

COVID-19 COMMITTEE

WESMUN 2020



Michael Kali
Chair of the COVID-19 Committee

BACKGROUND GUIDE

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Hello and welcome to WESMUN! I am your chair Michael. I am incredibly excited to be your chair for this crisis committee, in my first and potentially your first virtual conference!

COVID-19 has changed how we do many things, whether it is greeting people or running Model UN conferences. But that does not mean we cannot have an engaging debate - the likes of which you may find in any Model UN crisis committee. As Model UN delegates, debate and discussion are paramount and I cannot think of a topic that is more relevant to each and every one of us. We all have our own experiences when it comes to this virus and we all have been affected differently. We may even have loved ones that have fallen ill due to the virus. There are also mixed emotions on how we should respond to it.

On social media and in conversations with friends, colleagues, and family - I have often heard people refer to 2020 as "cancelled" - that we are simply waiting for our lives to return to normal. But what is normal? This virus has changed things. And in my opinion; I believe that we should use our time now, to learn from our mistakes, focus on ourselves, and prepare for the future, because it will be different.

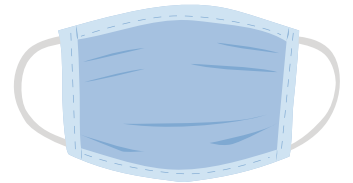
As delegates in this committee you are expected to do just this. There are still many obstacles that we need to overcome in order for our world to return to a semblance of "normal". The trajectory the world takes is up to every single one of its inhabitants - not just the nations they reside in.

With the world in complete disagreement in terms of eradicating this virus. I hope that this committee and the discussion that occurs within it, serves as a learning experience for you and also an opportunity to engage in collective action. We are a Model United Nations after all.

Best of luck.

Sincerely,

Michael Kali



BACKGROUND TO THE CRISIS

The COVID-19 virus has had an unprecedented effect on the world and has crippled the global economy. Each of our lives has changed forever and there is no certainty that we may return to the lives we once knew. The virus has affected nearly every industry and has even changed our social habits.

COVID-19 achieved pandemic status in mid-March of 2020, and continued to rage on globally. Areas impacted by COVID-19 generally require the use of masks in public spaces and require 6 feet of social distancing in order to curb the spread of the virus.

The coronavirus is a respiratory disease that is spread through respiratory droplets and attacks the lungs. Common symptoms include coughing, sneezing, and a high fever. In severe cases, patients require respiratory support, and estimated global fatality rates are between 3-10%. The long term symptoms and effects of COVID-19 are currently unknown, but have been reported to include permanent loss of taste, stroke, and permanent face blindness.

On November 14th 2020, with daily case numbers reaching new records across the globe, experts from the world's most powerful countries delegated by the G8, the WHO and the World Bank, will meet virtually for the first time to discuss the new trajectory that our world is heading in. Delegates in this committee are expected to work together to conquer this pandemic while also ensuring that the needs of their people are fulfilled. Not all countries have fared equally, some have slowed or even stopped the spread of the virus, others have let it run rampant.

Even in the depth of the crisis, human ingenuity maintains the flame of hope kindled: the possibility of a cure, a safe and effective vaccine, is only months away. However, the production of a vaccine is one issue - distributing it is another. With organizations and companies within the USA, UK and Russia leading the race for a vaccine, will other nations be able to gain access to it?

Delegates - you are tasked with ensuring the social, physical and economic wellbeing of your nation - do what you must to ensure your nation prospers. Will you work together and make the vaccine available to all, or will you look after only your own and take advantage of the chaos that is unfolding around the world. The choice is yours.



NOTES AND RESEARCH EXPECTATIONS

Delegates are expected to adhere (within reason) to their nation's foreign policy. In addition to this the committee will begin with the current state of affairs that our world is in on the day of November 14th (total cases, deaths, status of vaccine). This is a crisis committee based on the real world, so we expect delegates to conduct thorough research on their countries with regards to:

Social distancing measures

Vaccine research

Outbreaks of the virus

Economic effects due to COVID-19 and the major industries affected within their own nation and the world → ie. commercial aviation, tourism, banking etc.

Population Health → how has the health of your population been affected by the virus, what can be done to solve this/mitigate the effects?

Supply chain capabilities of your nation → an effective vaccine will rely on distributing it to your entire nation, this means proper infrastructure for transport and storage is required

Respective organization you are a member of → ie. G8 representative, WHO representative, World Bank representative

These topics are to serve as a starting point for your research. Each country has been affected differently by the virus, and each country has its own strengths and limitations when it comes to producing and distributing the vaccine. In addition, some countries rely on tourism as a major portion of their GDP, hence, vaccinating said nation may be of extreme economic importance. Furthermore, many nations have been filled with inner turmoil and protests for a variety of reasons. Since there will be a number of crisis updates within this committee, conducting thorough research on your country will help you navigate an appropriate course of action. Also, this committee is meant to be both fun and a learning experience - we encourage delegates to use their own experiences with COVID-19 to assist them with potential solutions regarding some of the crises that may arise within the committee.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Can the structures proposed and built during this committee be applied in a future pandemic?

A virus knows no borders, what sacrifices in terms of national sovereignty is your country willing to make to resolve the current crisis and resolve the next one?

Solving Coronavirus is only one of many international crises, it may be to your benefit to consider tradeoffs now to gain other future benefits. For a micronesia state, spending a billion dollars to instantly receive a vaccine is not a worthwhile trade.

