

## World Health Organization

### Background:

A specialized agency within the framework of the United Nations, the World Health Organization (WHO) was established on April 7th, 1948, and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. It is an international organization concerned with global public health initiatives. It works through these initiatives by bringing together governments, private businesses, and non-governmental organizations to promote health goals such as combating infectious disease.



WHO bureaucracy was slow to respond to claims by Doctors Without Borders that the current outbreak in Farfalu and Anyep had the potential to kill thousands. The delayed announcement by WHO that the outbreak was a true Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) resulted in the slow mobilization of the international community which ultimately cost many lives. However, WHO was limited in their response options due to conflicting data reports from various stakeholders. Internally, WHO has dealt with temporary senior staffing issues and flawed regional structures, thus resulting in an unreliable pillar of support to all international stakeholders. These issues are the source of the majority of criticism regarding the response from WHO.

Another factor that restricts WHO is their capacity to collect data on the disease through contact tracing and other disease surveillance tactics. This is in part due to staffing and funding limitations but is also affected by attacks on WHO epidemiologists by organized locals who believe WHO staff is spreading the disease. Complications within WHO, combined with public misconceptions that make reliable data collection difficult, are contributing to the distrust that other actors have in WHO's capacity to coordinate international actors and enforce global norms and standards.

### Opening Position:

The WHO Director-General has instructed your delegation to negotiate with all stakeholders, although you may find that some stakeholders may not want to negotiate with one another. You are to take the following opening positions:

- You are receptive yet sensitive to the criticism you are facing and are willing to implement immediate changes to your capacity, expertise, and approach on your own terms.
- You must take steps to educate the public on proper Ebola prevention methods and prevent further attacks on medical staff and volunteers.
- The problem of unreliable and inconsistent data collection means that you must get all actors on board with your epidemiologic efforts but respect cultural traditions in the process.
- You must advise countries on their outbreak responses while supporting them to become self-sufficient.