Ebola has had multiple outbreaks over time, most recently affecting West Africa from 2014-2016. This specific outbreak led to more casualties than all past Ebola outbreaks combined, spreading across country borders. The fatality rate of Ebola is an average of 50%, which no approved vaccine as of yet. Yet, in an effort to decrease the death toll, the United Nations called upon their Security Council to support governments with stronger leadership in affected countries, and to open borders of more developed countries for medical evacuation. Through these methods cases have drastically decreased through protective measures that try to control the disease before it spreads from a single region. With experience tackling many disease outbreaks in the past, the international response to virus outbreaks has bettered, but the deadly threat of new diseases still remains. The recent Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) has demonstrated the limited capabilities of each

nation to control and tackle a new strand of virus immediately. A host of COVID-19 would spread the virus through respiratory droplets produced when they cough or sneeze. With 18.7 million confirmed cases and 705,000 deaths reported, these numbers are expected to grow without proper control. Through this pandemic, it is clear that different approaches based on country have different outcomes. Some countries have fully recovered while others continue to suffer due to the reproductions of this outbreak. It is important to take note of each country's responses and current state when focusing on combating future outbreaks. The deadly threat of global pandemics has and will continue to affect the international community in drastic ways. Though it is difficult to predict future outbreaks, we must continue to improve healthcare facilities and regulations to deal with outbreaks as they appear.

United Nations Involvement:

As part of the United Nations (UN), the World Health Organization (WHO) has taken up the task of responding to global infectious disease outbreaks through supporting member states. To respond to outbreaks, WHO relies upon the World Health Assembly's (WHA) revised International Health Regulations that were adopted in 2005 through the WHA Resolution 58.3. The revised International Health Regulations framework identified eight areas for member states to focus upon improvement: building core capacities in the areas of national legislation, policy and financing, coordination and communications, surveillance, response, preparedness, risk communication, and human resources and laboratories. WHO has already made clear their purpose and goals to provide adequate healthcare and immediate response systems, but the UN body has also expressed concern for safety during these pandemics. This concern has led to communication with other UN bodies as well as affected governments to provide safety and financial support. For example, during the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the United Nations Security Council had adopted resolution 2439 (2018) in order to support WHO's efforts to control the outbreak. This resolution had condemned any attacks by armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to protect humanitarian and medical essential workers in that area. This resolution was a direct result of WHO's risk assessment in that area, which noted the lack of safety and security to address the outbreak. WHO had also used prediction tools to predict for the virus to expand to Uganda, Rwanda, South Sudan and Burundi, leading the United Nations Security Council to include these regions in the resolution. Additionally, many Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) are devoted to assisting underdeveloped countries facing extra hardships during a global disease outbreak. For example, during the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, where families are advised to social distance at home, the American Red Cross had supported 53,000 people recovering from loss of homes due to fire. Dilemmas such as lack of sanctuary or proper sanitation make people more susceptible to attaining a disease. For this reason the American Red Cross along with numerous other NGOs have made it their mission to fully support those affected by both the economical and social challenges disease outbreaks pose.

Bloc Positions:

Western: Considering that the Western Bloc is generally more developed and advanced compared to other blocs, their response to managing global infectious disease outbreaks is more advanced. This bloc is constantly evolving its pandemic preparedness plans and frameworks. Though economic stability isn't much of an issue, this bloc still faces the challenge of protecting humanitarian and healthcare workers as well as enforcing immediate response programs during an emergency outbreak.

Latin America and Caribbean: Latin America and the Caribbean don't have a guideline in case of an infectious disease outbreak or adequate response plan. With weak social protection, and increasing unemployment rate, and fragmented health systems, it is difficult for this bloc to combat a disease outbreak with their economic state, weak democracy, and struggle to safeguard human rights. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, this region has been facing a terrible economical, social, and humanitarian crisis.

African : The African bloc consists of fragile health systems and currently faces other health, environmental, and economic challenges. Alongside this, larger poverty rates make the population more susceptible to disease. Additionally, estimates of the economic impact of COVID-19 on Africa range from 2-5 percent decline of GDP by the end of 2020. Issues mainly faced by this block stem from lack of economic preparedness and guidelines for immediate response.

Asian-Pacific: With proper guidelines and responses set in place to tackle global infectious disease outbreaks, the potential for the prevention of disease outbreaks in the region is noteworthy. The Asian-Pacific bloc has mostly stable health facilities with access to laboratories for research, advanced technology, and resources. Despite their advanced public health infrastructure, diseases still pose a threat to economies and areas of poverty which struggle to afford proper combatting tools. Poverty acts as a barrier to adequate healthcare since many individuals struggle to find proper housing or means for self isolation during emergency lockdowns. With lack of housing, sanitation, and support, poverty in this bloc poses an overlooked threat to stopping the spread of diseases.

Basic Solutions:

When addressing how to tackle this topic, it is important to consider different implications. Throughout history nations have continued to better their responses to global infectious disease outbreaks in an effort to reduce negative impacts. Although, efforts vary based on country development and capabilities, medical facilities, governmental enforcement, and many more factors. First and foremost a delegate should ensure that proper protocol is in place in case of an unexpected outbreak. Immediate response is key to preventing damage caused. Protocols in place should be revised to include more enforcement and strategies based on each nation's capabilities. Once pre-planned measures are implemented, the focus must shift to supporting healthcare

facilities and workers. Physical and legal protection for humanitarian and hospital workers must be ensured safety in their workplace. This could look like more protective wear equipment being provided, proper sanitation, and a stable healthcare facility without an overflowing amount of patients. During this, there must also be a research process in play to focus on subduing symptoms and preventing a virus from spreading. Research to cure a viral disease calls for highly advanced facilities and funding which many underdeveloped nations don't have access to. Based on your country's capabilities, collaboration through partnerships of non-profits or more developed countries could be vital in the research aspect. Although, delegates must keep in mind certain limitations such as leadership, financial resources, support from outside countries, poverty, and lack of economical structure when proposing solutions. Overall, successful solutions must include a way to tackle a disease outbreak through preparedness and immediate response with respect to capabilities of each host country.

Questions to Consider:

1. How is your country equipped to respond to global infectious disease outbreaks, and can their response system be improved?
2. In what way has past viral infections affected your country, and has your country taken measures to prevent repetition of those challenges?
3. Has your country's response to the COVID-19 Pandemic been successful, and what has your country done to achieve that success or failure?
4. What other challenges do many countries face, such as lack of economic stability and healthcare infrastructure, that prevent them from having effective emergency responses to disease outbreaks?
5. How can emergency responses to disease outbreaks occur without putting essential workers and healthcare professionals at risk?

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