

World Health Organization President's Letter

Introduction:

Hello Delegates and welcome to the Saint Bonaventure University 2019 Model United Nations Spring Conference. My name is Bilawal Rafi-Iqbal and I will be chairing the World Health Organization (WHO) committee. I have competed in multiple Model United Nations conferences throughout high school and here during my time at St. Bonaventure University. This will be my third time chairing a committee in Model UN. My goal by the end of this conference is to ensure that you have gained a better understanding of the procedures used in debate as well as a better substantive understanding of the topics at hand. I advise all of you to become familiar and to gain as much knowledge as possible of the World Health Organization, its functions, its role and the various issues the organization looks into. I can't emphasize enough how important it is to thoroughly understand your country's policies and the topics at hand. It is a basic element of our conference that you represent your country's policies faithfully. I look forward to sharing this exciting learning experience with all of you in the 2019 Spring conference.

This is a major resource that you might want to consult. Click on "Resources" and then on a country's profile:

www.imuna.org

Topics

Access to Healthcare Coverage

Universal health coverage (UHC) is the idea that all individuals should receive basic health services without suffering financial hardship. UHC includes a wide range of basic health services such as health promotion and prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and palliative care. As part of the Sustainable Development Goals, all United Nations member states have agreed to try to achieve universal health coverage by 2030.

According to the World Health Organization, about half of the world's population does not have access to basic and essential healthcare coverage or services. More than 100 million people have become poverty-stricken due to out-of-pocket expenditure on health services. About 32% of each country's health expenditure comes from people paying out of their own pockets. An estimated 18 million health workers will be needed by the 2030 in order to help meet the World Health Organization's Sustainable Development Goals.

The scope of universal healthcare does not include providing all health services to individuals free of charge. It also does not solely focus on the financial aspect of providing health services to individuals, but also on providing population-based services such as public health campaigns.

It is up to you and your fellow delegates to decide the future of universal health coverage for millions of people all over the world.

Questions to Consider

1. What is your country's current healthcare policy? Is your country making steps towards universal health care?
2. How can your country make progress towards universal health care?
1. Has your country assisted in the World Health Organization's Sustainable Development Goals?
2. What is the role of the United Nations in achieving those goals?
3. Is the UN capable of really making a contribution to universal health coverage?
4. Does your country have a proposal to deal with this issue?
5. Does your country think that this is better left to individual countries rather than international organizations?

Useful Resources

http://www.who.int/universal_health_coverage/en/

Mental Health Care

In many parts of the world there is a stigma against mental health. The World Health Organization estimates that one in four people suffer from severe mental health disorders, including severe depression, bipolar disorder, and psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia. People with these disorders generally die 10-20 years earlier than the general population. Common misunderstandings about the nature of mental health disorders and their treatment have contributed to their neglect. A common misconception is that mental disorders cannot be treated, but we know that effective treatments exist and can be successfully delivered in primary care. Some believe that people with mental disorders are violent or unstable, and therefore should be locked away, while in fact the vast majority of affected individuals are non-violent and capable of living productively within their communities. Integrating mental health services into primary care is the most viable way of ensuring that people have access to the mental health care they need. People can access

mental health services closer to their homes, thus keeping their families together and maintaining their daily activities. In addition, they avoid indirect costs associated with seeking specialist care in distant locations. Mental health services delivered in primary care minimize stigma and discrimination, and remove the risk of human rights violations that might occur in psychiatric hospitals.

WHO's Mental Health Gap Action Programme (MHGAP), launched in 2008, expands services in countries, especially resource-poor countries. It focuses on making available non-specialized health-care providers in an integrated approach that promotes mental health at all levels of care. Access to comprehensive health services remains out of reach for the majority of people with severe mental health issues.

Questions to Consider:

1. What is your country's stance on Mental Health Care? Is your country making steps to implement access to Mental Health Care?
2. What are steps countries can take to educate their citizens about the stigma against mental health?
3. Is the UN capable of providing sustainable access to Mental Health Care?
4. What are some of your country's strategies to prevent mental illnesses and promote Mental Health Care?
5. Is your country partaking in the World Health Assembly Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan?

Useful Resources:

https://www.who.int/mental_health/resources/mentalhealth_PHC_2008.pdf

<http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-disorders>

Ebola Epidemic in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Cholera in Yemen:

The current Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is now the second largest in history according to the World Health Organization (WHO), with at least 426 confirmed cases in the country. The outbreak, declared on August 1, has led to at least 198 confirmed deaths, the DRC's health ministry said. This is the tenth outbreak since Ebola was first detected there in 1976 and centers around the eastern city of Beni in North Kivu, a region which has been ravaged by armed conflict, which has hampered efforts to curb the outbreak. This is the first time in history Ebola has been detected in an active war zone. On top of the already occurring conflicts between local factions, WHO officials in the region have been met with some resistance from local

populations--such as people refusing vaccination and other aid, and families refusing to comply with the proper handling of infected deceased loved ones.

The World Health Organization has been working closely with local and international partners to coordinate activities and provide technical guidance related to surveillance, laboratory testing, contact tracing, infection control, border health screening, data management, risk communication and health education, vaccination and logistics.

Due to the severity of this disease and the instability of the environment in which this outbreak has occurred, it is imperative that swift and efficient action is taken by the delegations in this committee to combat further infection throughout the world.

Another very serious situation emerged in war-torn Yemen where Cholera has viciously spread and infected tens of thousands. Indeed, Reuters reported in October 2018 that “roughly 10,000 suspected cases are now reported per week.” This is just too serious not to deal with right away.

Questions to Consider:

1. Has your country had any previous contact with Ebola or victims of Ebola?
2. What measures are your country taking to help combat the spread of Ebola?
3. How would the spreading of Ebola from the DRC affect the people of your country?
4. Does your country suffer from any serious infectious diseases such as Ebola?
5. Is your country located in a zone known for infectious diseases?
6. Did your country experience any similar incidents?
7. What are the other infectious diseases that might spread globally?
8. Study Yemen and the spread of cholera there and explore options to deal with this health crisis.

Useful Resources:

www.imuna.org

<https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/outbreaks/drc/2018-august.html>

<http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ebola-virus-disease>

<http://www.who.int/ebola/drc-2018/timeline/en/>

Epidemic and pandemic-prone diseases

[Outbreak update – Cholera in Yemen, 11 October 2018](#)