

# MMUN Jr 2021

## United Nations Environmental Program

### Committee Overview

This committee will be run Harvard Style, meaning you cannot write resolutions prior to the conference. **Anyone caught plagiarizing clauses from an external or prewritten source will be disqualified from all awards, no exceptions.**

It is strongly recommended that you write at least one position paper, in which you describe the historical context surrounding a given topic, your country's stance on that matter, and/or possible solutions to the issues at hand. There is no minimum word requirement for your position papers, so long as it is obvious that you have done thorough research. Delegates should send their position paper(s) to [simratpal.deol@icsd.k12.ny.us](mailto:simratpal.deol@icsd.k12.ny.us)—**no papers will be accepted two days prior to when the committee opens.**

To be eligible for an award, you must submit at least one position paper. The quality of your paper, your behavior within committee, and your ability to propose meaningful solutions within the context of your country will also be taken into consideration.

### Committee Description

Controlling the International Plastic Waste Trade to Protect Developing Nations

Preventing the Rise of New Zoonotic Diseases

### Chairs

Sammy Deol | [simratpal.deol@icsd.k12.ny.us](mailto:simratpal.deol@icsd.k12.ny.us)

Hey, everyone! My name is Sammy, and I'm a high-school senior from Ithaca, New York! I've been doing Model UN for four years, and this is my second time chairing a committee. Beyond Model UN, I'm the president of both my school's Key Club and our Medical Careers Club, and I'm on the editorial board of our newspaper. I know Model UN conferences can be intimidating, so please don't hesitate to email me if you have any questions or concerns. I'm here to make this the best conference possible, and I'm looking forward to meeting you all!

# MMUN Jr 2021

## United Nations Environmental Program

### Controlling the International Plastic Waste Trade to Protect Developing Nations



For over thirty years, China imported about half of the world's recyclable plastic waste, making other nations reliant on the Asian country for proper disposal. The European Union and United States once shipped 95 percent and 70 percent, respectively, of their yearly recycled plastic to China, where environmental regulations have historically been both weak and unenforced.

However, as a part of a recent effort to combat its woes with pollution, China effectively barred the importation of plastics with its January 2018 "National Sword" policy. Though this move may be understandable from China's perspective, it has had massive repercussions on the international plastic industry. Recycling costs have increased throughout much of the developed world, which, when combined with the increased demand on individual recycling facilities, has led to labor shortages and facility shutdowns.

In addition, most developed countries lack the infrastructure needed to recycle their own waste, even if they have the economic resources to invest in recycling. As a result, these wealthier nations are increasingly shipping their solid waste to poorer states, particularly those in Southeastern Asia. Indonesia, for example, saw its importation of plastic waste rise by 250% in 2018, the year China passed its new legislation.

Plastic substances unsurprisingly pose a serious threat to wild animals—one estimate from the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) claims that plastic debris kills over one million seabirds and hundreds of thousands of marine animals every year. They also contain toxins, such as the endocrine-disrupting bisphenol A (BPA), that can directly harm humans.

Even after international agreements, such as the 2019 Basel Convention, have tried to mitigate the pressure on developing nations, they still face the burden of these adverse effects. Thus, it is important that the delegates of UNEP discover ways to make the international plastic waste trade more equitable.

*What can the international community do to foster stronger recycling systems within developed countries? How should the nations that are hurt the most by the plastic waste trade protect their civilians from the dangers of plastic pollution? How can the delegates of UNEP encourage member-states to switch to environmentally-friendlier alternatives to plastics?*

### Sources:

<https://e360.yale.edu/features/piling-up-how-chinas-ban-on-importing-waste-has-stalled-global-recycling>

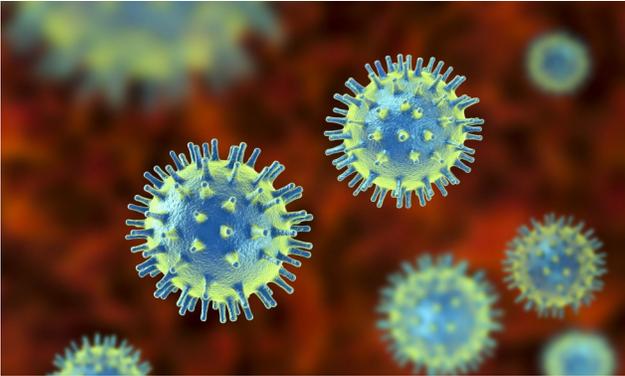
<https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2020-world-plastic-waste/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/12/climate/plastics-waste-export-ban.html>

# MMUN Jr 2021

## United Nations Environmental Program

### Preventing the Rise of New Zoonotic Diseases



With the worldwide COVID-19 death toll approaching four and a half million, the sheer scale of the ongoing pandemic is unprecedented for modern times. From an environmental standpoint, however, an event of this caliber was almost inevitable. As we continue to destroy the Earth's natural habitats and, in the process, increase the frequency of interactions we have with wild animals, we become much more vulnerable to the diseases that those organisms carry.

Many of the diseases that have historically threatened humans can be classified as "zoonotic," meaning they are derived from animals. The bubonic plague that killed over one-third of Europe's population in the 1300s comes from the *Yersinia pestis* bacterium, transmitted from rodents via fleas. More relevant to recent times, Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) comes from a class of viruses—appropriately named ebolaviruses—that, before spreading to primates and humans, likely originated in fruit bats.

The spread of such diseases from animals to humans is often facilitated by the unsanitary handling of animals. For example, experts believe that the first known case of COVID-19 can be traced back to a live animal market in China; similar shops in developing countries are seen by scientists as breeding grounds for potentially dangerous contagions.

Though enacting worldwide restrictions on the sale of wild animals would mitigate the threat posed by zoonotic diseases, doing so would threaten the food security of millions of people. Furthermore, live animal markets are not the only places where these diseases emerge—Malaysia's 1998-99 outbreak of the Nipah virus likely stemmed from contamination on pig farms, for instance.

The world has also grown to be amazingly interconnected, a quality that has only heightened our susceptibility to these illnesses. The carrier of an unknown disease can bring the infection to any part of the world in a day's time. Given the potential threats that zoonotic diseases pose to future generations, the delegates of UNEP must discuss realistic ways to prevent their spread.

*How can live animal markets be regulated on a global scale to lower the risk of disease spread? What are some other ways the international community can make human-animal interactions more sanitary? How should nations react when a new zoonotic disease is spreading within their borders?*

#### Sources:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XeoG6xuXdV4>

<https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/07/06/888077232/u-n-predicts-rise-in-diseases-that-jump-from-animals-to-humans>

<https://www.understandinganimalresearch.org.uk/news/research-medical-benefits/the-increase-in-zoonotic-diseases-the-who-the-why-and-the-when/>