

The World Health Organization (WHO)



The Antibiotic Crisis

Background of Committee:

Founded on April 7th, 1948, the World Health Organization (WHO) was created to “build a better, healthier future for people all over the world.” From combatting the multitudes of infectious and noncommunicable diseases that can be found in our international community to aiding the discovery of new cures and vaccines to helping the different communities of people affected by these diseases, the World Health Organization has striven to gain a better understanding of the health of our society to protect and preserve it. Currently, more than seven thousand people are part of the World Health Organization, with offices branching through more than 150 countries.

The World Health Organization has taken many steps in order to combat the growing antibiotic crisis. First and foremost, WHO has been working closely with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) in a “One Health” approach to promote best practices to avoid the emergence and spread of antibacterial resistance. Furthermore, a global action plan on antimicrobial resistance was adopted by Member States at the Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly, which was supported by the governing bodies of WHO, FAO and the OIE in May and June 2015. Lastly, the World Health Organization has continuously supported various nations in our international community by helping to strengthen their health and surveillance systems.

Background of the Topic:

As the usage of medicine continues to increase and spread throughout our international community, it is crucial to recognize that though a multitude of benefits and positive results are the direct development of the rising implementation and distribution of medicine, many disadvantages and negatives have been created through the misuse of certain types of medicine, namely antibiotics. The misuse of antibiotics leads to antibiotic resistance, in which bacteria (not the individual themselves) becomes antibiotic-resistant. As antibiotic resistance continues to become more common in not only humans but also animals, it has become a public health concern worldwide.

Antibiotic resistance is the result of antibiotic abuse, where the patient either takes more than prescribed/necessary or misuses the antibiotics in other ways. The bacteria that was initially being treated by the medicine becomes increasingly immune to the antibiotics, and becomes classified as “resistant bacteria”. These strains of resistant bacteria may spread from individual to individual, infecting humans and animals and ultimately causing infections to be harder to treat. Overall, antibiotic resistance not only leads to higher medical costs, but also an increase in hospital stays and mortality in our international community. As antibiotics are increasingly abused and therefore rendered ineffective, an increasing amount of infections and diseases such as pneumonia, tuberculosis, gonorrhoea, and blood poisoning becomes harder to treat.

Goals of the Committee:

The goal of this committee session is to not only stop the growth of the antibiotic crisis, but to also raise awareness of the multitude of dangers that it brings. First and foremost, as the antibiotic (also known as antimicrobial resistance) crisis continues to grow and spread

throughout our international community, more commonly distributed infectious diseases are harder to prevent and treat. This may result in prolonged illness, a quicker rate of infection in one's community, and in extreme cases death. We aim to facilitate the creation of innovative, feasible solutions that address the many subtopics of the worldwide antibiotic crisis while being efficient and sensitive to the reality of the situation in our time together as a committee.

The overall set-up of committee will follow the guidelines of the General Assembly. However, we will spend more time and direct more focus and attention on substantive speeches than general debate in our committee as the Dias strongly encourages developed, in depth debate in our committee sessions. As this is not Security Council, we will not utilize Round Robin for speaking purposes, nor will the Dias allow unlimited time for speeches. Instead, we strongly encourage speeches to be around a minute and 30 seconds.

UN Involvement

Though the United Nations have made many actions in the past towards the fight against the worldwide antibiotic crisis, recently new agreements and declarations have been formed by the General Assembly in September of 2016. This Declaration, based on the ideals of the Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance of 2015, set precedents as it became the fourth time a health issue has been taken up by the General Assembly. During the meeting, Heads of States committed to taking a broad, coordinated approach to address the root causes of Antimicrobial Resistance across multiple sectors, especially human health, animal health and agriculture.

Furthermore, in 2014, the World Health Organization published an United Nations Health Report addressing the dangers of the Antibiotic crisis. The study, which was the first of its kind, incorporated data from more than 114 countries, giving the most comprehensive and thorough look at the situation. It highlighted the fact that the antibiotic crisis has been occurring in virtually every nation, affecting individuals of all ages and races. Although the report does note that this resistance against strains of bacteria occurs across many different agents, it specifically focuses on seven different bacteria that are responsible for commonly occurring, possibly fatal diseases such as sepsis, pneumonia, gonorrhea, and urinary tract infections.

Key Questions

- What actions (if any) has your nation taken to combat the spread of the antibiotic crisis?
- What resistance against bacteria is most prevalent in your nation?
- What are the different key factors that come into play when tackling the issue in first world countries compared to third world countries?
- What stance has your nation taken against this crisis at hand? (Look at past voting patterns on Resolutions, statements in reports, etc.)
- How will the distribution of vaccines and medicines be regulated without being restricted by government?

Works Cited

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