



# THE FIFTY-SIXTH ANNUAL NORTH AMERICAN INVITATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS

Dear Delegates and Moderators,

Welcome to NAIMUN LVI and more specifically welcome to the World Health Organization. The staff of NAIMUN LVI has been working day and night to make this the most rewarding and educational experience yet, and we are excited to welcome you all to DC in February!

This document is the topic abstract for the World Health Organization. It contains three key elements to allow you all to prepare well in advance for the committee: topics, structure, and research avenues. The goal of this abstract is to give you a better understanding of the content in the committee. As well, it is meant to be a launch point for further research about the content of this committee. By reading and understanding the topic abstract, you will more fully get a sense of how this committee will be run at NAIMUN and what specific issues the NAIMUN staff want you to focus on.

We hope to be of assistance to you in your preparation for NAIMUN LVI. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to contact the Secretary-General or Director-General. We look forward to welcoming you to the NAIMUN family!

Best,  
Chase and Charlotte

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## Topic Abstract: World Health Organization

### Introduction

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The World Health Organization is tasked with one of the most critical functions of the United Nations. This specialized agency addresses a wide range of topics relating to public health issues and humanitarian affairs. In 1945 when the United Nations was founded, diplomats discussed the need of a global health organization. The constitution of the WHO was enacted on 7 April 1948, which we celebrate as World Health Day.<sup>1</sup>

Any United Nations Member State is eligible to obtain WHO membership. Other countries can apply for WHO membership; they would just need to be approved by a majority vote in the World Health Assembly. As of 2016, the World Health Organization has 194 member states; this includes two associate members: Puerto Rico and Tokelau.<sup>2</sup> All World Health Organization Member States appoint delegations to the World Health Assembly, which is the WHO's supreme decision-making body. The headquarters are based in Geneva, Switzerland, and members meet every year in May. The World Health Assembly is also tasked with appointing the WHO's Director General every five years. The current Director General of the WHO is Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the first person from the WHO African Region to serve in this position.<sup>3</sup>

During NAIMUN LVI, the World Health Organization will take an urban focus and discuss two pressing issues relating to urbanization. Current projection indicates that by 2050 70% of the world's population will live in urban areas; as the WHO it's essential that we take precautionary measures now to mitigate the effect urbanization will have

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<sup>1</sup> "History of WHO." World Health Organization. September 01, 2016. Accessed June 04, 2018. <http://www.who.int/about/history/en/>.

<sup>2</sup> "Alphabetical List of WHO Member States." World Health Organization. March 14, 2014. Accessed June 04, 2018. [http://www.who.int/choice/demography/by\\_country/en/](http://www.who.int/choice/demography/by_country/en/).

<sup>3</sup> "Biography of Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus." World Health Organization. August 15, 2017. Accessed June 04, 2018. <http://www.who.int/dg/tedros/biography/en/>.



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on urban health. In this meeting we will address two critical issues: (1) the management of climate disasters and the (2) the increasing threat of road traffic injuries in cities. Throughout the conference, all delegates will have the opportunity to share their perspectives and ideas to propose meaningful and sustainable solutions to these two issues.

### Topic A: Management of Climate Disasters

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We define climate disasters as any catastrophic event that is caused by nature or the natural processes of the earth. The severity of these disasters is measured through the lives that are lost, the economic damage that a country might sustain, and the ability of a particular population to rebuild. The number of climate-related disasters has tripled worldwide since 1980.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, AccuWeather declares that since 1990, natural disasters on average have affected 217 million people every single year.<sup>5</sup>

These events wreak havoc on established human systems. Research shows that countries which have limited resources are the most vulnerable and have the potential to be most affected. Additionally, these disasters can cost states billions in recovery and aid funding.<sup>6</sup> Besides limited resources, another critical factor that determines a country's vulnerability to natural disasters is population density. Increased populations lead to more injuries and more deaths even when it pertains to minor storms. For this reason, urbanization plays a critical role when it comes to the management of climate disasters.

At NAIMUN LVI, we'll be focusing on three different types of natural disasters which have a potentially catastrophic risk when it comes to cities and the health of their populations: heat waves, hurricanes, and earthquakes.

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<sup>4</sup> "Seven Things to Know about Climate Change." National Geographic. Accessed June 04, 2018. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/climate-change/>.

<sup>5</sup> "Are Natural Disasters Increasing?" The Borgen Project. March 14, 2018. Accessed June 04, 2018. <https://borgenproject.org/natural-disasters-increasing/>.

<sup>6</sup> Dominey-Howes, Dale. "Explainer: Are Natural Disasters on the Rise?" The Conversation. March 15, 2015. Accessed June 04, 2018. <https://theconversation.com/explainer-are-natural-disasters-on-the-rise-39232>.



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### Topic B: Epidemic Control and Global Health Security

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Despite significant improvements to medical technologies over recent decades, the major outbreaks have occurred throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> Century at the domestic, regional, and international levels: Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Ebola struck populations in the Middle East and Africa respectively; Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) showed the effectiveness of diseases in highly-populated, urban environments; and H1N1 Influenza proved that globalization has made it possible for a local health emergency to turn into a global health crisis.<sup>7</sup>

While some countries have the technological and economic capacities to monitor and prevent the spread of pandemics within their borders, there are many that do not. Outbreaks in countries that lack the infrastructure to effectively prepare for and respond to pandemics lead to high mortality rates and are likely to diffuse beyond the borders of the state from which they originate.<sup>8</sup>

Neither states, nor non-governmental organizations, nor the World Health Organization itself can combat this issue alone. Feasible solutions to preventing global epidemics do not stem from individual actors working in isolation: partnerships, international collaboration, and coordinated efforts are a necessity in this process.

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<sup>7</sup> “How the 4 Biggest Outbreaks Since the Start of this Century Shattered some Long-Standing Myths.” World Health Organization. 2018. Accessed December 3, 2018. <https://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/ebola-6-months/myths/en/>

<sup>8</sup> “Proposed Programme Budget 2018-2019.” World Health Organization. April 10, 2017. Accessed December 3, 2018. [http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/WHA70/A70\\_7-en.pdf](http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA70/A70_7-en.pdf)



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## Resources for Further Research

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### Topic A

- [http://www.who.int/environmental\\_health\\_emergencies/natural\\_events/en/](http://www.who.int/environmental_health_emergencies/natural_events/en/)
- <http://www.who.int/hac/techguidance/ems/natprofiles/en/>
- <https://www.cfr.org/blog/man-made-cities-and-natural-disasters-growing-threat>
- <http://digital.thechicagocouncil.org/natural-disasters#home/7>

### Topic B

- SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome)." World Health Organization. April 26, 2012. Accessed December 10, 2018. <https://www.who.int/ith/diseases/sars/en/>.
- "The Global Health Security Agenda." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. January 27, 2016. Accessed December 13, 2018. <https://www.cdc.gov/globalhealth/security/ghsagenda.htm>.

### Helpful Visual Materials

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d4YCPqz8NQU>

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/galleries/The-worlds-worst-traffic-jams-and-commutes/commuteu-bolivia-g/>