

**ADMUN 2020**

**UNEP**

**Plant-Based Diets**

**Chairs: Sophie Schell and Charlotte Mendelson**

**Assistant Chair: Zoe Fisher**



**UNEP**

# Welcome delegates,

Our names are Sophie Schell, Charlotte Mendelson, and Zoe Fisher. We are 7th graders at Alice Deal Middle School. Whether it is debating or resolution writing, we love every aspect of MUN! We are so thrilled about the opportunity to co-chair a committee for you this year at ADMUN. Plant-based diets are a unique topic that you are unlikely to see at any other conference. We all have strong opinions on environmentally related things and enjoy trying to educate others. If this is your first conference or your 21st conference, we want you to take risks, work with new people, and have fun. If you have any questions or concerns feel free to email us at [sophieschell07@gmail.com](mailto:sophieschell07@gmail.com), [mendelsoncharlotte0@gmail.com](mailto:mendelsoncharlotte0@gmail.com), or [zoekaleafisher@gmail.com](mailto:zoekaleafisher@gmail.com) We hope that this background guide proves useful in writing your position papers. We wish you all the best in preparing for the conference, and can't wait to see all of you, on April 4th in committee.

Best of luck,

Charlotte Mendelson, Zoe Fisher, and Sophie Schell

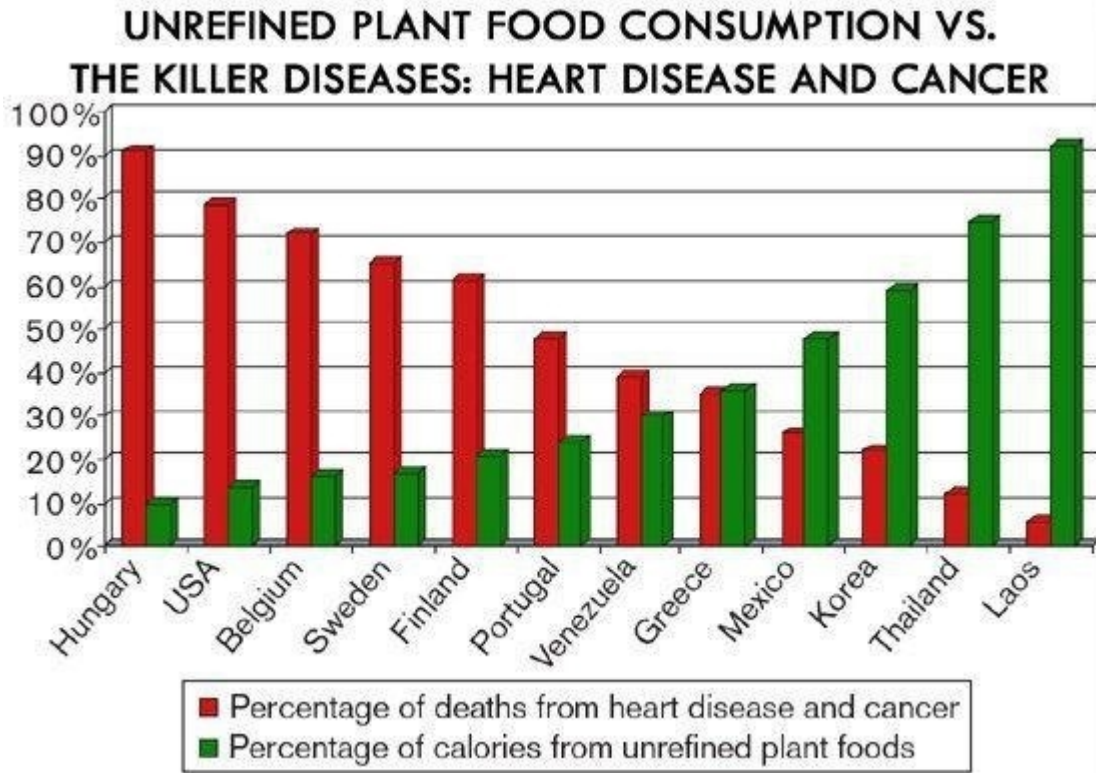
# Committee background

The UN environmental program (UNEP) was created on June 5, 1972, to establish environmental projects and activities with the United Nations. UNEP leads international environmental action, sets the global environmental agenda, supports the consistent implementation of environmentally sustainable development, and is an activist for the environment. The headquarters are located in Nairobi, Kenya. UNEP focuses on 7 broad topics: Climate change, Disasters and Conflicts, Ecosystem management, Environmental governance, Chemicals and Waste, Resource Efficiency, and the Environment. UNEP has done many projects including, but not limited to, sustainable consumption, promoting global recycling of paper, and education about sustainability.

UNEP has had several successes, such as the 1987 Montreal Protocol for limiting emissions of gases, which cause the thinning of the planet's protective ozone layer, and the 2012 Minamata Convention, a treaty to limit toxic mercury. UNEP has sponsored the development of solar loan programs, with attractive return rates, to reduce the initial costs and entice consumers to consider and purchase solar photovoltaic systems. The most famous example is the solar loan program sponsored by UNEP that helped 100,000 people finance solar power systems in India. Success in India's solar program has led to similar projects in other parts of the developing world, including Tunisia, Morocco, Indonesia, and Mexico.

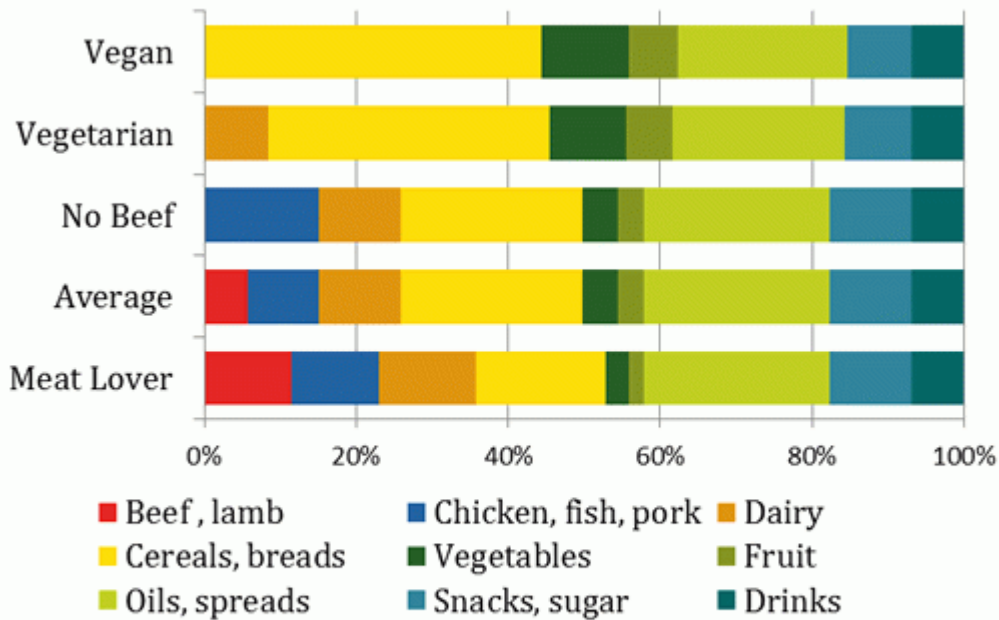
# Topic Background

Plant-based diets are a continuing trend around the whole world. One may choose to become a vegetarian or vegan for many reasons, such as concern for the environment or the belief that animals should not be killed for food.



As you can tell from this graph, there is a direct correlation between the consumption of plants that are not processed and the rate of deathly diseases. Countries with a higher rate of unrefined plants in their diet have a lesser rate of death by heart disease or cancer and vice versa. In general, this graph shows the more developed, better off, countries with higher GDP's are also at a higher risk of death by cancer or heart disease. The choice to have a plant-based diet can lessen the risk of certain diseases.

## Sample Diets: distribution of food energy



Note: Each of the four example diets have been based on 2,600 kcal of food consumed per day, roughly the same as an average American. This figure should not be confused with total food supply which is around 3,900 kcal/day.

Sources: ERS/USDA



## Current Situation

As people begin to consider the positive effects of plant-based diets, their popularity is beginning to grow. Around the world, the average person consumes 75 lbs of meat each year. The meat industry is very economically sturdy because of this. Millions of people are employed in the meat and poultry business. So you would think if the whole world went vegetarian, then it would cause a huge loss of jobs, right? Wrong! Although those jobs will be lost, new ones will appear in agriculture and agronomy. Livestock production and the meat industry is thought to be one of the biggest contributors to climate change. As of January 2019, 11% of the world are vegetarians and that number is constantly growing. Below is an infographic that gives you a bit more information about vegetarianism and plant-based diets.

Country	Vegetarians (%)	Approx. No. of individuals <sup>[3]</sup>	Source Year
 Australia	5.0%	1,105,000	(2010) <sup>[4]</sup>
 Austria	9.0%	765,000	(2013) <sup>[5]</sup>
 Brazil	8.0%	15,896,000	(2012) <sup>[6]</sup>
 Canada	4.0%	1,264,000	(2003) <sup>[7]</sup>
 China	4.0% - 5.0%	54,428,000—68,035,000	(2013) <sup>[8]</sup>
 Denmark	4.0%	220,000	(2011) <sup>[9]</sup>
 Finland	5.0%	274,000	(2014) <sup>[10]</sup>
 France	2.0%	1,306,000	(2011) <sup>[11]</sup>
 Germany	9.0%	7,371,000	(2009) <sup>[12]</sup>
 India	31.0% - 40%	392,890,000-506,960,000	(2006) <sup>[13]</sup>
 Israel	13.0%	1,078,000 <sup>[14]</sup>	(2015) <sup>[15]</sup>
 Italy	10.0%	6,010,000	(2009) <sup>[16]</sup>
 Japan	4.7%	5,964,300	(2014) <sup>[17]</sup>
 Netherlands	4.5%	738,000	(2008) <sup>[18]</sup>
 New Zealand	1.0% - 2.0%	39,000—78,000	(2002) <sup>[19]</sup>
 Poland	3.2%	1,228,800	(2013) <sup>[20]</sup>
 Portugal	0.3%	31,629	(2007) <sup>[21]</sup>
 Russia	3.0% - 4.0%	4,380,000—5,840,000	(2014) <sup>[22][23]</sup>
 Spain	4.0%	1,788,000	(2007) <sup>[24]</sup>
 Sweden	10.0%	970,000	(2014) <sup>[25]</sup>
 Switzerland	5.0%	375,000	(2007) <sup>[26]</sup>
 Taiwan	13.0%	2,964,000	(2007) <sup>[27]</sup>
 United Kingdom	7.0% - 11.0%	7,095,000	(2002) <sup>[28]</sup>
 United States	1.9%	6,140,000	(2014) <sup>[29]</sup>

## Review

As stated above, people adopt plant-based diets for many different reasons, such as they oppose animal cruelty, have environmental concerns, want to lower their environmental impact or they are following a trend. People also choose against a plant-based diet for various reasons including, iron deficiency, religious practices or concern that it would harm the meat and poultry industries. What does the global community think?

## Focus Questions

1. How can plant-based diets benefit your country? How can they hurt your country?
2. Are plant-based diets common in your country? Why?
3. Does your country support plant-based diets?
4. Does your country have any policies or laws in place about plant-based diets?
5. Does your country want to expand the use of plant-based diets? How?
6. What are the effects of plant-based diets on your country?

# Helpful Sources

- <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/voraciously/wp/2019/02/15/how-plant-based-rebranded-vegan-eating-for-the-mainstream/>
- <https://www.webmd.com/diet/obesity/news/20191104/are-there-health-downsides-to-vegetarian-diets>
- <https://philpapers.org/rec/RACV>
- <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41398-019-0552-0>
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3662288/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2pPwwU1N9hM>
- <https://www.westonaprice.org/health-topics/abcs-of-nutrition/twenty-two-reasons-not-to-go-vegetarian/>