



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

## 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/>.



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

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>.



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

## Topic B: Road Traffic Accidents

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On average 1.2 million people worldwide die each year in roads. Road traffic injuries are the number one cause of death among people aged 15–29 and the leading cause of preventable deaths. Even further than deaths on the road, there are around 50 million people that each year sustain nonfatal injuries from road traffic.<sup>7</sup>

Transportation is one of the leading challenges that developing countries will face in meeting the needs of an urbanizing population. Globally, the urban population is expected to surpass six billion by 2045.<sup>8</sup> Ninety-percent of the world's fatalities on the roads occurs in low- and middle-income countries, even though these countries have approximately 54% of the world's vehicles.<sup>9</sup>

These fatalities affect developing countries more than developed because rapid motorization compounds urbanization. The economic and social benefits of motorization are enormous to developing countries as it provides, flexible transportation, reduced manual labor, as well as an expanded array of job and educational opportunities.<sup>10</sup> However, there are consequences to motorization: injury, air and noise pollution, neighborhood fragmentation from new and expanded expressways, and it is an increasingly more significant source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions contributing to climate change. Cities are in a precarious situation as they must accommodate the intense desire for personal mobility while mitigating the substantial economic, environmental, and social costs of motorization.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> "GLOBAL STATUS REPORT ON ROAD SAFETY." World Health Organization. 2015. Accessed June 4, 2018. [http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/road\\_safety\\_status/2015/en/](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_safety_status/2015/en/).

<sup>8</sup> "World's Population Increasingly Urban with More than Half Living in Urban Areas." United Nations. July 10, 2015. Accessed June 04, 2018. <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/news/population/world-urbanization-prospects-2014.html>.

<sup>9</sup> "GLOBAL STATUS REPORT ON ROAD SAFETY."

<sup>10</sup> Sperling, Daniel, and Eileen Clausen. "The Developing World's Motorization Challenge." *Issues in Science and Technology*. Fall 2002. Accessed June 04, 2018.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.



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

## 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

- [http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/road\\_safety\\_status/2015/en/](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_safety_status/2015/en/)
- <https://roadsafety.piarc.org/en/strategic-global-perspective-scope-road-safety-problem/impact-public-health>
- <http://blogs.worldbank.org/transport/road-crashes-have-more-impact-poverty-you-probably-thought>

### 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/>