



# LASALLECUNMUN

## 2025

# WHO

(World Health  
Organization)

“Development of Norms  
and Standards in the  
Context of Epidemics:  
Strategies for an Effective  
and Coordinated  
Response”

Background Guide







Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the World Health Organization committee, I am honored to take the role as President of this committee for LASALLECUNMUN 2025. I am very excited to hear what your delegations have to say about this topic and get to know each one of you. This year I will represent this committee alongside with Mónica Helena Pat Cab as our Moderator and Jimena Marianela Glory Ruiz as our Conference Officer.

I am currently 16 years old and in my fifth semester of high school in the health area, I chose this area because the subjects we study will be very beneficial for my future when I study Medicine. This will be my third time participating in a Model of the United Nations, in my first year I represented the Russian Federation and won Best Position Paper representing that country in DISEC and in my second year I served as the Conference Officer of UNICEF. Throughout my life I have engaged in different hobbies such as horse riding, archery, taekwondo, pottery among other activities. However, one of the activities I have enjoyed the most is participating in the Model of the United Nations. I find the experience of being a delegate particularly exciting, especially when it is your first Model since you are not sure what to expect. The entire process of organizing an event of this magnitude also inspired me to now take in the role of president this time challenging myself.

For this Model I sincerely hope that all of you will develop a passion for MUN just as we have. It is my commitment that through this experience each delegate will not only gain a deeper understanding of the importance of this committee but will also cultivate skills of negotiation and critical thinking that are so essential in the day-to-day life since this will also be an excellent opportunity to expand your knowledge. In my expectations I want each delegate to be able to express the perspectives of the country they represent effectively, especially given the relevance of the topic where many of you may already be familiar with some of the main issues and challenges. Please remember that if you have any questions regarding the committee or the topic you are welcome to reach out to me at any time since I am here to support you and ensure that you will have all the resources and guidance needed to have a great experience. I am excited to see the thoughtful discussions and debates that will unfold the day of the Model. Let's make this a memorable experience for everyone involved.

Sincerely,

**Hanna Nicole Navarro Dozal**  
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## **COMMITTEE DESCRIPTION**

The World Health Organization (WHO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations. Established in 1948, it is dedicated to promoting health, keeping the world safe, and serving vulnerable populations. The WHO leads global efforts to expand universal health coverage, coordinate responses to health emergencies, and promote healthier lives from pregnancy care through old age. Guided by science, the organization works with 194 Member States across six regions and on the ground in over 150 locations.

***Topic: “Development of Norms and Standards in the Context of Epidemics: Strategies for an Effective and Coordinated Response”***

## **INTRODUCTION**

WHO is the world’s foremost public health agency, it plays a crucial role in creating guidelines to manage epidemics and plans for a unified response from all the countries in any health crises to guarantee that everyone is on the same page when an epidemic strikes, the efforts of this committee to reassure these approaches have recently become more critical. This organization has been providing detailed recommendations on how to handle different types of crises. By doing so, the WHO helps managing and containing the spread of infectious diseases more efficiently minimizing the impact they could have done.

The development of these rules includes an extensive collaboration with experts from different countries. This process ensures that the norms they create are based on the latest scientific evidence, but still adaptable to unique challenges posed by each epidemic. Lately WHO’s work in the development of norms and standards has been more crucial than ever with their high standards for public health practices, encouraging a fast and organized reaction when a crisis occur.

The creation of this guidelines is absolutely crucial in order to prevent and control epidemics globally since they ensure a consistent framework that countries can follow making their responses systematic and effective. Without these standards the efforts to combat epidemics would be very fragmented and much less efficient leading to potentially higher rates of infection.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The history of epidemics is very long and complex since we can’t actually know where they started, but we do have some very popular and big epidemics that have affected the history of our world like the “Plague of Justinian” in the 6<sup>th</sup> century that devastated the Byzantine Empire, the disease spread rapidly through the Mediterranean, reaching Constantinople in 542 CE. It is estimated that the plague killed between 25 million and 100 million people significantly reducing the population of Europe and the Near East, this plague not only caused a lot of deaths but also had a profound economic, social and political effects making the empire unstable, another big and important pandemic is “The Black Death” in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, one of the most

devastating pandemics in human history, caused by the bacterium *Yersinia pestis*, which was originated in Central Asia and spread to Europe through trade routes, wiping out an estimated of 25 million people (about one-third of Europe's population at the time). The plague caused social, economic, and cultural upheavals, leading to a significant decline in the population, labor shortages, and a change in the structure of European society and last the "Spanish flu" emerged in 1918, this was actually an influenza pandemic that infected about one-third of the global population and caused the deaths of an estimated 50 million people. It spread rapidly due to World War I troop movements and affected countries across the world, with high mortality rates among young, healthy adults.

The importance of creating norms and standards to control epidemics began to gain significant attention in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This period increased the establishment of international health organizations and the development of public health policies aimed at controlling infectious diseases. The International Sanitary Conferences, held between 1851 and 1938, were among the first efforts to create international norms and standards for controlling epidemics, particularly cholera, plague, and yellow fever marking history with epidemics. The creation of the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1948 also marked a significant milestone in the development of global health norms and standards. The WHO has since played a crucial role establishing guidelines and protocols for epidemic control, including the International Health Regulations (IHR), which were revised in 2005 to provide a framework for global health security.

This help of WHO has been crucial in managing outbreaks of diseases like Ebola and COVID-19, reducing their impact on populations across the world, they help ensuring that best practices are shared and adopted globally, enhancing the overall preparedness and resilience of health systems. WHO by setting clear expectations, rules and providing evidence-based guidance, help building public trust and compliance, which are essential for the successful implementation of health measures.

## **CURRENT SITUATION**

The UN recently held the "Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly". During this assembly, several topics related to the control of epidemics were put into discussion. They have emphasized having different sorts of systems in place to handle outbreaks, so they don't evolutionate into full-blown epidemics. They also underlined the need for international cooperation in combating public health emergencies, referring to it as transparent data sharing, along with an equitable access to vaccines and medical supplies. By doing so, all countries can fight an epidemic effectively without vast numbers of human loss due to the epidemic.

Strengthening global health security is key through the International Health Regulations (IHR), which were revised again in 2016. These regulations require countries to develop and maintain core capacities for effective surveillance, responsive measures, and health system preparedness.

This will, in essence, demand the ability to detect, accurately assess, report, and respond to events that affect public health in an efficient manner. The regulations also give much emphasis on transparency and timely sharing of information, which is key to ensuring a well-coordinated

and effective international response. All these standards are promoted by the IHR, which hence provides a unified approach toward handling public health emergencies and enhancing global health resilience and cooperation. In addition to the IHR, the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN) has provided the international community with a critical response to epidemics; this is through a collaboration of already existing institutions and networks that pool together resources and information to make the response to outbreaks both rapid and effective.

This includes national public health institutions, universities, international agencies like WHO, and non-governmental organizations. Lately, this network has been very instrumental in enhancing the capability of outbreak response through several strategic initiatives. Allowing real-time data collection, management, and analysis, it enables health authorities to track and respond to the outbreak more effectively. One of these efforts is the Go.Data platform, which was helpful in addressing the 2022 mpox outbreak in Chile. The WHO Hub, supported by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, was established in September 2021. The program was put in place particularly to respond to demonstrated health weaknesses around the world, with the ability to manage public health threats and inform about the choices that were being made in order to mitigate these threats. The WHO Hub works in close collaboration with Member States and currently partners with 150 countries, also working with an environment that brings together innovators, scientists, and experts from all across a wide spectrum of disciplines. The help from all these people keeps us at the forefront of innovation and ensures we're solving real-world challenges faced by people across the globe.

The USA has also been at the forefront in developing norms and standards in the field of epidemic through its initiative, Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA), by partnering with at least 30 countries over a period of five years to achieve the GHSA targets. This initiative includes investing over \$1 billion in resources to expand the GHSA and strengthen public health systems in 17 countries. The GHSA gives financial support, technical assistance, and training to help these countries develop better public health systems. In addition to this, the U.S. has also played a lead role in the development of the Global Health Security Agenda Implementation Plan by the U.S., together with its implementation. Global Health Security Strategy: This whole-of-government, science-based approach outlines how GHSS will strengthen global health security by building global health security capacities through partnerships and driving global action toward shared goals with other countries.

In other words, joint efforts by countries in developing norms and standards for epidemic response underline a strong international commitment to global health security. We should also emphasize some of the most important contributions made toward this topic, such as from the United Kingdom, which contributed through data supporting actions and sample sharing initiatives very critical to transparency and response speed. The health security framework in Nigeria has been reinforced with multidisciplinary teams and continuous improvement metrics, while India improved capabilities in testing diseases such as yellow fever. France has also been actively supporting the principles of equitable access to essential health services and developed strategies for epidemic control. These concerted efforts made by countries mentioned in

previous times represent a unified approach toward managing global health crises with emphasis on international cooperation and being well prepared.

### **COUNTRY BOX**

Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela  
Dominion of Canada  
Federal Republic of Germany  
Federal Republic of Nigeria  
Federal Republic of Somalia  
French Republic  
Japan  
Kingdom of Norway  
Kingdom of Spain  
Kingdom of Sweden  
People's Republic of China  
Plurinational State of Bolivia  
Republic of Equatorial Guinea  
Republic of India  
Republic of Italy  
Republic of Korea  
Russian Federation  
The Republic of Indonesia  
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland  
United States of America

### **GUIDE QUESTIONS**

- I.** How has your country collaborated with international organizations, such as the WHO, in the development of norms and standards for epidemics?
- II.** Has your country suffered from big human losses because of a bad health infrastructure?
- III.** What measures has your country taken to strengthen its public health infrastructure?
- IV.** Has your country established any policies or regulations to ensure transparent data sharing and equitable access to medical supplies?

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