

ADMUN 2020

Background Guide

Crisis Committee



**Water Rights and
Water Access**

Chair Information:

Hello delegates,

We are Krithi Tamarappoo and Lucy Chamberlain, and we will be your chairs for this CC. We are currently freshmen at Benjamin Banneker Academic High School and School Without Walls, respectively. We have been participating in Model UN at Deal since seventh grade. We are really excited for you to fully engage and enjoy this committee, however it is also important to understand that this could be our reality. We have put effort into making sure that it remains a serious topic, but we have also tried to make it creative so that it models a realistic scenario. In terms of creativity, we have included elements that are somewhat atypical for MUN, like puzzles, props, and things that have to be discovered by the delegates. If you are in the scientists committee and have any questions, or are unclear about any directions please let us know.

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Position papers are due on the day of the conference. Bring a copy with you for your chairs.

Thanks,

Krithi and Lucy

Topic Background:

Considering that potable water access has been compromised in some parts of the world, delegates will be placed with an even more extreme scenario. It is currently the year 2060 and a contaminant has been found in the Pacific Ocean, and is making its way towards the Philippine Sea; large amounts of people have been dying. Once it passes the Philippine Sea, it will move towards the Bay of Bengal, and the Arabian Sea. Major countries in this region like China, India, and Saudi Arabia have such large populations that the effects will be devastating. Delegates in committee will collaborate and try to contain the contaminant so it doesn't spread. Part of the committee will include powerful world leaders or representatives from different countries, and part will be scientists.

Topic #1: Containing and treating the contaminated water:

The pollutant in the water is spreading rapidly throughout Asia, including some countries with some of the largest population in the world. The first step of the process is to effectively contain the water in a reasonable manner.

Once the water is contained the delegates need to figure out what the pollutant is, so that it can undergo the proper treatment. The water will need to be treated so that it meets the drinkable standard.

Topic #2: Water Rights:

Water rights affect peoples' lives every day. Many people don't have access to water, so it will be important for delegates to come up with cheap solutions which provide the largest quantities of water possible. Many conflicts occur due to the amount of water in communities-- safe water sources will also prevent diseases. In some countries, reliable healthcare is not well-established either, leading to massive epidemics; these two issues go hand in hand. If people get sick from the water quality, and cannot receive help, there is a high risk of death. Water and Sanitation is one of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), so there is a dire need for solutions since it hasn't been solved by 2060. Delegates will have to cooperate and form alliances in order to solve the crisis of water rights and water access.

Past Water Issues:

Water rights and accessibility was already a major problem, considering that an increase in population increases competition for water. One of the biggest examples of the water crisis, specifically contamination, was the Flint, Michigan lead crisis. In 2015, tests from the EPA and Virginia Tech concluded that there were high levels of lead in the water.¹ According to the UN, "more than 80 per cent of wastewater resulting from human activities is discharged into rivers or sea without any pollution removal".²

¹ "Flint Water Crisis Fast Facts." *CNN*, Cable News Network, 14 Dec. 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2016/03/04/us/flint-water-crisis-fast-facts/index.html>

² "Water and Sanitation - United Nations Sustainable Development." *United Nations*, United Nations, <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/water-and-sanitation/>.

Current Water Issues:

Right now, ethylene glycol and botulinum toxin have polluted the waters of the greater Pacific Ocean, causing global panic due to heavily impacted water quality, with death being a very possible outcome. Ethylene glycol (a clear, odorless liquid), used for antifreeze vehicles, is toxic to pets and humans sometimes. Therefore, the people that fish along coastal areas are experiencing food shortages as well. The exponential rate of car manufacturing has contributed to the increased pollution of waterways. Botulinum toxin is a neurotoxin responsible for the rare poisoning of botulism. Despite its rarity, botulism generally kills those who contract it. Delegates will need to work to contain the spread of these two chemicals, as well as its effects on innocent civilians.

Statistics:

- Around two-thirds of the world's transboundary rivers do not have a cooperative management framework. (SIWI)³
- 297,000 children under five die every year from diarrhoeal diseases due to poor sanitation, poor hygiene, or unsafe drinking water. (WHO/UNICEF 2019)

Delegates:

World Leaders:

1. India
2. Switzerland
3. China
4. United States
5. Somalia

³ "Water." *United Nations*, United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/water/>.

6. Indonesia
7. Sweden
8. Russia
9. Canada
10. Saudi Arabia
11. Iran
12. Philippines
13. Sri Lanka
14. Australia

Scientists:

1. Greta Thunberg
2. Marie Curie
3. Rosalind Franklin
4. Dr. Meredith Green
5. Bill Nye
6. Dr. Richard Webber

Greta Thunberg:

Greta Thunberg is a climate change activist born and raised in Sweden. In December 2019, she attended the Madrid Climate Conference, COP25⁴, held by the UNFCCC. In 2018 as well, she went to the COP24 conference in Poland. Thunberg took a zero-emissions sailboat across the

⁴ Euronews &. "Greta Thunberg at COP25: People Suffer and Die for Climate Change." *Euronews*, 9 Dec. 2019, <https://www.euronews.com/2019/12/09/live-follow-greta-thunberg-s-press-conference-at-climate-summit-cop25-in-madri>.

Atlantic Ocean to New York City, where the United Nations is located. She inspired school walkouts across the world in major cities, but started out small. Every Friday in Sweden, she would leave school to protest climate change. Thunberg makes her Aspergers a focal point of her campaigning; she says she has a unique perspective, allowing for her to tackle climate change.

Possible Actions:

Due to the fact that Thunberg helped start Fridays for Future, one possible action is to start worldwide movements across the world modeling these walkouts; more people must be informed on the climate crisis. Thunberg could potentially start an organization which would help reverse climate change as soon as possible. With water availability rapidly decreasing, the most money possible will be needed to prevent conflict. It is up to Thunberg to determine how to obtain this money.

Bill Nye:

Bill Sanford Nye is a famous television presenter and scientist. Bill Nye incorporates science into his various shows and movies. However, he is most famously known for his show *Bill Nye The Science Guy* that ran for 5 seasons (1993-1998). After his award-winning show, he has been focusing on space exploration, educating others, and challenging those with opposing opinions, such as climate-change deniers.⁵

⁵ Webster, Andy. "Review: 'Bill Nye: Science Guy,' a Portrait of a Fighter for Facts." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 26 Oct. 2017, www.nytimes.com/2017/10/26/movies/bill-nye-science-guy-review-documentary.html.

Possible Actions:

Considering that Nye was on his very successful TV show, he is used to working and interacting with the public. He has interacted with kids, as well, as his tv show was created to teach science in engaging ways. Additionally, he challenges others on different topics, which will help him negotiate different ideas with opposing delegates.

Dr. Meredith Green:

Dr. Meredith Green is the head of the World Health Organization, which focuses on international issues, mainly public health. She has a higher educational background in microbiology and biology, as she works to aid others and combat diseases along with her organization. Not only is she skilled in various scientific fields, she is the head of a large organization, and has good administration skills.

Possible Actions:

The goal of the WHO is to fight communicable and non communicable diseases such as influenza, HIV, heart disease, and cancer. Considering that they work internationally, they work from 150 country offices.⁶ Dr. Green is likely to work with the world leaders to cooperate and form strategies, similar to her work with the WHO.

Dr. Richard Webber:

Dr. Richard Webber is a general surgeon. Webber is very qualified to discuss these topics; although he has no formal training on the water crisis, he can present logical solutions. Webber works at the Pacific Northwest General Hospital in Seattle, which is ranked the worst hospital in

⁶ “About WHO.” *World Health Organization*, World Health Organization, <https://www.who.int/about>.

Seattle.⁷He diagnoses and examines patients, but also does various surgeries. In addition, Dr. Webber also travels around the world to aid people who have suffered from diseases found in local water supplies.

Possible Actions:

Because of Dr. Webber's abilities, working with a major organization or independently working as a general surgeon are both ways to improve the water crisis. Dr. Webber can work with scientists from WHO, such as Meredith Green, or with other scientists such as Rosalind Franklin. Dr. Webber can work in high-stress situations very well, while still being extremely productive.

Kendall Jenner:

Part of the hit show *Keeping Up With the Kardashians*, Kendall Jenner is a famous member of the Kardashian/Jenner family. One of the youngest sisters, Kendall has the ability to advocate for water rights and access for a long time. One example of this was her 2017 charity:water campaign, which she did for her birthday instead of ordinary gift giving.⁸ She asked people to donate \$22 if they could, as she was turning 22, but explained that any amount available would help communities receive access to clean water. In the end \$67,800 was donated, successfully completing 8 projects in small communities across Mozambique.

Possible Actions:

Kendall Jenner has the ability to be very influential, as she has both fame and wealth. Kendall Jenner also lives in California, so she is familiar with problems regarding water access. Even though she owns very expensive properties, she is still caught up on major events occurring in Southern California which impact millions of people (such as droughts). Jenner is talented at

⁷ "Richard Webber." *Grey's Anatomy Universe Wiki*, greysanatomy.fandom.com/wiki/Richard_Webber.

⁸ "Kendall's 22nd Birthday." *Charity*, my.charitywater.org/kendall/22nd.

negotiating, and would work well with other delegates who are invested in the well-being of all people; this includes those with more money than most people. Her status can be used to a great advantage in committee, possibly starting another campaign, or a new line of the many Kardashian/Jenner companies dedicated to the cause.

Marie Curie:

Marie Curie was born Marie Sklodowska in Poland. After moving from Warsaw to France, she married Pierre Curie, her colleague at work when researching radioactivity. Marie and Pierre earned the Nobel Prize in Chemistry, as they discovered radium and polonium. About 10 years later, Marie earned another Nobel Prize for producing radium as a pure metal, proving it existed in real life.⁹ Curie grew up in a poor family, which impacted her, making her work even harder to earn the position she achieved.¹⁰ A world-renowned scientist, she paved the way for many advancements regarding modern technology, such as X-ray machines.

Possible Actions:

Curie, having travelled many places for various projects/collaborations, has the ability to work with people, especially those who are passionate about improving living conditions. Curie, with extensive knowledge of scientific elements, can test water and perform any necessary work relating to chemistry, as long as it is broad. Her specialty is radiation, and can work with people/governments to help those in need of treatment to water pollution.

Rosalind Franklin:

⁹ “The Nobel Prize in Physics 1903.” *NobelPrize.org*, www.nobelprize.org/prizes/physics/1903/marie-curie/facts/.

¹⁰ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. “Marie Curie.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 3 Nov. 2019, www.britannica.com/biography/Marie-Curie.

Rosalind Franklin is a chemist, who is best known for her work on x-ray crystallography, which ultimately caused her to play a major role in the Watson-Crick DNA model. She developed an early passion for science, attending Newham College at Cambridge University. Franklin began to work on x-ray diffraction on DNA samples, while in John T. Randall's Biophysics Unit at King's College London.¹¹ Lab chief, Maurice Wilkins, however, was able to procure her unpublished research, which he then passed on to James Watson and Francis Crick. Franklin's research proved influential, as James Watson, Francis Crick, and Maurice Wilkins were eventually awarded a Nobel Prize for their work on the model, amidst her battle with ovarian cancer. Unfortunately they never credited Rosalind Franklin for her groundbreaking work, and she was never awarded a Nobel Prize.

Possible Actions:

Rosalind Franklin being a brilliant chemist, and a talented person in a scientific field, will allow her to have a good understanding of the water crisis. Specifically, she has the skillset and capacity to work with water contamination, as it relates to chemistry. Additionally, her long and difficult fight with ovarian cancer can help her understand the perspectives of those struggling with poisoning from the water. Her capability to show victims empathy will be beneficial to deciding what actions will help the people impacted by this crisis.

Questions to Consider:

- What is one of the aspects that needs to be addressed immediately?
- Will your country be directly impacted by this crisis?

¹¹ "Biographical Overview | Rosalind Franklin - Profiles in Science." *U.S. National Library of Medicine*, National Institutes of Health, profiles.nlm.nih.gov/spotlight/kr/feature/biographical.

- What role do you/does your country play in this? Ex. relief/aid, victim, etc.

Links for further research:

- <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/water-and-sanitation/>
- <https://www.unwater.org/water-facts/water-sanitation-and-hygiene/>
- <https://water.org/our-impact/water-crisis/>
- <https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/water/>