

Study Guide – World Health Organisation

1. Welcome Letter

Distinguished Delegates of the World Health Organization,

Welcome to this year's special edition of IsarMUN which will take place in cooperation with UN75! It will not be a typical online Model United Nations Conference but rather an online think tank.

We are Christina Pletowski and Nada Mahmoud, and it is our absolute privilege to be your chairs for these two days. I, Christina, graduated with a Bachelor's degree in American Studies and Political Science and I am now in my third year of my law studies at the LMU in Munich. I started attending MUN-Conferences during my exchange year in the United States of America four years ago and I am looking forward to debating our committee's agenda.

I am Nada and I graduated with a Bachelor in Medicine and a Bachelor in Surgery. I am currently studying for my Masters in Public Health at KCL in London, as well as training to specialize in Psychiatry. I started doing MUN as a high school student in 2011, and still hold the same passion and love for these events especially in a committee like the WHO. I am honored to be given the chance to co-chair with Christina, and cannot wait to meet all of you, virtually of course, in the upcoming event!

We are more than happy and proud to have you in our committee and we do hope that you will have a productive time while debating upon crucial issues which concern the World Health Organization - we are sure there will be heated and intellectually stimulating debate sessions.

The World Health Organization (WHO) began when its Constitution came into force in 1948.¹ It is composed of the Secretariat, an Executive Board consisting of 34 members² and total 194 member states as well as their workforce that is spread across regional offices and has its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.³ The WHO is the supervising and coordinating authority on global health within the United Nations (UN)⁴ and adheres to the UN values such as integrity,

¹ "Who we are", World Health Organization, 2020, <https://www.who.int/about/who-we-are> (accessed on Oct. 24, 2020).

² "The Executive Board", World Health Organization, 2020, <https://www.who.int/governance/eb/en/> (accessed on Oct. 24, 2020).

³ "WHO Presence in Countries, Territories and Areas", Report 2017, World Health Organization, 2017 (WHO/CCU/17.04), Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/255448/WHO-CCU-17.04-eng.pdf;jsessionid=17F912B064620877A7B35A6C80B8EA30?sequence=1> p. 1 (accessed on Oct. 24, 2020).

⁴ "WHO: World Health Organization - Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth", United Nations, 2020, <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2013/09/who-world-health-organisation/> (accessed on Oct. 24, 2020).

respect for diversity and professionalism.⁵ The mission of this specialized agency is to promote health worldwide and keep the world safe, especially save the most vulnerable.⁶ The WHO produces health guidelines and standards⁷, supports countries in their public health issues as well as finances⁸ and promotes health research.⁹ So far, the biggest success of the WHO is the eradication of Smallpox which has been the first disease in history to be eliminated by human effort.¹⁰

Your devotion, responsibility and hard work are required not only during the conference but also before its beginning. You will have to conduct detailed research so as to be able to discuss possible (innovative) solutions for the development of the ability for a long-term emergency response regarding pandemics. This topic is of utmost importance when looking at the current worldwide situation resulting from COVID-19. No matter if you are beginners or experts, discussing and debating about such crucial topics is always challenging. That is why we will provide you with important information via this study guide, so you will have a great first overview about this topic. We are looking forward to hearing all of your ingenious and original ideas in November and simultaneously we do promise that we will do our best so that these two days will be an unforgettable and unique experience for you!

Sincerely,

Christina and Nada

2. Introduction of the problem

Pandemics are large-scale outbreaks of infectious disease which typically affect a significant number of the global population. They significantly increase morbidity and mortality worldwide but can also cause economic, political and social disruption with huge negative consequences.¹¹ It

⁵ “*The United Nations Global Compact Way: UN Global Compact*”, The United Nations Global Compact Way I UN Global Compact, <https://unglobalcompact.org/about/the-un-global-compact-way> (accessed on Oct. 24, 2020).

⁶ “*A Healthier Humanity; The WHO Investment Case*”, World Health Organization, 2018 https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/investment-case/brochure-inv-case-en-for-web.pdf?sfvrsn=a19f4045_0 (accessed on Oct. 24, 2020).

⁷ “*WHO guidelines approved by the Guidelines Review Committee*”, World Health Organization, 2020 <https://www.who.int/publications/guidelines/en/> (accessed on Oct. 24, 2020).

⁸ “*Health Financing*”, World Health Organization, 2020, https://www.who.int/health-topics/health-financing#tab=tab_1 (accessed on Oct. 24, 2020).

⁹ “*The WHO strategy on research for help*”, World Health Organization, 2012, https://www.who.int/phi/WHO_Strategy_on_research_for_health.pdf?ua=1 p. 1 (accessed on Oct. 24, 2020).

¹⁰ “*Smallpox*”, World Health Organization, 2020, <https://www.who.int/csr/disease/smallpox/en/> (accessed on Oct. 24, 2020).

¹¹ Oppenheim, Ben; Gallivan, Mark; Mulembakani, Prime; Rubin, Edward und Wolfe, Nathan, “*Disease Control Priorities: Improving Health and Reducing Poverty*”, Chapter 17, 3rd edition, Washington D.C., The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank, 2017.

is very challenging to combat the detrimental outcomes and consequences following from a pandemic.

Internationally, progress towards preparing and mitigating the devastating impacts of pandemics has been made. As a result of growing concerns, threats and these negative repercussions caused by global diseases, countries had no other choice than creating pandemic plans. However, there are still significant gaps and challenges when it comes to handling a pandemic. Especially countries with less financial resources and the most vulnerable ones, are very negatively affected by such a crisis resulting from a pandemic. Therefore, improvement of global pandemic preparedness is of the utmost importance. Still, International Health Regulations (IHR) are not even and a lot of countries lack basic requirements which are needed for compliance and in order to recover from a pandemic.¹² That is why development of the ability for a long-term emergency response regarding pandemics is of high priority.

3. Development of the ability for a long-term emergency response regarding pandemics

Impact of pandemics

Pandemics may lead to significant increase in morbidity and mortality with especially stronger impacts on the already frail healthcare systems in Low and Middle income countries. Special attention needs to be paid to the mental health outcomes related to lockdowns and quarantine, shift from office to home-based work and reduction in general working staff due to cost-cutting practices by large and small businesses. Pandemics can also cause major economic damage through substantial increase in direct health-care costs related to the management of the pandemic, and indirect effects on the local business and economic growth. In countries with weak institutions and legacies of political instability, pandemics can increase political stresses and tensions. In these contexts, outbreak response measures such as quarantines have sparked violence and tension between states and citizens.¹³

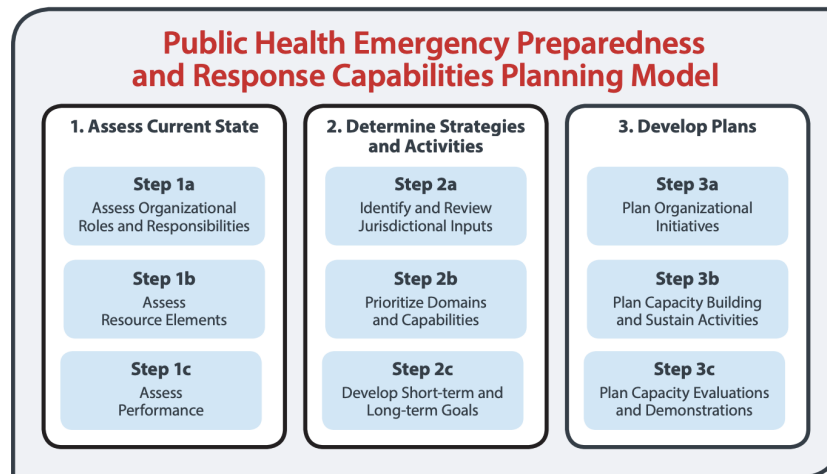
Role of Public Health

Public health deals with the health of populations. Its central aim is to keep people healthy by preventing diseases which in the worst case lead to death. Many approaches to prevention in various forms are taking place already. Political and legal initiatives and medical interventions are already being done. However in practice, decision-making and its process in a public-health emergency unfortunately lacks complete information. This leads to uncertainty regarding the threat posed by a pandemic and the possible effectiveness of response measures. Therefore, these prevention plans must be adapted to the circumstances of a particular situation and event even if

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Madhav, Nita, et al. "*Pandemics: Risks, Impacts, and Mitigation*", Disease Control Priorities, Third Edition (Volume 9): Improving Health and Reducing Poverty, The World Bank, 2017, pp. 315–45, doi:10.1596/978-1-4648-0527-1_ch17; Qiu, W., et al. "*The Pandemic and Its Impacts*" Health, Culture and Society, vol. 9, University.

there are limited resources or competing demand within other sectors. The ability to take well-founded and immediate action, despite the uncertainty dictated by the speed of events, is the essence of crisis management.¹⁴



Source: Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Capabilities, cdc.gov. 2018, WHO, p. 8.

Pandemic Preparedness, Alert and Response

It is crucial to ensure that member states of the WHO and the international community in general can rapidly share information, mobilize resources and implement rational control measures in the face of a major public health emergency. Getting immediate access to the appropriate expertise and utilizing and focusing that knowledge to support countries facing disease threats is necessary.¹⁵

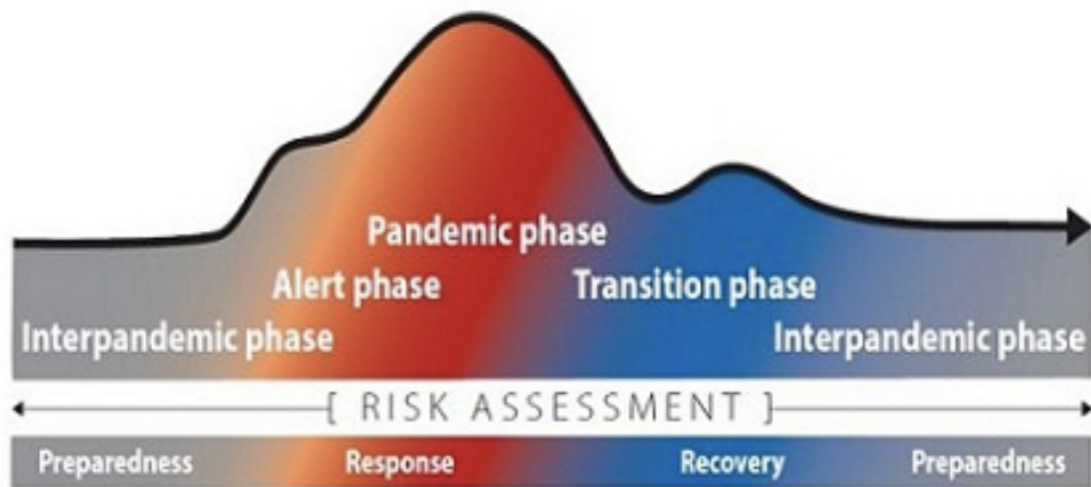
Three steps for an effective pandemic preparedness, alert and response:

1. Early detection, prevention, anticipation and prediction: examine risks and know the root causes of the problem as well what the problem is, especially through education and social mobilization;
2. Rapid response through effective standard operating procedure by utilizing given information;
3. Effective response through appropriate control methods, good coordination, adequate resources and logistics and after-action evaluation.¹⁶

¹⁴ “*Strengthening Response To Pandemics And Other Public-Health Emergencies*”, Report of the Review Committee on the Functioning of International Health Regulations (2005) and on Pandemics (2009), 2011, pp. 3.

¹⁵ Ryan, Mike, “*Epidemic Alert and Response in Emergencies*”, World Health Organization, 2006, pp. 10 <https://www.who.int/hac/techguidance/training/predeployment/Epidemic%20alert%20and%20response%20in%20emergencies.pdf?ua=1> (accessed on Oct. 24, 2020).

¹⁶ Ibid.



Source: Current WHO global phase of pandemic alert: Avian Influenza A(H5N1) <https://www.who.int/influenza/preparedness/pandemic/h5n1phase/en/> (accessed on Oct. 24, 2020).

Community Preparedness

“Community preparedness is the ability of communities to prepare for, withstand, and recover from public health incidents in both the short and long term.”¹⁷ This can be achieved through engagement and coordination with a cross-section of state, local, tribal and territorial partners and stakeholders. Public health needs to be developed in a sense that community preparedness is supported. Communities must be empowered to ensure that services and aid are planned and adapted based on their feedback and local contexts. Community education, protecting vulnerable groups, supporting health workers, case finding, contact tracing, and cooperation with physical distancing measures can only happen with the support of every part of affected communities.¹⁸

Public health efforts are also essential in pandemics to identify incidence rates and isolate possible sources as well as mitigate the indirect health and economic effects. This could be attained by good surveillance programs, information sharing with stake-holders and the general public, in addition to enforcement of strong infection control practices by better law enforcement. It is also crucial for all organizations and agencies to pool efforts to invest in and develop appropriate vaccines in the efforts of curbing current infection rates, as well as prevent future outbreaks.¹⁹

¹⁷ “COVID-19 Strategy Update”, World Health Organization, April 2020, https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/covid-strategy-update-14april2020.pdf?sfvrsn=29da3ba0_19&download=true p. 6 (accessed on Oct. 24, 2020).

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Madhav, Nita, et al. “Pandemics: Risks, Impacts, and Mitigation”, Disease Control Priorities, Third Edition (Volume 9): Improving Health and Reducing Poverty, The World Bank, 2017, pp. 315–45, doi:10.1596/978-1-4648-0527-1_ch17

Community Recovery

Not only Preventing and responding but also recovering from incidents that affect public health is of utmost importance.²⁰ “Community recovery is the ability of communities to identify critical assets, facilities, and other services within public health, emergency management, health care, human services, mental/behavioral health, and environmental health sectors that can guide and prioritize recovery operations.”²¹ Another important function of public health agencies is to perform fatality management services which include identification of the deceased, determination of cause of death, recovery and preservation of the human remains, and provision of mental health assistance for those grieving.²²

4. Sources for further research

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- **Global Influenza Programme:**
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- **Pandemic Influenza Risk Management:**
<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/259893/WHO-WHE-IHM-GIP-2017.1-eng.pdf?sequence=1>
- **Disaster Management in a Pandemic:**
https://www.paho.org/disasters/index.php?option=com_docman&view=download&category_slug=tools&alias=542-pandinflu-leadershipduring-tool-15&Itemid=1179&lang=en
- **Emergency Management Discussion Guide:**
https://www.cdc.gov/cpr/readiness/healthcare/documents/discussion_guide_for_emergency_management.pdf

²⁰ “Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Capabilities”, October 2018, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, https://www.cdc.gov/cpr/readiness/00_docs/CDC_PreparednesResponseCapabilities_October2018_Final_508.pdf p. 19 (accessed Oct. 24, 2020).

²¹ “Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Capabilities”, October 2018, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, https://www.cdc.gov/cpr/readiness/00_docs/CDC_PreparednesResponseCapabilities_October2018_Final_508.pdf p. 12 (accessed Oct. 24, 2020).

²² “Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Capabilities”, October 2018, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, https://www.cdc.gov/cpr/readiness/00_docs/CDC_PreparednesResponseCapabilities_October2018_Final_508.pdf p. 13 (accessed Oct. 24, 2020).

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