



*Boston University Academy Model United Nations Conference X*

*Saturday, January 28th to Sunday, January 29th, 2023*

*Boston University Academy*

*Boston, MA*

***UN COMMITTEE: WORLD HEALTH***

***ORGANIZATION***

***(WHO)***

***Background Guide***

## ***Chair Introduction:***

Hi All Delegates!

My name is Dominic Iafrate, a senior at Boston University Academy, and I'm excited to be your 2023 chair for the WHO subcommittee in General Assembly. My vice-chair is Nye Matta, a sophomore at Boston University Academy, who is also very excited to be here!

WHO stands for World Health Organization, which means that this committee will be handling health crises around the world from issues like deadly viruses and pandemics (none in particular...) to sanitization and clean drinking water.

The main reason I joined BUAMUN was because of my experience with debate: I had taken several debate classes in the past, and when those were discontinued in my freshman year of high school, I wanted a way to engage with interesting topics without having to deal with the stress of winning or losing the debates themselves. I hope this conference will provide you with engaging topics, interesting discussions, and most of all, fun.

Preparing for a Model UN conference may still be a daunting task, especially when you don't know what to expect. Although the position paper is the only mandatory assignment prior to the conference, it would be quite helpful to come more prepared. A good idea would be to have a one written out opening speech, probably even another for the second day of the conference. The research will also play a very important role, as it always gives an argument more credibility to have it backed up with sound data. I look forward to having lively discussions and hopefully passing some resolutions by the end of our time together.

Delegates, welcome to BUAMUN!

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## ***Committee Information:***

The World Health Organization is a General Assembly, meaning it is built up of representatives from many nations around the world. Committees held within the General Assembly are important in policymaking and fund allocation. The concept of WHO was conceived when the United Nations originally met in 1945, but it officially became a committee in 1948. One of the primary goals of WHO was to provide equitable access to health benefits around the world. WHO has dedicated itself, sometimes even successfully, to eradicating numerous diseases from around the world with vaccines. Most recently, you have likely heard lots of discussion of the World Health Organization due to COVID-19. WHO was the most important global organization in dealing with cases of the coronavirus, and also with funding research and distribution of vaccines.

The topics which we will discuss in this year's WHO committee are air pollution and yellow fever vaccines. As climate change increases in relevance, air pollution is a crucial aspect of the conversation. We see air pollution throughout the globe, in both rural and urban areas, and its detrimental effects are felt by more than 99% of the population. Since the 1980's cases of yellow fever have been increasing, with over 45,000 deaths occurring in 2013. The virus is typically transmitted via mosquito bites and once transmitted, the fatality rate is between 3 - 7.5%, with the second stage of disease having a fatality rate between 20 - 50% and the last stage having a 50% death rate.

## ***Position Paper Guidelines:***

**This committee requires two position papers.** They are on the topics of Human Genome Editing and Malaria. The absence of at least one position paper will disqualify you (the delegate) from receiving an award. The quality, depth, and clarity of your position papers will influence award decisions. Each position paper should be 1-3 pages and double-spaced. This includes citations which are preferably in the format of footnotes. To insert a footnote, simply click *Insert > Footnote*. Note: A footnote goes after the period. Position papers should follow a general outline with three paragraphs. This is only a suggestion, as long as the paper fits the aforementioned specifications, the number of paragraphs will not be taken into consideration.

### **Possible position paper outline:**

- 1) Introduction to your delegation and the topic as a whole
- 2) The position of your delegation
- 3) Your delegations proposed solutions

Furthermore, each position paper must be titled in the following format:

**Delegation:** Dominic Iafrate and Nye Matta

**School:** Boston University Academy

**Committee:** WHO

**Position:** United States

**Topic:** Malaria

## *Topic 1: Human Genome Editing*

### **General Overview:**

Human genome editing is a relatively novel concept in the field of bioengineering. It refers to the methods by which scientists make specific changes to an individual's DNA or genome, either adding or subtracting DNA fragments. Because editing DNA may be inheritable across generations, the development of these technologies and methods has become a topic of frequent debate among scientists in the WHO and throughout the academic world. Editing the natural building blocks of human status may have unintended consequences on offspring or even society in general, or it may allow us to create and model different people for different purposes. Delegates should attempt to come to a conclusion on genetic editing, and whether genetic editing should be enforced, allowed, or prohibited.

### **Main Background Guide:**

In 2016, [Chinese researchers first attempted to edit the genome of a human embryo](#). Immediately following, bioethicists and university professors around the world began to question the morality of the experiment, even questioning whether the experiment even succeeded at all. The topic was left in debate for several years until recently in 2021 when the WHO came out with a [statement](#) recommending certain guidelines for future scientific research and experiments regarding genome editing. "Human genome editing has the potential to advance our ability to treat and cure disease, but the full impact will only be realized if we deploy it for the benefit of all people, instead of fueling more health inequity between and within countries," said the Director of the WHO. The potential for both incredible benefits and terrible divisions between countries and even society-shattering implications is what draws interest to this topic.

### **Questions to Consider:**

The Chairs would look favorably upon resolutions that attempt to elaborate on or go against the resolutions already created. This means that any resolution proposed should not just raise awareness for these experiments and research, but, more importantly, allocate specific resources to finite areas of development, aiming to either further or deny the development of specific genome editing. Therefore, the Chairs recommend discussing biotechnology and the allocation of funds to research in specific areas or withholding of those funds for other use.

## **Bloc Positions – Topic 1:**

The following is a list of general positions held by various nations.

### Global Leaders in Genomic Research:

*These are nations that are heavily involved in the matter of Genome Editing due to their wealth and resources. While these nations must deal with their own questions regarding genome editing, they are also in a position of power when it comes to coming to a conclusion on genome editing globally.*

United Kingdom

Canada

China

Russia

Japan

United States

Singapore

South Korea

India

Germany

South Africa

### Nations Least Interested:

*These are nations that either are not interested in the development of Genomic Editing or nations that would benefit from allocating funds to resources other than those on Genomic Editing.*

*These nations are not particularly in a position of power, but would benefit greatly from prioritizing other services over Genomic Editing.*

Zambia

Liberia

Sudan

Congo

Angola

Ghana

Nigeria

Tanzania

Uganda

### **Further Research:**

[https://www.who.int/health-topics/human-genome-editing#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/human-genome-editing#tab=tab_1)

<https://www.who.int/news/item/12-07-2021-who-issues-new-recommendations-on-human-genome-editing-for-the-advancement-of-public-health>

<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/understanding/genomicresearch/genomeediting/>

<https://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/article/ethics-values-and-responsibility-human-genome-editing/2019-12>

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240030060>

## ***Topic 2: Malaria***

### **General Overview:**

Malaria is a life threatening disease caused by parasites that are transmitted to people through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes. It is preventable and curable, but still serious and often fatal. The majority of the world's population is at risk of malaria, as it is incredibly contagious and the symptoms aren't much different from those of an influenza virus. Recently, malaria vaccines have neared practicality, although a completely flawless vaccine has not been discovered as of yet. Delegates should set goals to aid struggling nations and develop and distribute the vaccine.

### **Main Background Guide:**

Malaria is most prominent in Africa, carrying the world burden of about 95% of malaria cases and 96% of malaria deaths worldwide. 80% of those deaths are suffered by children 5 years old or under. In 2020, there were about 241 million cases of malaria worldwide, and 627000 deaths, resulting in an about 0.26% fatality rate. This number is wildly increased in underdeveloped areas, especially those in as warm a climate as Africa. WHO has three main prevention tools and strategies: firstly, vector control, which refers to the containment and elimination of the vectors which transmit the disease, mosquitoes. The 2 core interventions are insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) and indoor residual spraying (IRS). Secondly, WHO recommends preventive chemotherapy, which uses medicines to control and prevent malaria infections and symptoms/consequences. It requires giving a full treatment course of an antimalarial medicine to vulnerable populations (generally infants, children under 5 years of age and pregnant women) at designated time points during the period of greatest malarial risk, regardless of whether the recipients are infected with malaria. Finally, WHO recommends the RTS vaccine (developed in 2021), which has been shown to significantly reduce malaria, and deadly severe malaria, among young children.

### **Questions to Consider:**

The Chairs would look favorably upon resolutions that allocate resources to the advancement of treatment of malaria worldwide. These may include anything from supporting countries and regions at the highest risk to developing a vaccine to distributing that very same vaccine. The Chairs recommend discussing the optimal purpose and location for these funds.



## **Bloc Positions – Topic 2:**

### Global Leaders in Malaria Research:

*These nations are important in the research of malaria and the distribution of malaria vaccines. Although they are not especially at risk of outbreaks, they can use their resources to help the nations in areas that are much more vulnerable.*

United Kingdom

Canada

China

Russia

Japan

United States

Singapore

South Korea

India

Germany

### Nations Most Afflicted :

*These are nations that struggle most with malaria. These countries must be involved due to the seriousness of malaria to their health, so their input on the distribution of vaccines is of utmost importance.*

Zambia

Liberia

South Africa

Sudan

Congo

Angola

Ghana

Nigeria

Tanzania

Uganda

**Further Research:**

[https://www.cdc.gov/malaria/malaria\\_worldwide/impact.html](https://www.cdc.gov/malaria/malaria_worldwide/impact.html)

<https://www.kff.org/global-health-policy/fact-sheet/the-u-s-government-and-global-malaria/>

[https://www.who.int/health-topics/malaria#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/malaria#tab=tab_1)

<https://www.who.int/news/item/06-10-2021-who-recommends-groundbreaking-malaria-vaccine-for-children-at-risk>