

# MUN

## WHO BACKGROUND GUIDE

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AUSMUN 2021



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF SHARJAH

# DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH WELCOME LETTER

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Dear Delegates and Faculty Advisors,

It is my utmost pleasure to welcome you to the American University of Sharjah Model United Nations (AUSMUN) 2021. As an organization led by the students of AUS, AUSMUN has had the privilege of hosting some of the biggest and most diverse MUN conferences in this region. Our 2020 conference saw over 1000 delegate registrations from more than 45 national and international institutions!

Adapting to a New Normal, Promoting Resilience: given the turbulent year of 2020, there was no other theme which could have fit our present conditions better. A small outbreak in Wuhan exactly a year back has now trickled down into a global catastrophe which has two million dead, leaving a trail of broken lives in its wake. Looking at the severely distorted life that has become our 'new normal', some may question whether it could all have been avoided. Whether we could have been better prepared. And the broader goal of our conference is to do exactly that: teach the upcoming generation to question current policies in the hopes of preventing another similar global catastrophe.

This background guide has been formulated by your chairs along with the research team to provide you with a concise overview of the topics chosen.

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The guide is initially divided into two sections based on the two topics and is further split into logical components. Firstly, the Summary and History section acts as an introduction to the issue. Secondly, the Discourse on the Issue section establishes a link between the issue, its implications, significance, and the United Nations Charter. Lastly, the Past International Organization (IO) Actions and Latest Developments section elaborates on the previous actions that have been taken, which can be used by delegates as a stepping stone to come up with their own solutions to the issues. At the end of each topic, delegates will find sections of questions and suggestions that aim to guide the process of research.

Delegates are greatly encouraged to expand beyond the guide and research about their country and topics in order to construct well founded arguments during debate. The delegate handbook contains a number of tips on how to research and addresses a vast array of common concerns. Finally, let me use this opportunity to extend my gratitude to all those who have helped create the document you are reading right now: Your wonderful moderators, the AUSMUN Research Team, and not to mention the AUSMUN Media team who have done an incredible job in designing and formatting the Background Guides.

I wish you the very best in preparing for the conference. If you have any queries at all, or need any specific help in researching for your topics, do not hesitate to contact [research@ausmun.com](mailto:research@ausmun.com)

Sincerely,  
Julia Jose  
Director of Research  
AUSMUN 2021

# MODERATORS

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Kumail Ali

Anushna Bagchi

Shamma Abdalla

Omar Reyad

# WELCOME DELEGATES!

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We are in unprecedented times, and AUSMUN is something that brings us a sense of normalcy.

Dear Delegates!

It is with great pleasure we welcome you to the 14th annual American University of Sharjah Model United Nations 2020 (AUSMUN) Conference. The first-ever AUSMUN virtual conference! This year, our World Health Organization (WHO) committee aims to tackle and solve essential issues through productive interactions, strong cooperation, and communications during our debates.

WHO was established on April 7th, 1947. The organization's mission statement is "to publish and disseminate scientifically rigorous public health information of international significance that enables policy-makers, researchers, and practitioners to be more effective; it aims to improve health, particularly among disadvantaged populations." As of 2020, WHO has 194 member states. The WHO appoints the Director-General every five years, WHO also votes on policy and finance matters, including the proposed budget. The assembly elects 34 members, technically qualified in the field of health, to the Executive Board for three-year terms.

On an annual basis, these 34 members meet during May. However, it can decide to hold a special session to address global health emergencies at any time, at the request of one-third of the member states. To date, there have been five special sessions called, with the most recent one being held on October 5-6, 2020. Some key areas of consideration of research should include your country's national capabilities and limitations, discourse, the mitigation of conflict, foreign relations as well as the oversight and monitoring mechanisms of the

different health situations with a particular focus on the ongoing pandemic. Moreover, due to the nature of these topics, the delegates' research and resolutions must be detailed and focus on the concepts' operationalization. Finally, due to the divisive nature of the majority of the topics discussed in the committee, the most effective ideas should focus on international cooperation.

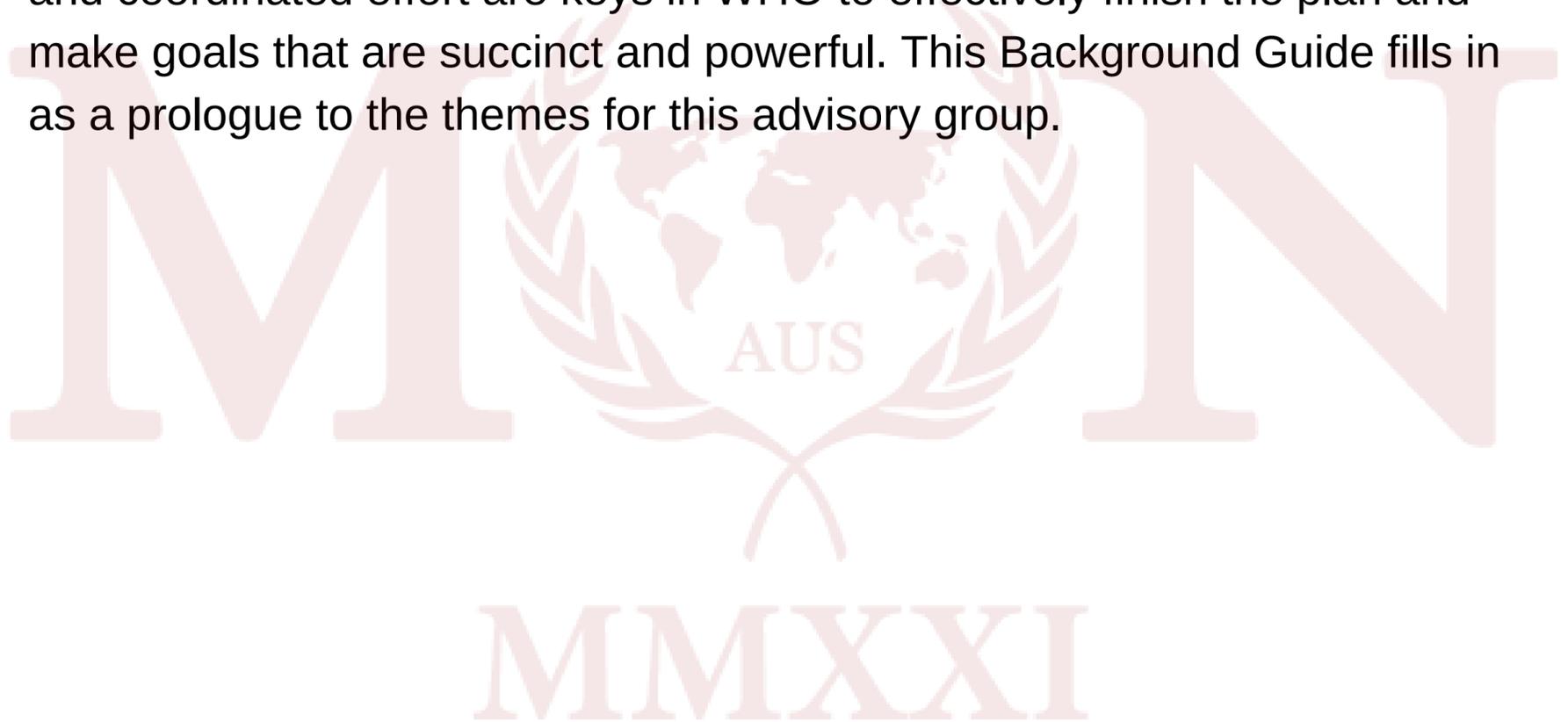
Lastly, this conference aims to ensure that delegates learn new information, hone their skills, and come up with innovative ideas all while enjoying their time. For any information, contact us through [whoun2021@gmail.com](mailto:whoun2021@gmail.com)

REGARDS,  
AUTHORS OF THE BACKGROUND GUIDE  
KUMAIL AND ANUSHNA



# OVERVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE

The WHO is a self-sufficient association that coordinates and organizes global medical services and issues with the point of accomplishing the most elevated degree of wellbeing worldwide. The WHO's constitution is based on Article 57 of the UN Charter (United Nations, 1946). The WHO works inside the extent of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). In WHO, we consider wellbeing as a common right for all under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Representatives ought to work together to advance multilateral dealings and concoct viable arrangements. Cognizant examination, re-enactment, and coordinated effort are keys in WHO to effectively finish the plan and make goals that are succinct and powerful. This Background Guide fills in as a prologue to the themes for this advisory group.



## Summary and History of issue

A pandemic occurs when a virus spreads past a nation's fringes. What started as a cluster of pneumonia cases with unknown etiology in China in late December, soon turned into a pandemic causing millions to die world wide. Upon further inspection and detailed research into the cause of these cases, it was identified as a new type of coronavirus isolated on January 7th in Wuhan, China. Novel coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, comes from a family of viruses ranging from something as mild as a common flu to something as deadly as SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome).

WHO is also responsible for the prevention of diseases as well as mitigating the ones present. For example, when informed about the outbreak in China, WHO began taking serious measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by hosting multiple tests to determine the cause of the disease. On March 11th 2020, upon assessing the alarming spread of the virus and levels of inaction, WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus characterized it as a pandemic.

Despite all the previous speeches where the WHO urged countries all around the world to prepare for an epidemic and inspite of immediate activation of the emergency management team, the world still faced millions of deaths and innumerable losses, both in terms of economy and welfare. Moreover, on February 12th 2020, the WHO activated its crisis management team and sent it across the world to help countries fight COVID-19. It also provided countries with the necessary framework to help prevent the disease from spreading, and campaigning for stay at home measures and various e-learning initiatives.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, WHO had seen and combatted

similar respiratory viruses such as Influenza A and SARS. Regardless of these being dealt with previously, the coronavirus had a different and more powerful impact on the world.

### **Discourse on the issue**

54.2 million cases and 1.31 million deaths across the globe was what it took for the world to recognize, understand, and stabilize itself against COVID-19. Even though an alarming number of extraordinary medical cases of pneumonia were being reported, countries failed to take the necessary precautions. Long before being characterized as a pandemic, the WHO recognized its potential and provided countries with comprehensive guidance to combat it. Furthermore, by January 20th, the situation became more adverse when the WHO officially deemed the virus contagious.

Lives were being lost and this meant a stricter approach was required towards the situation. While some people accepted the situation positively, others did not, their negligence had devastating consequences. Some people did not take the virus seriously since they believed their fundamental human rights were being violated. To them it was in their best interest to fight back. Rights are subject to 'reasonable limits' as mentioned in Article 29 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights but the question being who places limits. Mobile phone tracking, self-quarantine, and losing the freedom of assembly are questions that people need answers for.

Nobody – or nothing is immune to this pandemic. The economy was no exception, with stocks having their most significant quarterly drops since 1987. It was critical and required immediate attention. With thousands of people facing unemployment, every country's economy was greatly impacted. Although a more optimistic approach is being taken to stabilize and resolve the situation, people believe that things will get worse. With a 3% shrink in the global economy, the IMF is hinting at more dire conditions than that of the Great Depression of the 1930s.

## **Past International Organization (IO) Actions & Latest Developments**

Despite not knowing the cause behind the outbreak of the virus, the WHO has tried its best to mitigate the problem. Issuing a strategic preparedness and response plan right after the joint mission between WHO and China in order to help assist countries combat the virus. They created a document containing an epidemiological overview of the virus. The strategic objectives of the document contained: minimizing human to human transmission and identifying and isolating the patients.

Upon declaring a pandemic, WHO urged all the countries to fight the problem together. It suggested that nations increase the manufacturing of personal protective equipment for frontline workers and provide guidance and support throughout the pandemic.

On March 9th the Global Preparedness monitoring board also called in for an immediate infusion of \$8 billion to allow for more production of equipment and assembling the resources to further assist defy the pandemic. Alongside all these, serious lockdown measures were taken by countries with high numbers of cases to restrict further spread of the virus which resulted in great progress and containment of the virus.

A weekly report published on November 13th, 2020, there have been 124 GOARN deployments across countries and over 234 million PPE have been shipped globally. The number of confirmed cases has reached 53 million with the number of deaths tolling at 1.3 million worldwide. However, the number of recoveries has come to 35 million.

Throughout the pandemic, non-governmental organizations such as Red Cross and Care International have helped and have always provided aid to people who are in need and are most vulnerable. By providing health and mental services, food, shelter and more to people most in need, they have allowed the mitigation of the pandemic and have assisted countries and the WHO in combating the deadly virus.

## Questions and suggestions for further research

- What improvements can be made by WHO and nations to mitigate the coronavirus pandemic?
- What are the changes that have occurred in people's lifestyles due to pandemic?
- Evaluation of how we as a committee can be more prepared to restrict and combat future pandemics?
- Could we revert back to how life was before the pandemic?
- How can we as a committee help prepare the world against such pandemics?
- Impact of Covid-19 on the world economy.
- List of Human rights violation due to coronavirus and its effects.
- Progress made in the scientific and medical aspect of Covid-19.
- Ways to prevent future pandemics.



## Summary and History of issue

Trafficking is defined as trading something illegally or being engaged in illegal commerce. Trafficking is a serious crime, especially when falsified medical products are being trafficked. Although it happens almost every day, health crises can boost the number of counterfeit products in the markets. Medical products range from medical gloves to prescription drugs and everything in between.

Use of substandard and falsified medical products is a significant threat to health care systems. If the drugs or medicines do not work the way they should, (as in most substandard and falsified cases of medical products) it in turn can prolong the disease and its drawbacks. More so, physicians and other healthcare professionals often try alternative therapies and waste valuable time, when all that is really needed is a high-quality version of the same product. In the worst case scenario, some of the people die, either due to untreated illness or because the substance itself killed them (WHO Global Surveillance and Monitoring System for substandard and falsified medical products, 2017). Unregistered/ unlicensed medical products as well as products that have not undergone evaluation or mass testing all fall under falsified medical products. An important term to note is, substandard/spurious/ /falsely-labelled/falsified/counterfeit (SSFFC).

Use of counterfeit medical products increases the cases of drug-resistant infections. This is problematic because certain countries may become impossible to treat. The promotion of drug resistant infections is a huge setback for the medical community. Aside from the hazardous health consequences, it also has several economic complications, such as waste of money, waste of resources and complex supply chains act as gateways for falsified products. This is a global issue.

The factors that lead to the emergence of such products, especially during health crises are most likely to be found at the intersection where access to affordable, quality, safe and effective medical products is limited, standards of governance are low, from poor ethical practices in health care facilities, quality control and distribution are limited as well. These reasons along with the combination of rise in demand and supply of these products create a perfect atmosphere for such trafficking. The major recent development includes increased trafficking of falsified medical products due to COVID-19, it is currently the biggest priority. In the annual report for 2019, dosage units of fake (falsified) and other illegal medicines detained were 1,018,678. (Health Products Regulatory Authority, 2019)

### **Discourse on the issue**

Global governance includes hard law, such as treaties, and soft law, such as resolutions, declarations, memorandums of understanding, and codes of practice. A treaty process already under way relates to the problem of substandard and falsified medicines. The Council of Europe's Medicrime Convention is a multilateral treaty intended to prevent the public health threats of illegitimate medicines, therefore the issue of trafficking becomes a huge violation of this treaty amongst the European nations. The Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) is the other treaty relevant to falsified medicines that is violated. ACTA sets international standards for intellectual property protection and creates a regime outside of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) (National Center for Biotechnology Information, 2013).

Protecting public health is the goal of the proposed code of practice on falsified and substandard drugs. Therefore, the World Health Organization (WHO) is the natural home for the negotiation, development, and adoption of the code. Article 2 of the WHO Constitution authorizes the organization, "to act as the directing and coordinating authority on international health work." Therefore trafficking of medical products is a direct infringement of this Article 2. The WHO Essential Medicines division is a major stakeholder globally in determining

protocols, their actions align with the WHO articles. The World Customs Organization (WCO), the only international organization dedicated to policing flows of goods into and out of countries, is the other stakeholder organization.

The UN's sustainable development goals include 17 objectives, and the markets of trafficked medical goods is heavily countering the UN SDG 3 which targets Good Health and Well-being (National Center for Biotechnology Information, 2013).

The trafficking of falsified medical goods is an attack on our right to access healthcare. It goes against the International Code of Practice for Falsified and Substandard Medicines, no country acting alone can protect its citizens from falsified and substandard medicines, it is international, fueled by international trade and telecommunications.

### **Past Actions by UN, International Organizations (IO) and NGOs**

This issue can still use further innovative ideas to deal with this problem globally, it can still continue to be minimized. However there are certain past actions taken by the UN and other international bodies that have significantly reduced the amount of trafficking of counterfeit medical products.

The 20th session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) adopted resolution 20/6 on falsified medical products due to concern about the involvement of organized crime in trafficking. At the same time, resolution 20/6 highlights the potential utility of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), in re-enforcing international cooperation in the fight against trafficking, through, its provisions, inter alia, on mutual legal assistance, extradition and the seizing, freezing and forfeiture of the instrumentalities and proceeds of crime.

Key achievements of WHO as of 2017 in regards to this issue, are as follows, 17 WHO training workshops were conducted, 126 Member

States and more than 400 regulatory personnel trained, 18 of the largest international procurement agencies sensitized to the issue and more than 1500 product reports, 20 medical product alerts and numerous warnings, WHO portal accessible in multiple languages to nominated focal points from regulatory agencies, WHO provides reports and a database containing search tools along with a mobile phone application designed to improve information flow when detecting and reporting substandard and falsified medical products. As of 2019, UNODC launched a Guide to Combat Crime related to Falsified Medical Products.

The Non Governmental Organization (NGO) Care International released a publication in relation to the recent COVID-19 developments, and stated that the spread of misinformation, and use of traditional healers and falsified medicines in West Africa have increased. Red Cross is another NGO, whose credibility and name has been used in COVID-19 scams like, free masks from the 'Red Cross' or fake test kits in the form of messages or emails.

### **Questions and suggestions for further research**

- How can different countries inform the public about how and what fake medical products look like? Or maybe the different ingredients certain fake products can contain?
- How to ensure successful trades take place without the interference of trafficked medical goods specifically?
- How to tackle the spread of falsified COVID-19 related medical products?
- Protocols that different governments can undertake to increase the reporting culture of such fake products?
- Innovative ways to involve the major stakeholders that can help combat this issue.
- How to limit production of counterfeit medical products at the source?
- Substandard and falsified medicine and its relation to promotion of drug resistant infections, and its possible solutions.

- Constrained access to affordable, safe and quality medical products due to several reasons.
- Software that can allow extensive and accurate databasing of fake medical products, their advantages and disadvantages.
- Effective criminal laws for individuals who commit trafficking of SSFFC goods.



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