



Study guide

WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION



TOPIC : CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK



Contents:

Page 3	Letter from the Chairs
Page 4	<u>Introduction to the committee</u>
	Important reminder
Page 5	<u>Introduction to the topic</u>
	What is coronavirus?
	Novel Coronavirus
Page 6	How China responded
	Parties Involved
Page 7	Impact on economy
	WHO's strategic objectives
Page 8	Issues to be tackled
	Sources and helpful links
Page 9	Helpful data



Letter from chairs

Dear honorable delegates,

it is our utmost pleasure to welcome you at ZAMUN 2020. We are happy that you have chosen World Health Organization committee for this year. You are about to (hopefully) solve the novel coronavirus crisis. This virus is known for no more than two months on the day this study guide is being written. We, the Chairs, hope that your knowledge, experiences and critical thinking will be used during the session and you will be able to handle this issue very well. It is important that society and countries present in WHO can handle the novel coronavirus both in real life and at ZAMUN.

To introduce ourselves a bit, we are both students. I, Peter Židek, study at Private Grammar School in Žilina, currently in 4th grade. I have attended many MUNs during the last 4 years, ZAMUN being one of them for 3 years straight. This year I have the honor to be chair of your committee and I hope that my experiences can help you.

Lucia Hodás-Pauer, studies at Gymnázium bilingválne Žilina, also in 4th grade. As Peter I attended many MUNs during my studies. This year I'll be Under Chair for the second time at ZAMUN. I hope we all will have good time.

Both I and my Under Chair will try to do our best. Whether it is chairing the sessions or helping you out. We have carefully prepared this study guide for you to be prepared well.

In case you would like to ask us something, you can contact me on my email peterzidek1@gmail.com. We are keen to see your skills and we are looking forward to the debates.

Yours sincerely

Peter Židek, Chair of WHO

Lucia Hodas Pauer, Under Chair of WHO



Introduction to the committee:

The World Health Organization is a specialized agency of the United Nations that is concerned with world public health. It was established on 7 April 1948, and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. The WHO is a member of the United Nations Development Group.

WHO Member States appoint delegations to the World Health Assembly, WHO's supreme decision-making body. All UN Member States are eligible for WHO membership, and, according to the WHO website, "other countries may be admitted as members when their application has been approved by a simple majority vote of the World Health Assembly". The World Health Assembly is attended by delegations from all Member States, and determines the policies of the Organization.

These days, world is facing a crisis in form of novel coronavirus. We are aware of this virus since 31st December of 2019. To this day, it has infected over 75 000 people and has been deadly to 2 000 people. It is important that this issue is solved as soon as possible. It has damaged economy, relations between countries and races. Virus first occurred in Chinese city Wuhan and has spread to whole China and other countries of the globe.

Unfortunately, we still know very little about the novel coronavirus which only makes it harder to stop and find a cure. Aim of WHO is to combat this virus as efficiently as possible before it becomes pandemic and takes more lives.

Important reminder:

As the coronavirus outbreak is an ongoing crisis, it is more than necessary to keep track of the latest development. There is link to daily WHO updates with new strategic objectives (they are similar to the issues to be tackled), new map of affected countries, stats, graphs and charts. The chairs would like you to check them daily or each few days until the beginning of ZaMUN.



Introduction to the topic:

What is coronavirus?

Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV).

These viruses are zoonotic, which means they are transmitted from animals to humans. There are several corona viruses circulating in the animals that have not yet infected humans.

Respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath or breathing difficulties are common signs. However, in more severe cases the infection causes pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death.

Novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

Also called Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak according to WHO.

The *2019-nCoV* was first reported in Wuhan, China, on 31st December of 2019.

Its animal source has not been identified yet, while it is likely that the first human infections came from live animal market in China. It is respiratory disease, which spreads primarily through contact with an infected person through respiratory droplets generated when a person, for example, coughs or sneezes, or through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose.

2019-nCoV is transmitted from person to person after close contact with infected human. That means the virus can be transmitted almost anywhere from workplaces, medical facilities to households.

People living or travelling in an area where the *2019-nCoV* virus is circulating may be at risk of infection. At present, *2019-nCoV* is circulating in China where the vast majority of people infected have been reported to authorities. Those infected from other countries are among people who have recently traveled from China or who have been living or working closely with those travelers, such as family members, co-workers or medical professionals caring for a patient before they knew the patient was infected with *2019-nCoV*.

While there is still much to learn about *2019-nCoV* such as how it affects people, it appears that older people and people with pre-existing medical conditions are in higher risk of developing severe disease.

To date, there is no specific medicine recommended to prevent or treat the novel coronavirus. However, those infected with *2019-nCoV* should receive appropriate care to relieve and treat symptoms, and those with severe illness should receive optimized supportive care. Some specific treatments are under investigation and will be tested through clinical trials. WHO is helping to coordinate efforts to develop medicines to treat *2019-nCoV* with a range of partners.



How China responded

Officials of Hubei were firstly blamed for downplaying the seriousness of the virus and potentially covering up its severity and ignoring evidence of person to person spread of the virus. Later on, a transcript of an internal Communist Party speech appeared to throw doubt on this narrative, revealing Xi knew about and was directing the response to the virus on January 7, that is almost two weeks before he commented on it publicly. This clearly shows that Chinese officials maintain tight control over the information.

In early stages of the outbreak, Li Wenliang, doctor from Wuhan warned about the dangers of 2019-nCoV. Shortly after that, he was arrested and only few day ago, he passed away. Since that, he has become a symbol of the government's perceived mishandling of the outbreak. He has come to represent not just the virus's persistent spread, but also Beijing's apparent muzzling of information about the outbreak.

With that being said, it is not certain whether Chinese government is currently withholding any information or not. More tension may be created over the time between China and other countries and between other authorities as well if there are beliefs that China is deliberately withholding information regarding the novel coronavirus.

Parties involved

China - 2019-nCoV originated in China, all the infected people were either visiting China from that time or they have met a person who transmitted the virus. There are doubts whether Chinese authorities are handling the crisis well or not. Despite that, China is receiving support in order to handle the virus.

Taiwan - Since 2016, when Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen took office, its relations with Beijing have not been good. From that time, Taiwan is being continuously excluded from WHO meetings and assemblies. In case of novel coronavirus outbreak in Taiwan, they may not be well prepared nor receive adequate help.

Italy – Europe's worst affected country by the novel coronavirus with more than 2500 cases confirmed. Since Italy is famous tourist destination in this time of the year, more cases may occur in other countries as tourist may be infected and transmitting the virus.

World Health Organization - WHO has set their strategic objectives to handle the crisis as efficiently as possible and is actively supporting countries involved, mainly China.



Impact on economy

While the novel coronavirus has hit mostly China, the economic impact is much larger. With Chinese cities under lockdown, travel companies and airlines have been hit the most. People stay at home to limit the risk of getting exposed to the virus, thus demand for certain goods has been changed. Restaurants, cinemas and hotel providers are suffering from loss of clients in these times. Many international retailers have closed their shops throughout China. However, this is only a local impact and novel coronavirus is hitting the international market as well.

Crude oil has hit its lowest price for the past year. In the past two weeks, its prices dropped by 15 % as China is the world's second-largest consumer of oil after the United States. It is also the world's largest importer of oil, accounting for a bit more than 20 percent of all global oil exports.

Stock markets are falling, Chinese has fell 8 % after their holidays.

Chinese economy should be recovering very quickly, with problems only in the first quarter. If the virus continues to spread, damage to both world and local economy will increase. In order to take the pressure of banks, The People's Bank of China is injecting huge amount of cash into markets. We also have to keep in mind the ongoing trade war, height of their debt and the fact that Chinese growth has been slowing down over the past years.

According to a study by the World Bank, a severe pandemic¹ could cause economic losses equal to nearly 5% of global GDP, or more than \$3 trillion.

After recent development, economy may be coming into recession; however, this is hard to tell as we are not aware of next development of the virus.

WHO's strategic objectives for this response are to:

Interrupt human-to-human transmission including reducing secondary infections among close contacts and health care workers, preventing transmission amplification events, and preventing further international spread

Identify, isolate and care for patients early, including providing optimized care for infected patients;

Identify and reduce transmission from the animal source;

Address crucial unknowns regarding clinical severity, extent of transmission and infection, treatment options, and accelerate the development of diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines;

Communicate critical risk and event information to all communities and counter misinformation;

Minimize social and economic impact through multisectoral partnerships.

(Objectives are from 3rd March, 2020 and they may change over the time)

¹ A pandemic is an epidemic of disease that has spread across a large region; for instance multiple continents, or even worldwide. Pandemic on 2019-nCoV has not been declared yet by WHO.



Issues to be tackled

Prevent virus to spread further - try to think of ways how to stop the virus from spreading rapidly or at all.

Limit human to human transition - what can be done to limit the virus from transiting between humans.

Explore the virus and its origin - to this day, we still know very little about the virus and it slows us down.

Seek treatment and cure - currently, there is no cure for those who are infected and developing one may take too much time, so you have try to find a way how to solve this issue.

Minimize impact on economic sector and social sector - as we have mentioned, the virus is harming local economies and world economy too, meanwhile it creates tension among countries and societies, your task here is to limit the consequences of the virus.

Prevent declaration of virus as pandemic - what can be done to limit the spread of virus across continents or worldwide.

Explore and find faster ways of identification of similar viruses and diseases in future - we do know that if we can identify the virus faster, we can fight it sooner and better, so you have to think about the future as well.

Sources and helpful links:

<https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

<https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>

(Basic information about the novel coronavirus and coronaviruses in general)

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports/>

(Official situation reports by WHO, updated each day)

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance>

(To see how well your country is prepared for potential outbreak)

<https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/28-01-2020-who-china-leaders-discuss-next-steps-in-battle-against-coronavirus-outbreak>

<https://thediplomat.com/2019/05/taiwan-picks-up-international-support-after-being-barred-from-world-health-assembly/>

<https://fortune.com/2020/02/07/li-wenliang-doctor-coronavirus-death-censorship/>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/business-51386575>

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/02/08/business/coronavirus-global-economy/index.html>

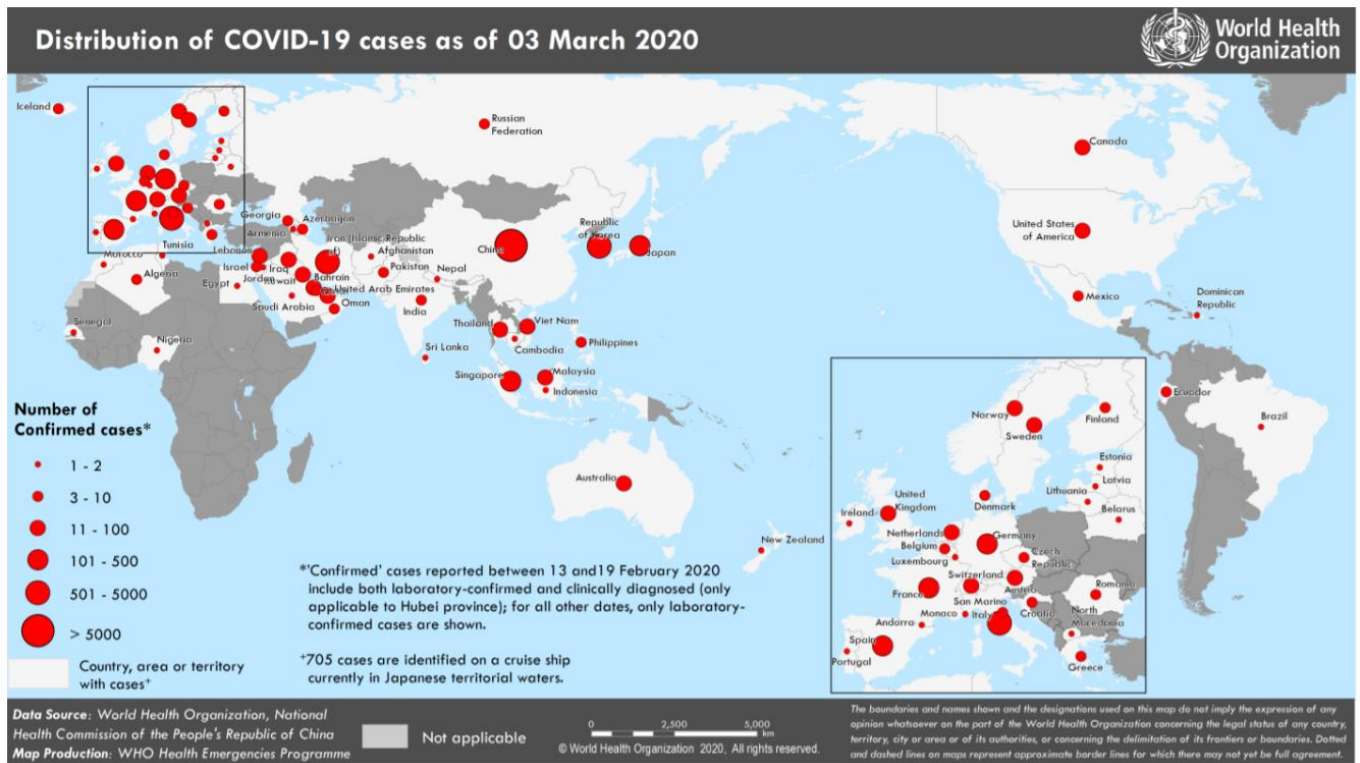
<https://oilprice.com/Energy/Crude-Oil/What-Will-Oil-Prices-Do-After-The-Coronavirus.html>

<https://hbr.org/2020/03/what-coronavirus-could-mean-for-the-global-economy>

Note: This study guide was written on 3rd March and this issue is still developing, so bear in mind that anything written in here may change over the time, The Chairs would like you to keep track of this topic until 22nd of April, when ZAMUN starts.



Helpful data



(Map below is from 3rd March, 2020 and it may change over the time)

