
World Health Organization

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Agenda item 1

Analyzing the Environmental Side Effects of Industrial Development Detrimental to Human Health

Report of the Chair

I. Statement of the Problem

1. Industry is vital to our world today and acts as a major economic factor for nations worldwide. However, its health effects are often severe. Specifically, the manufacturing industry has become a larger threat to human health as it has continued to grow exponentially over many years. For many, urban living makes it inevitable to encounter the negative effects of industry on health. As just one example, the World Health Organization has stated that the 18 million people who reside in Cairo, Egypt breathe in 20 times the acceptable level of air pollution each day. [1]

2. The fact that the negative effects of industry can be seen in a number of industrial aspects is something that makes solving this issue a very intricate process. Industry can not only harm humans through the air they breathe but also through water systems, radiation, land pollution, etc. [2] Nations who are developed may contemplate their industry's health effects while developing countries may not have the necessary funds in which to consider the harmful industrial effects that industrialization could bring. Not only is each nation's industry having an effect on their own people, but their pollution is also detrimental to the international community.

3. Air pollution is possibly the most predominant negative factor on human health caused by the growth of industry. [3] Caused mostly from emissions by factories, automobiles, and other industrial components, air pollution is especially apparent and threatening in industrialized nations. According to the World Bank, 2-5% of urban area deaths are caused by exposure to air that is considered unsafe by WHO. [4] Water and land pollution caused by growing industry is also a huge cause of human health problems; all of these hazards can be linked back to industry.

4. Poor air and water quality caused by industrialization leads to human diseases, deaths, and genetic mutations. If this committee does not act, its side effects will only worsen and continue to cause more damage to human wellness. This body must give this topic attention on the international and national level in hope of implementing effective solutions to reduce industry's health effects in prevention of human health hazards.

5. A large part of this issue is multinational corporations (commonly referred to as MNCs) moving into countries and damaging the environment regardless of laws or pollution restrictions. For example, many oil companies are located in different nations. Some of these oil companies are not as environmentally-friendly as is expected; therefore causing health problems within the nation. Better managing the damage caused by MNCs is a potential solution to this issue.

II. History of the Problem

6. In London, England during the winter of 1952, deadly smog condensed over the city from the increase of local industry emissions and burning coal. Thousands of tons of harmful particles and carbon dioxide collected to form a thick black layer of smoke-polluted air over London. This occurrence killed approximately 12,000 people who were attributed with pneumonia, bronchitis, tuberculosis, and heart failure. Those who already suffered from respiratory problems such as asthma died of respiratory distress. The aftermath however turned towards better efforts in the future as society began to realize the close tie between industrial pollution and public health. [5]

7. The Kyoto Protocol, established by the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), is an international agreement to work towards a goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions during the years 2008-2012. The Kyoto Protocol includes 84 signed nations and has been ratified in 184 countries. [7] However, the Kyoto Protocol's ambitious expectations have not yet been satisfied. Predictions suggest that its goal will not be successful but still be of great importance as a step toward more dramatic and effective actions. [8] Greenhouse gas emissions are the result of over 150 years of industrial activity and are the cause of many health hazards all over the world. [6]

8. More recently, there have been numerous issues in many industrialized nations. China, especially, has problems with their enormous CO₂ emissions that are caused by their factories and working environments. China's CO₂ releases are climbing at an alarmingly high rate that is worse than was expected. China contributes more than 67% of the world's global coal consumption which is the main cause of their dramatic CO₂ emission increase. [9] It is important to note the unhealthy conditions in the factories that cause workers' wellness issues.

III. Potential Solutions

9. When exploring possible solutions to this issue, it is important for delegates to remember the complexity and global outreach this topic commands. Each nation is unique and has its own industry and health issues. So, when creating working papers, delegates must be mindful of other delegates' plans of action so that each country can contribute as it sees fit. Delegates should consider previous plans and programs implemented by the World Health Organization and other UN bodies. Also contemplate the possibility of both long-term and short-term plans to include in resolutions.

10. Potential solutions also include enforcing stricter guidelines and possible ways to clean up damage. Many programs today work toward cleaner environments that are better for human health, but when researching these, delegates must consider if they are effective or not. If not, what can be done to improve them? And how can these be incorporated into diverse nations? Part of the problem is the previous damage already done. A resolution should also include proposals towards cleaning up this damage. When delegates are writing position papers before debate and/or working papers in the conference, they should consider these options.

11. Providing incentives for MNCs using greener, safer technologies is a possible technique to be used in finding solutions for this topic. Many MNCs will move within different nations borders and often times, add harmful pollutants to the environment. Delegates should consider proposing incentives for such companies to enforce health regulations.

12. Another branch of solutions for this topic includes funding. As delegates research this topic, it is recommended that they consider funding options that could be accessed by many diverse nations. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private corporations are a dependable option to aid financially in developing a safer manufacturing industry.

IV. Position and Research Tips

13. When researching this topic, delegates are encouraged to verify their nations industrial development and its effect on their populations health. Refer to credible resources to find each countrys position and past experiences with harm to human health by industry. Consider these questions:

- What kind of industries is the nation invested in and is it growing?
- Has the nation experienced major effects from their industry? If so, how?
- What current environmental health effects caused by industry are the nation dealing with?
- What, if anything, has the nation done to protect human health from industrial pollution?
- What WHO programs has the nation worked with previously?

Helpful Web Resources

- <<http://www.who.int/en/>>
- <<http://www.cdc.gov/>>
- <<http://www.who.int/research/en/>>
- <<http://www.cia.gov/>>

V. Note to Delegates

I would like to thank all delegates in advance for taking part in MUNSA XVI on behalf of the World Health Organization. I greatly look forward to seeing all of you in action during the conference and watching each nation become involved in the effort towards a resolution. I have great hopes that each delegate will work hard and research their countrys position on the topic and become involved in debate. Above all, I also encourage you to enjoy yourselves

at MUNSA XVI. Engage in this opportunity with authenticity and remember to appreciate your experience. Thank you for joining MUNSA XVI.

Isabella Olea

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