

31st Annual

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE

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SECRETARIAT

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General Assembly Plenary

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United Nations Children's Fund

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World Health Organization

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Dear Delegates,

We heartily welcome you to Diplomacy Camp, the 31st annual Brigham Young University Model United Nations Conference (BYUMUN), which will be our first virtual experience. Our names are Jake Fairchild and Anela Hansen, and we will be your co-directors for the World Health Organization (WHO) this year. I, Jake, am a Junior at BYU applying to the Marriott School of Business. I look forward to helping the world's economy and analyzing ways to elevate the quality of life on a global scale. I, Anela, am a senior at BYU majoring in Russian Studies. While here, I have loved learning about the power individuals have to create change and have become very passionate about securing rights for immigrants. I hope to continue learning about these things in law school after I graduate.

This year, the World Health Organization will be discussing the following: *A Global Approach to the COVID Pandemic*.

The World Health Organization (WHO) is intent on creating a world in which everyone can live healthy, productive lives, regardless of who they are or where they live. Ensuring this right to health for all is an important part of the Sustainable Development Goals and a particularly relevant quest in light of this year's events.

This background guide is here as a reference and starting point in understanding WHO's role in the topic at hand. This guide should not replace individual research efforts, but instead, become a springboard for your own innovative solutions. The resolutions that come to life at the UN influence the whole world and this conference is an opportunity for you to practice affecting change in this our global society. Please prepare in a way that will allow you to share your ideas and represent your country with clarity and confidence. The effort you put in before BYUMUN will enhance your ability to communicate persuasively and enable you to be the powerful delegates we know you can be.

We wish you the best of luck as you study and prepare! Please reach out to either of us with any questions that arise.

Sincerely,

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Committee History

“Through international collaboration for better health, WHO intended to build common understanding and good will. As noted in the earliest days by the first Director-General of the World Health Organization, Brock Chisholm, ‘Political, social, and economic differences have no meaning when the health of people is at stake.’”

- Dr. Margaret Chan, former WHO Director-General

The World Health Organization, known as WHO, was established on 7 April 1948, which is now celebrated as World Health Day. At the end of World War II, diplomats met and formed the United Nations. One of the first things they discussed was setting up a global health organization to assist in the difficult task of restoring basic health services in a world damaged by war.¹ In the beginning, WHO’s priorities were urgent responses to emergencies, such as delivering medicines and vaccines, containing outbreaks, and providing relief to refugees. However, the founders of the committee foresaw a greater role in the future: to “provide a mechanism through which all countries would collaborate in the pursuit of better health.”² The accomplishments of WHO are widespread, and include the eradication of smallpox as one of its greatest achievements.³ Today, WHO has a wide spectrum of responsibilities and more than 7,000 people from over 150 countries working to increase global health. This organization is one of the agencies that belong to the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), together with many others such as UNICEF, UNESCO, and UNEP. All of these agencies were created to improve the effectiveness of the United Nations’ development activities at the country level.⁴

In regards to membership, any Member State that signs or accepts the Constitution of WHO can become a member.⁵ In regards to the governance of WHO, the legislative body is the World Health Assembly. This assembly meets annually in Geneva and delegations from all 194 Member States attend the meeting.⁶ The Health Assembly appoints the Director-General of the Organization, who supervises the financial policies and has to review and approve the program’s financial budget.⁷ The current Director-General is Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. The WHO is financed by contributions from Member States and outside donors. The greatest financial contributors to WHO are the United States, Japan, Germany, United Kingdom and France. WHO is working hard to ensure accountability, and the Office of Internal Audit and Oversight (IAO) is responsible for internal audit, inspection, and evaluation of the adequacy and effectiveness of the WHO’s financial management and use of assets.⁸

The other governing body of WHO is the Executive Board of the World Health Organization, which has 34 members qualified in different health fields that are elected for 3-year terms. However, all Member States and Associate Members have the right to attend committee meetings if they have designated a representative that has been approved by the Director-General.⁹ Each

¹ “WHO History Background.” Accessed 2 October 2020. <http://www.who.int/about/history/en/>.

² WHO 60th Anniversary Message from the Director-General Dr. Margaret Chan. Accessed 2 October 2020. http://www.who.int/who60/dg_message/en/.

³ “Smallpox.” Accessed 2 October 2020. <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/smallpox/en/>

⁴ “About the UNDG.” Accessed 2 October 2020. <https://undg.org/about/>.

⁵ Constitution of the World Health Organization, Basic Documents, 45th edition, Supplement, 2006. http://www.who.int/governance/eb/who_constitution_en.pdf.

⁶ “Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly.” Accessed 2 October 2020. <http://apps.who.int/gb/gov/assets/reglement-wha-2015-web-en.pdf>.

⁷ “Governance WHO” Accessed 2 October 2020. <http://www.who.int/governance/en/>

⁸ “Accountability.” WHO. Accessed 2 October 2020. <https://www.who.int/about/finances-accountability/en/>.

⁹ Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board of the World Health Organization.” Accessed 2 October 2020. https://www.who.int/governance/rules_of_procedure_of_eb_of_wha_en.pdf.

member of the board has one vote in voting procedure.¹⁰ The Executive Board meeting will determine the agenda for the Health Assembly every year and adopt resolutions for forwarding to the Health Assembly. The primary function of the Executive Board is to advise the Health Assembly, give effect, and facilitate work.¹¹ WHO has six regional offices: Africa, Europe, South-East Asia, Eastern Mediterranean, Western Pacific, and the Americas. Each region has a regional committee, which meets once a year. The Regional Director of each office has the responsibility to effectively supervise and manage the regional WHO centers (note that these regions are not the same as the United Nations regions used by other UN organizations).¹²

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² “Working with the regions.” *WHO*. Accessed 2 October 2020. <https://www.who.int/chp/about/regions/en/>.

Annotated Bibliography

“About the UNDG.” United Nations Sustainable Development Group. Accessed 2 October 2020. <<https://undg.org/about/>>.

An overview of the UNDG’s work , goals, and entities that make up the group.

Constitution of the World Health Organization, Basic Documents, 45th edition, Supplement, 2006. http://www.who.int/governance/eb/who_constitution_en.pdf

This text declares the purpose of the World Health Organization, objectives, functions, membership and associate membership, organs, the boards, conferences, regional arrangements, budget and expenses, voting, reports submitted by states, legal capacity, privileges, and immunities, amendments, etc.

Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly, Extract from *Basic documents*, 48th Edition. Accessed 2 October 2020. <https://apps.who.int/gb/gov/en/information_rule_wha_en.html>.

This document includes the rules and procedures for the Health Assembly. It contains rules on sessions of the assembly, agenda setting of regular and special sessions, secretariat, plenary meetings of the assembly, committee credentials, officers, general committee, main committees, rapporteurs, participation of representatives in Executive Board, voting, etc.

Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board of the World Health Organization, Extract from *Basic documents*, 48th Edition. Accessed 2 October 2020. <https://www.who.int/governance/rules_of_procedure_of_eb_of_wha_en.pdf>.

This document lists and describes all of the rules of procedure of the WHO. It includes rules on membership, attendance, sessions, agenda, officers of the board, committees of the board, secretariat, languages, conduct of business, voting, suspension and amendment of rules of procedure, and general provisions.

“Small Pox Disease”, Disease, World Health Organization Website. Accessed 2 October 2020. <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/smallpox/en>.

This page expounds on how the disease of smallpox was eradicated. It is a contagious disease caused by a virus and was one of the world’s most destructive diseases. The WHO led a global immunization campaign that eradicated the disease in 1980.

WHO 60th Anniversary Message from the Director-General Dr. Margaret Chan. Accessed 2 October 2020. <http://www.who.int/who60/dg_message/en/>.

The Director-General’s annual message regarding the work of the organization, its current goals, and successes from the previous year.

“WHO History Background.” *WHO*. Accessed 2 October 2020. <<http://www.who.int/about/history/en/>>.

An overview of the background of WHO as published by the organization, beginning with its original mandate and outlining the changes through to the current WHO.

“Working with the regions.” *WHO*. Accessed 2 October 2020. <<https://www.who.int/chp/about/regions/en/>>.

A description of the six WHO regions with links to each so that readers can review the differences in the initiatives being run in each office.

I. A Global Approach to the COVID Pandemic

“The COVID-19 pandemic is more than a health crisis; it is an economic crisis, a humanitarian crisis, a security crisis, and a human rights crisis. This crisis has highlighted severe fragilities and inequalities within and among nations. Coming out of this crisis will require a whole-of-society, whole-of-government and whole-of-the-world approach driven by compassion and solidarity.”

- **WHO Statement on COVID-19, September 2020**

Introduction

Less than a year after the discovery of COVID-19, WHO had reported 34,161,721 positive cases globally and 1,016,986 deaths,¹³ a grim visual of what the UN calls a global health emergency.¹⁴ 53.7% of aggregate cases worldwide have come from just three countries—the United States of America, India, and Brazil.¹⁵ Although this is not the first coronavirus to infect people,¹⁶ researchers have had to work overtime to understand what the symptoms and limitations of novel COVID-19 are, what the long-term health effects may be, and how this illness affects various risk groups. In this work, it has become increasingly clear that though the COVID crisis has not spared any nation or people, it has disproportionately affected some more than others. Its harms extend beyond the sphere of public health alone and have laid bare “severe and systemic inequality”¹⁷ in every nation. As such, WHO has refined a three-step plan to secure health, economic opportunities, and future security for all, particularly for those who are most vulnerable.¹⁸

COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP)

To offset the many harms of COVID-19, step one is to focus on health and prevention. As of 3 September 2020, WHO had already raised 1.4 billion dollars to meet the medical needs of individuals and nations around the world.¹⁹ These funds have enabled WHO to help 80 countries that requested assistance in expanding essential public health measures, to deliver food and over 450 million items of PPE to 172 countries, and to focus on the goal of implementing physical distancing and contact tracing around the world.²⁰ These efforts have aligned with the Five Aims of the SPRP²¹ and allowed WHO to assist in limiting spread in developing nations, refugee groups, nursing homes, schools for children, and other vulnerable locations.

However, disparities remain. Despite being 49.6% of the total world population,²² women have

¹³ “WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard.” *WHO*. Accessed 3 October 2020. <<https://covid19.who.int/>>.

¹⁴ “United Nations COVID-19 Response.” United Nations. Accessed 3 October 2020. <<https://www.un.org/coronavirus/>>.

¹⁵ “WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard: Situation by Country, Territory & Area.” *WHO*. Accessed October 3, 2020 <<https://covid19.who.int/table>>.

¹⁶ “Q&As on COVID-19 and related health topics.” *WHO*. Accessed 3 October 2020 <<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>>.

¹⁷ “United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-10.” United Nations. Accessed 3 October 2020. <<https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un-comprehensive-response-to-covid-19.pdf>>.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² “Population, female (% of total population).” *World Bank*. Accessed 3 October 2020. <<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL.FE.ZS>>.

made up more than 51% of COVID cases worldwide.²³ Furthermore, because so many members of the global community are staying at home to prevent outbreaks and because of job loss related to the virus, the risk for women and children in domestic violence situations has grown exponentially.²⁴ Informal workers, migrants, refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), children, old persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous communities, and those with lower incomes have also suffered disproportionate effects as the result of the pandemic.²⁵ Preventing the pandemic has come, in some cases, at the cost of essential healthcare; vaccination efforts have been postponed in 38 countries, meaning that 148 million children are at-risk of missing out on routine immunizations this year.²⁶ In some places, births in health facilities have dropped by as much as 60%, leaving mothers and newborns alike susceptible to potentially serious implications in terms of mortality.²⁷ While the measures imposed to slow COVID are ongoing and proven to work, WHO seeks for solutions that address the needs of vulnerable populations until a credible, deliverable vaccine is developed.

Safeguarding Lives and Livelihoods: Socio-Economic Factors

On top of a global death toll now exceeding one million people, the lives of billions have been disrupted. While necessary lockdowns have been implemented around the world, the suspension of social and economic activities has been felt more by some than others. It is estimated that 420-580 million people could slide into poverty—the first increase in 30 years—with 70-100 million people at risk of falling into extreme poverty.²⁸

The pandemic has slowed the global economy, reversed decades-long progress in gender equality, and negatively impacted each region in unique ways. For example, according to projections, developing countries stand to lose \$220 billion in GDP in 2020 alone.²⁹ WHO has recognized these situations as deeply human problems that must be solved if we hope to retain the progress we have made as a worldwide civilization. WHO has called for a temporary ceasefire between warring countries, advocating for solidarity at a time when worldwide suffering is caused by a common foe. Additionally, the UN Secretary-General released a policy brief recommending that, for the time being, debt be treated with a measure of grace; the recommended approach should include a debt standstill, targeted debt relief, and an addressing of structural issues in the international debt architecture.³⁰ Though the World Bank and International Monetary Fund have committed to help relieve some economic burdens, further measures are necessary for full worldwide functioning to resume. The UN has poured resources into understanding which countries suffer most and finding creative answers for these problems; however, sustainable solutions that enable economic growth without compromising public health have yet to be entirely agreed upon.

We Are All In This Together: COVID-19 and Human Rights

As the COVID-19 Pandemic has quickly become the number one concern of our global community, the UN has highlighted just how important human rights are in the COVID-19

²³ “United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-10.” *United Nations*. Accessed 3 October 2020. <<https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un-comprehensive-response-to-covid-19.pdf>>.

²⁴ “Q&A: Violence Against Women During COVID-19.” *WHO*. Accessed 3 October 2020. <<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/violence-against-women-during-covid-19>>.

²⁵ “United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-10.” *United Nations*. Accessed 3 October 2020. <<https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un-comprehensive-response-to-covid-19.pdf>>.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

response. The global priority has been and continues to be saving lives. This prerogative has led to extensive lockdowns in many severely affected countries. These measures affect livelihoods and security, as well as access to health care, food, and basic resources required for everyday life. Each of these threats is a threat to health, be it physical, mental, or emotional.

With so many restrictions, the underlying issue, as highlighted in the UN policy brief on human rights, is that states have an obligation to guarantee human rights to all constituents. For example, the right to an education has been affected in 191 countries with nationwide school closures impacting 1.6 billion learners.³¹ The UN has outlined various good practices where measures are being taken in order to more fully guarantee human rights. These include: Provision of emergency water supplies to low income areas; the delay of housing eviction for unpaid rent during the crisis; extending paid sick leave to workers or those being supported on unemployment programs; securing shelter and provisions for the homeless; the expansion of domestic violence response for victims of abuse; and providing child care for essential workers.³² The UN stresses that it is important to know that not all States have the resources to provide relief that guarantees all human rights.

Questions to Consider

1. How can WHO provide help to those whose situations may have worsened as a result of the current public health situation (women, refugees, those with medical needs who feel uncomfortable in hospitals, children in need of immunizations, etc.)?
2. Is it possible to prioritize the needs of society as a whole and the needs of individuals at the same time?
3. Outside of monetary help, how can economies—particularly the economies that are most vulnerable, such as those in developing countries—be lifted during this time of public health crisis?
4. How can the WHO ensure that all states are guaranteeing basic human rights while forming a response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

³¹ “COVID-19 and Human Rights.” *United Nations*. Accessed 3 October 2020. <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un_policy_brief_on_human_rights_and_covid_23_april_2020.pdf>.

³² *Ibid.*

Annotated Bibliography:

Population, female (% of total population)." *World Bank*. Accessed 3 October 2020. <<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL.FE.ZS>>.

Information about the population from the World Bank; this particular indicator was pulled to showcase disparity of gender ratios worldwide, as there are considered to be "missing women" from every age of life.

Q&As on COVID-19 and related health topics. *WHO*. Accessed 3 October 2020 <<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>>.

One of many WHO Q&As about COVID; this one touches on the basics of what COVID is, how it is spread, how it differs from other viruses, etc.

Q&A: Violence Against Women During COVID-19. *WHO*. Accessed 3 October 2020. <<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/violence-against-women-during-covid-19>>.

Another WHO Q&A, this time highlighting the vulnerability of women during this time. This shows the unique increased likelihood of domestic violence and what can be done to combat that reality.

United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-10." *United Nations*. Accessed 3 October 2020. <<https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un-comprehensive-response-to-covid-19.pdf>>.

A PDF document outlining the key points and details of how the UN plans to respond to the COVID pandemic, as well as what has already been accomplished. It includes the three-step plan talked about above. This is the main source from which information was pulled for this background guide.

United Nations COVID-19 Response. *United Nations*. Accessed 3 October 2020. <<https://www.un.org/coronavirus>>.

The United Nations main page on COVID-19; it delineates their response to various parts of the crisis.

WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard. *WHO*. Accessed 3 October 2020. <<https://covid19.who.int/>>.

A WHO site that gathered general information about COVID-19 and Q&As regarding specific situations directly influenced by COVID.

WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard: Situation by Country, Territory & Area. *WHO*. Accessed October 3, 2020 <<https://covid19.who.int/table>>.

An interactive dashboard highlighting the details of the pandemic's effects by country, territory or area.