



United Nations
Development Programme
Access to Clean water

Table of Contents

Director’s Letter	3
Introduction to MUN	4
What is Model UN?	4
Recommendations for Choosing a Country	4
Research Tips	5
The United Nations	5
Committee Overview	5
Topic Overview	6
Historical Analysis	7
Timeline	8
Current Situation	10
Bloc Positions	11
Countries Emphasizing Access to Clean Water	11
Countries Starting to Make Efforts for More Access to Clean Water	11
Countries Taking Limited Action	11
Potential Solutions	11
Lower Water Prices	11
Reduce Corporate Water Footprints	12
Educate to Lower Water Consumption	12
Water projects in Developing Countries	12
Guiding Questions	13
Further Research	13
Bibliography	13

Director's Letter

Dear distinguished delegates,

Welcome to AbbyMUN 2021! My name is Chetanbir Brar and I will be your Director in the UNDP committee this year. I am a Grade 10 student at Garibaldi Secondary School who loves sports and clubs. Recently I grew a passion for volleyball and badminton. I don't consider myself to be physically active, but I try my best. I'm also involved in the Student Government, Leadership, and Photography Club at my school. I have always been interested in debating and that is one of the reasons why I chose to be a Director for AbbyMUN. In the past, I was a chairperson for a small MUN club in grade 8 and that was also a very interesting experience for me. I'm really excited about this year's committee as this is my first time as a director, and I will try my best to make this experience as smooth as possible.

Joining me in helping run the committee is our Assistant Director, Raissa Batra. She is also a Grade 10 student studying at Abbotsford Senior Secondary School, looking to join the IB Programme next year. She is a resourceful person and easily approachable. She has participated in many MUNs over the span of two years and even won an award for a Special Mention as the Delegate of Italy in the Millennium MUN 2020. She hopes to make your experience with MUNs as interesting and fruitful as possible.

This committee is UNDP in which we will be discussing access to clean water across the world. We expect each delegate to come to the conference with an understanding of his or her country's positions and a willingness to forge agreements. The best way to prepare to represent your country well is to read this backgrounder in-depth and even do your research. To ensure that you act professionally and diplomatically, please learn and practice the Rules of Procedure, which you can learn more about in the 'resources' section on our website, and also please dress in professional business attire for the conference.

But most importantly, I hope you have an informative yet enjoyable experience with us. If you have any questions, please feel free to email us at undp@abbymun.com. Please send your position papers to the same.

Kind regards,

Chetanbir Brar
Director of UNDP
AbbyMUN 2021

Introduction to MUN

What is Model UN?

Model United Nations, also known as Model UN or MUN, is a political simulation where students role-play as delegates to simulate the United Nations¹. This is an extracurricular activity and generally done through MUN conferences which are organized by high schools across Canada. During conferences you are eligible for awards which include best position paper, best new delegate, honourable mention, outstanding delegate and lastly, best delegate, for which you receive a gavel. Through MUN you gain the skills of research, public speaking, debating, collaborating, and writing expertises. Students are to give detailed speeches on their nation's position and offer possible solutions. Additionally, students are recommended to write a position paper on your given topic describing its history, solutions, etc. Position papers are mandatory to be considered for an award.

Recommendations for Choosing a Country

When picking a country it is crucial to find one that is the most suitable for you. Consider the following:

- Does my country have the same political views as me?
- Is my country challenging and can I step outside my comfort zone?
- Is my country involved in the topic at hand or would I be rather less involved?
- Is there substantial information about the country's history and actions on the topic at hand?
- Can I feel comfortable to come up with viable solutions and provide overall quality to the debate with this country?
- Can I provide statistics and reliable information to my fellow delegates?

¹ <https://bestdelegate.com/what-is-model-united-nations/>

Research Tips

Research is one of the reasons why some people are reluctant to join MUN. From the lack of available information or the sophisticated use of language, research can prove quite arduous for many beginner delegates. Nevertheless, the more research you do, the more confident and knowledgeable you will feel about the topic and the country you are representing. For many, Wikipedia is seen as an unreliable source. It is a great starting point but it should not be your only source of information. A great way to obtain more information is through the ‘further reading’ section of the backgrounder. Additionally, you should research in areas like culture, economics, politics, history and governmental organizations relating to the topic.

The United Nations

The United Nations (UN) is an international body established on October 24, 1945, after World War II. The UN was the second attempt to create an international organization after the failure of the League of Nations, which was created in 1919. The UN’s office is currently located in New York City with additional headquarters in Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi. The officials include Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. The objective of the UN is to maintain peace and security, develop friendly relations, and solve global implications with respect to the basics of human rights. In addition, the United Nations is split into 6 sections. The Security Council, General Assembly (includes DISEC), Economic and Social Council, International Court of Justice, Secretariat and Trusteeship Council.²

Committee Overview

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) aims to help developing nations with poverty reduction, democracy, crisis prevention and recovery, and environmental and natural resource protection. UNDP is a 165-country network that brings together the 40 UN funds, programmes, specialised agencies, and other organisations striving to help countries in the eradication of poverty, the reduction of disparities and exclusion, and building resilience so that countries can progress well. UNDP, as the UN's development agency, is crucial in assisting countries in achieving the sustainable development goals.

UNDP relies entirely on voluntary contributions in the form of unrestricted regular resources (core) and contributions allocated for a specific subject, programme, or project from UN Member States, multilateral organisations, the private sector, and other sources to fulfill its mandate. The development that UNDP is seeking is a long term process which requires stable

² <https://www.britannica.com/topic/United-Nations>

funding in order to respond to challenges. Flexible resources allow UNDP to enable rapid responses to development needs and emergencies.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the result of the merging of the United Nations Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance (UNEPTA), established in 1949, and the United Nations Special Fund, established in 1958.³ The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was founded by the United Nations General Assembly in 1965. The two organizations were fully combined into the UNDP in 1971.⁴

UNDP plays an important role in fostering coordination within the UN system at the country level, by providing key system-wide services and country support platforms to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and plays a critical advisory role in driving the sustainable development agenda based on Member States' priorities and country context.

Topic Overview

Water scarcity affects more than 40 percent of people, an alarming number that will increase with the rising temperatures. Although 2.1 billion people have improved water hygiene since 1990, every continent is affected by dwindling supplies of drinking water.⁵ By 2050, it is projected that at least one in four people will suffer recurring water shortages. Safe and affordable drinking water for all by 2030 requires investment in adequate infrastructure, sanitation and the promotion of hygiene. It is essential to protect and restore water-related ecosystems. We have to provide safe and affordable drinking water for over 800 million people who are without basic services and also increase the availability and safety of services for more than two billion people.

There's nothing more essential to life on earth than water. People are struggling to access the quantity and quality of water they need for drinking, cooking, bathing, handwashing, and growing their food. In 2010, the UN General Assembly explicitly recognized the human right to water and sanitation. Everyone has the right to sufficient, continuous, safe, acceptable, physically accessible, and affordable water for personal and domestic use. Some 829 000 people are estimated to die each year from diarrhea as a result of unsafe drinking-water, sanitation, and hand hygiene.

³ <https://www.undp.org/about-us#:~:text=History,Assembly%20of%20the%20United%20Nations>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ https://www1.undp.org/content/seoul_policy_center/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-6-clean-water-and-sanitation.html

Many economies depend on clean water for manufacturing, farming, tourism, recreation, energy production, and other economic sectors that need clean water to function and flourish. In developed countries, that is, countries that have everything from technology to luxury, getting clean water at home is as 'natural' as breathing fresh air. This is something most people in the developed world may not realize, but it does not apply to the rest of the world. There are far more countries that do not have access to clean water or water that is fit for human consumption.

When people have clean water near home, threats become opportunities. Clean water restores time and energy. When children are not walking long distances for water, they're freed for school and play. It improves education. When children are not late because they're fetching water, or missing school because they're sick from waterborne illnesses, they have a far better chance of learning well. Clean water grows opportunities. Women nowadays who do not have to spend hours every day to get water, have the time to increase their incomes. But unfortunately this is not the same all around the world. Almost 60 percent of the population in Ethiopia lacks basic access to drinking water.⁶ Half of those without basic access are drinking from water that is more than likely or certainly contaminated, like hand-dug wells, unprotected natural springs, ponds, and more. In Papua New Guinea, 51 percent of the population drinks surface water, which is water from ponds, lakes, rivers, swamps, and springs, among other locations.⁷ Additionally, under 45 percent of the country of Mozambique, which is over 13 million people, lacks basic access to water.⁸ Fortunately, many countries are now increasing their access to clean water with the help of UNDP.

Historical Analysis

Access to clean water has been a crippling crisis world-wide. It was recognized as a human right by the UN in 2010. Many countries do not have access to clean drinking water to this day. Access to safe, affordable and reliable drinking water and sanitation services are basic human rights. International human rights law obliges States to work towards achieving universal access to water and sanitation for all, without any discrimination, while prioritizing those most in need.

The UNDP has implemented multiple international programs that have helped with providing clean drinking water and sanitation across the world. The involvement of the UK's Department for International Development helped create two linked initiatives: the Global Annual Assessment of sanitation and drinking water (GLAAS, now renamed the global Assessment and

⁶<https://lifewater.org/blog/how-many-countries-dont-have-clean-water-top-10-list-and-facts/#:~:text=Ethiopia,spring s%2C%20ponds%2C%20and%20more>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

Analysis of Sanitation and Water) and the Sanitation and Water for All partnership).⁹ GLAAS is implemented by WHO under the protection of UN-Water to research progress and obstacles within the sector (a task performed by the Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation before the switch to household data). It uses existing high-quality sources of consolidated data, like OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) for aid flows, by data from other national authorities such as questionnaire surveys.¹⁰

Another program is the UNDP Water Government Programme (WGP) which helps countries achieve integrated, equitable management of water, and universal access to safe water supply and sanitation. Focusing on the funding side of it, the estimated annual funding for this program is \$80 to \$90 million. In 2015, 4.5 billion people lacked safely managed sanitation services and 2.3 billion lacked even basic sanitation and clean water.¹¹ After this, many programs were developed to accommodate these people with less clean water and sanitation access.

These are the goals of the UNDP in their 2030 agenda to provide clean water to all people. The first goal is to achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation by 2030. They seek to pay special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations. Another goal is to improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating discharges and minimizing the release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the percentage of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse at the global level. They want to substantially improve the global efficiency of water use in all sectors and ensure a viable supply of clean water to address water scarcity.¹² Furthermore, it is imperative to implement integrated water management at all levels, including through cross-border cooperation. Finally, it is also important to expand international cooperation and support for capacity building for developing countries in activities and water and sanitation programs.

Timeline

1930 - The League of Nations Health Organization (LNHO, predecessor of the WHO), published recommendations and collected data on drinking water and sanitation as part of its rural hygiene programme.¹³

⁹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/escr/pages/water.aspx>

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ <https://www.who.int/news/item/12-07-2017-2-1-billion-people-lack-safe-drinking-water-at-home-more-than-twice-as-many-lack-safe-sanitation>

¹² <https://www.fao.org/sustainable-development-goals/indicators/641/en/>

¹³ [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4143854/#:~:text=International%20monitoring%20of%20drinking%20water%20and%20sanitation%20has%20been%20on.Fund%20\(UNICEF\)%20through%20their%20Joint](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4143854/#:~:text=International%20monitoring%20of%20drinking%20water%20and%20sanitation%20has%20been%20on.Fund%20(UNICEF)%20through%20their%20Joint)

Mid-1930s -- Beginning of the monitoring of international drinking water and sanitation in response to and in support of a series of international targets and agreements around drinking water and sanitation.

November 22, 1965 -- UNDP formed to help countries eliminate poverty and achieve sustainable human development, an approach to economic growth that emphasizes improving the quality of life of all citizens while conserving the environment and natural resources for future generations.

1981 -- The International Drinking-water Supply and Sanitation Decade lasted until 1990. It aimed for substantial improvement in drinking water and sanitation by 1990, which resulted in national action plans for water supply and sanitation, in addition to the Mar del Plata action plan. This decade also encouraged more communities to participate in the management of water and sanitation facilities.

1983 -- With Mozambique suffering from a drought and internal conflict, UNDP collaborated with the government and other partners to identify groundwater sources and drill wells all across the country.¹⁴

1990 -- The World Summit for Children took place in 1990 with its Declaration and Plan of Action. It called for universal access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities for sewerage by 2000. The summit led to the ratification of 192 countries of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.¹⁵ The demand for nationally representative information resulting from this process prompted UNICEF to increase its monitoring efforts, launching the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) in 1995 to assess the country's situation with respect to several issues, including drinking water and sanitation.

1990 -- WHO and UNICEF combined monitoring efforts into a joint monitoring program for water supply and sanitation.¹⁶ The JMP, although known as a joint program, has functioned since its inception coordinating the activities carried out separately by the headquarters of the two organizations.

1997 -- WHO and UNICEF reviewed their monitoring experience. An important change was made to the approach for estimating coverage. It switched from the government provided data to data collected through censuses and nationally representative household surveys.¹⁷

¹⁴ <http://50.undp.org/en/>

¹⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Summit_for_Children

¹⁶ https://www.unwater.org/publication_categories/whounicef-joint-monitoring-programme-for-water-supply-sanitation-hygiene-jmp/

¹⁷ Ibid.

July 28, 2010 -- The United Nations officially recognizes access to clean drinking water as a basic human right.¹⁸

2014 -- The Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation (JMP) starts analyzing available data on all UN Member States and countries and territories recognized by the UN (over 190 of the 240 UN-recognised countries and territories, as of 2014).¹⁹

Current Situation

The global water crisis has led to millions of deaths and has left thousands infected and diseased. It is imperative that we face the crisis before it's too late. An estimated 1.2 million people died from unsafe water sources in 2017, which was 2.2% of the world's deaths for that year.²⁰ In low-income countries, it accounts for 6% of deaths. One in four people do not have access to safe drinking water. SDG Target 6.1 is to: "achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all" by 2030.²¹ In 2020, almost three-quarters (74%) of the world population had access to a safely managed water source.²² While the world has made progress over the past five years, it has been very slow. In 2015 (at the start of the SDGs) only 70% of the world's population had safe drinking water.²³ This means we have seen an increase of four percentage points in five years. It is clearly too slow to achieve universal access by 2030. If progress continues at this rate, we will only reach 82% by 2030. If we are to reach our target, we need to see more than triple (3.2x increase) the rate of progress for the next decade.²⁴

The definition of decent drinking water sources includes "water that is carried out inside buildings (household water connection pipes located inside the user's house, land or yard) and other sources of decent drinking water (public faucets or drain pipes, wells or wells, protected excavations). wells, protected springs, and rainwater harvesting.) In 2020, 6% of the world's population had no access to improved water sources. Low-income countries tend to have a larger share of the population without access to clean water. However, there are some exceptions: for example, more than half of Equatorial Guinea's population does not have access to clean water despite having a GDP per capita of over \$27,000.

¹⁸ https://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/human_right_to_water.shtml

¹⁹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4143854/>

²⁰ <https://ourworldindata.org/water-access#:~:text=In%20low%20income%20countries%20unsafe,accounts%20for%206%25%20of%20deaths.>

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

Bloc Positions

Countries Emphasizing Access to Clean Water

Cambodia is among the top 10 countries most improved by percentage, with 75% now having access to clean water compared to 52% in 2000. Another country that has started putting emphasis on access to clean water, is India. While the country still has a lot of people without clean water or water in general, it is nearly at the top of the list for providing most people with clean water. More than 300 million people since 2000 have had access to clean water in India. A current initiative in India is called Swajal that is helping in empowering communities to self-manage safe drinking water and it has helped 18.6 million people gain access to clean water.²⁵

Countries Starting to Make Efforts for More Access to Clean Water

Some countries have started the process of providing clean water but a lot of work still needs to be done. For example in Mali, 93% of the country's rich/middle-class families and individuals have access to clean water whereas only 41% of the poor population of Mali has access to clean water. Mali collaborates with UNICEF to lead a community-led open sanitation for decreasing open-defecation.²⁶ Another example of this bloc position would be Mozambique. Mozambique ranks fourth on the table of countries making great progress in water provision but remains in the top 10 in the world for lowest access to clean water.

Countries Taking Limited Action

Eritrea, Papua New Guinea and Uganda are the countries with the lowest access to clean water in the world. Papua New Guinea is second lowest in the world with only 37% of people having access to clean water and Uganda with only 38%. These are underdeveloped countries that don't have the resources, money or technology to provide clean water to their nation, and would likely need the support of developed nations to make substantial change.

Potential Solutions

Lower Water Prices

A significant obstacle to water access is increasing water prices. They are obsolete and require reform. Currently 1.1 billion people lack access to clean water. This already too high number is

²⁵ <https://www.unicef.org/india/what-we-do/clean-drinking-water>

²⁶ <https://www.unicef.org/mali/en/water-sanitation-and-hygiene>

going to keep rising if the price of water increases or even if it remains the same. Lowering water prices or even providing clean drinking water free to people without access will lower the global population of people without clean water. Clean drinking water is a human right as we simply can not live more than 3 days without it. High water prices also mean more people who can not afford clean water are likely to die of thirst or hunger. High water prices also affect the nations/countries economy as more people will fall ill due to dehydration, heat stroke and other heat related diseases and would not be able to work or contribute to the economy. We have to lower water prices because by not lowering them we are ripping away a basic human right of people who can't afford as much water as their rich counterparts.

Reduce Corporate Water Footprints

Industrial water use accounts for about 22% of global consumption. A corporation's footprint includes the water consumed directly and indirectly when the goods are produced. Sustainable manufacturing is imperative, especially in these troubling times. Fresh water or even clean drinking water is a scarce resource and reducing our water footprint will allow people in need to access water and in this way, we also do not waste water. Some big corporate companies do not recognize this issue and go on about using water that they could have saved. Everyone needs to recognize the water shortage in underdeveloped countries and the people who don't have access to clean water in those countries. When we "use" excess water or in a careless manner, we are preventing other people who really need it from having access. The water footprint of humanity has exceeded sustainable levels in a lot of countries and it is unequally distributed among people across the world.

Educate to Lower Water Consumption

Changing the face of this crisis involves a crucial step in which we must educate others and ourselves. We need to understand that this issue is rapidly growing and we need better lifestyles that promote saving water instead of wasting it. Some regions like India and Australia are already facing the freshwater crisis. The most critical task is making sure the problem is much better understood worldwide. Clean drinking water is crucial for survival and we need to make sure we have this basic element in the future for the generations to come.

Water projects in Developing Countries

New technology is highly effective when it comes to making sure that drinking water stays clean. Technologies such as water filters and even high-tech freshwater wells. This new technology is much needed by countries fighting the battle for clean drinking water. It can be extremely helpful to developed nations, but underdeveloped countries may not have the budget for these technologies on a large scale. Funding for these projects is a possible way of promoting clean drinking water in developing projects.

Guiding Questions

1. What is your country's stance on the problem of access to clean water?
2. How can developing nations with limited resources provide their citizens with clean water and how can developed nations help them with achieving this need?
3. What are the major water resources in your country?
4. Does your country support “the right to clean water”?
5. How can water be made more abundant and affordable?

Further Research

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- 5) <https://ourworldindata.org/water-access>

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