

<b>Forum:</b>	Economic and Social Council 1 (ECOSOC)
<b>Issue:</b>	Measures to strengthen global resilience against virus outbreaks and health pandemics
<b>Chair:</b>	Bill Cheng, Deputy Chair

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## Introduction

The first emergence of viral infections in human history began in the Neolithic period, as human behavior changed to accommodate more members in agricultural communities. The more densely populated communities allowed for viruses to spread more rapidly among humans as well as livestock and plants since humans became increasingly more dependent on farming to produce food. One of the oldest viruses ever recorded in human history are smallpox and measles which evolved from viruses that can be traced back to other animals. Having first appeared in Europe and North America, the Spanish conquistadors first introduced the viruses to North American, exposing indigenous peoples susceptible to these foreign viruses and resulted in fatal epidemics.

A virus is a microscopic infectious agent that only replicates within cells of a living organism and are capable of infecting all types of living organisms. When exposed to these infectious agents, the virus forces a host cell from the organism to rapidly replicate thousands of identical copies of the original virus and, when near a viruses vicinity, the host may contract the virus by inhaling or swallowing it, through being bit or through engaging in sexual activity with other infectious organisms.

The novel coronavirus is a modern example of an extremely contagious virus first identified in December 2019 in Wuhan, China. Nations around the world have adopted emergency responses and preventive measures with caution in order to combat the spread of this disease. However, with newly passed legislation and policies, the economy has been tremendously impacted as limits have been placed over enterprises and small businesses in order to maintain social distancing and prevent gatherings in large groups. The consequences of this are very real and the economic challenges must be overcome to return to the living standards before the virus. Fortunately, there has been successful attempts to develop a vaccine to combat this agent which may possibly allow people to develop immunity to this virus.

## Definition of Key Terms

### **Social distancing**

Employing social distancing is the practice of maintaining a physical distance from other individuals outside of your household and avoid skin-to-skin contact with people or objects to minimize exposure to unknown contaminants and the virus.

### **Pandemic**

A pandemic disease is defined as an extremely severe epidemic outbreak which has spread over an entire country or several continents, typically affecting a large population at the same time. Ever since the beginning of humankind, diseases and illness have plagued the human race; however, it was not until the worldwide trade network was developed from 2000B.C did the scale and spread of diseases increase dramatically. As pandemic diseases remain persistent throughout history, the death-rates of these pandemics continue to decline due to more advanced healthcare methods and the reliance on scientific knowledge rather than religious explanations.

### **Coronavirus disease 2019(COVID-19)**

COVID-19 is a highly contagious form of respiratory disease first discovered in Wuhan province of China. As a respiratory disease, its main form of transmission occurs through the sneeze or cough droplets of an infected individual entering the respiratory system of a healthy person then inhabiting its host without discoverable symptoms at first.

### **Quarantine**

Quarantine is a practice of restricting the movement of people or animals in order to prevent the spread of diseases. Possible individuals who may have contracted the disease through close-contact with infected patients and have not yet been confirmed with a medical diagnosis will undergo this procedure to identify whether they have the disease or not. The duration of the quarantine depends on the incubation period- the time frame required for a virus to develop-of the virus. However, retaining distance from social interaction affects an individual's psyche negatively as it is mentally challenging to avoid face-to-face meetings with other people.

### **Pneumonia**

Pneumonia is the general term to describe a lung inflammation infected by a virus or bacteria. Severe cases of pneumonia may result in the air sacs to be filled with pus and obstructing the breathing tube. Common symptoms of pneumonia include fever, chills, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting and a difficulty in breathing. The infectious virus, COVID-19, is identified as a type of pneumonia.

## **Vaccine**

Vaccines are substances injected into the human body to stimulate common viruses which allows the immune system to acknowledge the existing virus and to combat it effectively when the virus breaches the system. Although vaccines are extremely effective, developing a vaccine typically requires years of experimenting and testing in order for it to be approved by the government and used on patients. At the moment, there are no vaccines made that are readily available to combat COVID-19.

## **Virus**

A virus is identified as any submicroscopic group of infectious agents that are regarded as non-living complex molecules capable of growth and multiplication in living cells which cause various diseases so spread between groups of humans, animals or plants. Most viruses contain the ability to mutate, but lack metabolic machinery of their own which causes them to be solely dependent on their hosts to provide material for replication.

## **Respirator**

Worn to prevent the inhalation of harmful substances or infectious viruses, a respirator, which is shaped like a mask, is a device that is strapped around one's neck and attached directly on to the face, covering both the mouth and the nose. The filters are swapped out regularly as unwanted material collects in the filters after each use. Respirators are worn by medical professionals as personal protective equipment against the coronavirus. The most common respirator mask that is readily available, the N95, has a minimum of 95 percent of filter capacity and is capable of intercepting viruses as small as 0.3 microns.

## **Asymptomatic**

Asymptomatic patients display no symptoms of a certain medical condition which increases the difficulty of diagnosing an individual of viruses because unless patients exhibit symptoms, test results are at risk of false negatives. This phenomenon can also be observed from patients recovered from a condition who is no longer presenting symptoms of the illness. In the case of COVID-19, it indicates the absence of fever, dry cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, etc.

## **Contact Tracing**

Contact tracing is a practice of locating and monitoring individuals with a possibility of having direct contact with an infectious person in order to control the spread of a disease. First, the direct contacts who have been exposed to the virus up to 14 days after are contained by local disease prevention centers. Next, the contact undergoes an interview to locate other potential hosts of the

disease and is evaluated for symptoms and stage of the disease for further treatment.

## Background Information

### *The Novel Coronavirus*

The Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infectious disease and a newly discovered coronavirus. The outbreak was first reported in Wuhan, China, on December 31, 2019. COVID-19 has developed into an epidemic, turning to be the world's biggest health emergency. In addition, the COVID-19 outbreak slammed all sectors of the economy from manufacturing activity and supply chains to universities and even film production. Furthermore, it has led to a catastrophic global economic crisis: sweeping containment measures have disrupted markets around the world. COVID-19 is disrupting businesses and people's daily routines, especially in countries where COVID-19 has hit the hardest, including China, the United States, and other European countries. This is the biggest plunge since the Black Monday crash of 1987. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) claimed that the world's GDP growth could drop by 0.5 to 1 percentage points from its earlier estimate in this year. In other words, the EU is expected to lose over 15.6 billion dollars in trade, and 5.7 billion dollars for the United States .

### *First Successful Vaccine*

The first ever recorded inoculation dates back hundreds of years ago in Gloucestershire, England. On May 14, 1796, medical student, Edward Jenner experimented with the concept of developing immunity through exposing an eight-year-old boy to the fluids extracted from a cowpox blister. Although the boy displayed minor symptoms after vaccination, he soon recovered and had not contracted cowpox again. Then, on July, 1, Jenner replicated the experiment with smallpox fluids, and no disease was developed which led to doctors all over Europe adopting Jenner's technique, causing a drastic decline in many other diseases.

### *Sterilization Breakthrough in The Medical World*

Before the appearance of sterilization methods, surgeons popularly operated on their patients in their street clothes without washing their surgical gowns which oftentimes were covered in dried blood and puss. Like military stripes on an army uniform, a dirty gown represented a level of mastery in the medical field. Hence, it was not uncommon for unsanitary practices during operations to cause fatal infections which lead to low success rates in surgeries at the time. Joseph Lister, however, observed that clean wounds would sometimes incur

infections, leading him to suspect that the root of the problem was in the wound itself. After several tests with chemical substances that killed germs, Lister developed a protocol to sterilize surgical equipment, the surgeon's hands, the wounds to be operated on, and air of the operating room. The results lead to cleaner medical practices and a good general idea of cleanliness.

## Major Countries and Organizations Involved

### China

As the origin of the novel coronavirus, China was one of the first countries to have a significant hit on employment. From the beginning of the crisis, the Chinese government has prioritized the interests of enterprises and protecting workers through various government policies. However, as the pandemic deteriorated the global economy, immobilizing several units of major corporations in heavily impacted regions and reducing the demand for popular store-bought goods, China adapted many policies that would alleviate the situation. Rising unemployment rates continue to worry Chinese authorities as the pandemic drags on and is leading to slowed economic growth.

### Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

The Bill and Melinda Foundation is a global nonprofit organization targeting to build lasting partnerships to provide assistance to resolve first world issues and delivering services to the world's poorest communities. Guided by the idea that all lives have an equal value, this foundation works to help less fortunate people lead a healthy and productive life. In February of 2020, announced its proposal to contribute up to 100 million dollars to coronavirus relief efforts with 20% of it dedicated to public health institutions in Asia and Africa to protect defenseless populations.

### The United States of America

The US federal government initially responded to the emergence of the virus in domestic territory by declaring a series of emergencies, leading to restrictions on international travel, limiting the entry of several foreign aliens and the formation of the White House Coronavirus Task Force. Following the surge of infected cases across the US, the state and local governments disclosed recommendations for protection against infections as well as the implementation of social distancing policies and control of the workplaces and schools. Shortly after, the closure of small businesses occurred and President Trump

mobilized the National Guard to aid the country's most affected areas. Between March and April of 2020, the US Congress passed a series of aggressive measures to combat the pandemic and economic repercussions. New proposals have been continually passed in the House of Representatives and the Senate with support from the White House, implementing legislation that provided economic relief with the intention of minimizing small business bankruptcies due to enduring periods of lockdowns.

## Norway

In ways similar to the United States, the government of Norway provides compensation of workers laid off due to the pandemic and extends its benefits to reduce financial responsibilities for workers on sick leave. In addition, a proposal for government loans to businesses suffering from considerable losses has been suggested as protection for Norwegian business owners in an act called the Government Bond Fund. As for customs, transportation only involves delivering cargo, not human passengers will operate without limits on the road, trains, ships, and aircrafts, allowing for trade to still prosper to some degree. Medical supplies and contaminated equipment related to coronavirus will be permitted without customs for the most efficient delivery. According to statistics, Norway has around 55,000 cases and under 500 deaths relating to the pandemic and on average maintains less than 2000 cases per day.

## WELTHUNGERHILFE

As a politically independent non-profit agency in Germany, Welthungerhilfe created a COVID-19 relief fund to finance activities for communities of the world most vulnerable to viral infections caused by the spread of COVID-19. In nations of extreme poverty, the pandemic puts a further strain on the already inadequate health care systems while the failing economic circumstances of those nations deteriorate at an even faster rate. The initial donations have already reached over 36 countries and are allowing for the implementation of rapid relief efforts to maximize aid in humanitarian support. These measures tackle not only the lack of medical aid, but also indirect causes including installing handwashing facilities and distributing seeds for local farmers to grow food as two of the many ways this organization impedes the rapid contraction of this virus. With millions of dollars allocated to remedy and prevent the further spread of the virus, Welthungerhilfe ensures transparency in the flow of money and informs the donors that their money will be going towards the relief efforts.

## Brazil

The first confirmed case of Covid-19 appeared in Brazil on February 25, 2020 when a man from São Paulo tested positive for the virus. In response to the serious economic repercussions, the government of Brazil passed legislation to effectively reduce taxes on certain industrialized products, imported goods, and medical supplies as a form of indirect aid to the economy. In addition, to keep a rapid flow of medical

equipment into the country, Brazil simplified the custom clearance procedures for commodities raw materials designed to combat the pandemic. This measure would accelerate the rate at which cargo can be delivered while ensuring the certification of its importers. On March 30, 2020, the Brazilian Senate passed a bill which included an alteration of labor regulations in order to ease the economic losses suffered by companies and enterprises. Among the provisions, one measure allowed for telecommunication to be utilized in order to replace workers to be present at the workplace.

## Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
1346-1353 1665- 1666	The devastating bubonic plague in London appeared which wiped out 20 percent of London’s population and caused thousands of housepets to be slaughtered.
February 1918, - April 1920	Caused by an H1N1 virus with genes of an avian origin, the spanish flu spread worldwide, infecting one-thirds of the world’s population and killing over 50 million people.
June 1981 - present	HIV/AIDS continues to infect geographic regions in Africa and the Caribbean as a manageable chronic health condition due to more effective prevention methods, diagnosis, treatment.
November 6, 2002- May 19, 2004	An estimated 8,000 people across 29 different countries were infected intermittently with SARS-CoV-1, a strain of coronavirus closely related to SARS-CoV-2, and was fully contained in 2004.
4 January 2020	Chinese officials in Wuhan declares a cluster of unidentified pneumonia cases  WHO confirms pneumonia cases in China
3 February 2020	WHO releases the international community's Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan in order to protect and provide assistance to nations with less developed healthcare systems which are especially vulnerable amidst the virus
11 March 2020	WHO characterizes the virus as a global pandemic

13 March 2020

President Trump of the United States declares a national emergency

26 March 2020

The number of US cases (82,404) surpasses China's (81,782) to become the highest in the world

2 April 2020

1 million COVID-19 infections are reached worldwide

24 April 2020

The number of cases in Brazil begins to spike

11 May 2020

Spain, Iran, Italy, Denmark, Israel, Germany, New Zealand, and Thailand begin to expedite lockdown restrictions

28 June 2020

Global cases surpass 10 million and deaths caused by the pandemic surpass 500,000

September 28, 2020

Global deaths due to COVID-19 surpass 1 million

December 11, 2020

The Pfizer-made COVID-19 vaccine is approved by the FDA and is authorized for all individuals 16 years of age and older

## Relevant UN Resolutions and Treaties



- [Severe acute respiratory syndrome, 17 May 2003\(A56/48\)](#)
- [Prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, 13 May 2010\(A/RES/INter64/265\)](#)
- [Consolidating gains and accelerating efforts to control and eliminate malaria in developing countries, particularly in Africa, by 2030, 29 August 2018\(A/72/L.68\)](#)
- [Resolution 2439, 30 October 2018\(S/RES/2439\)](#)
- [Global solidarity to fight the coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID\)-19, 2 April 2020\(A/RES/74/270\)](#)
- [International cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19, 20 April 2020\(A/RES/74/274\)](#)
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## Possible Solutions

### To activate strict lockdown procedures for the most affected areas

Previously attempted by Wuhan officials in China, a full-scale lockdown within the city borders was implemented which prohibited transport from in and out of the city with 9 million residents. Checkpoints were installed frequently on road junctions in populated areas to reduce the number of people traveling and isolated the mass population indoors at home to reduce outdoor activities. Following the government interventions the estimated number of cases each day drastically declined although it caused a significant disruption to the economic structure and limited personal freedoms typically allowed in the daily lifestyle. China's example has verified that this method is tremendously effective; however, executing a full-on lockdown would be a major violation of human rights and freedoms and risk serious mental side effects for staying indoors for a great duration of time.

### To employ basic social distancing actions to contain the spread of the virus

Another method of adequately containing the virus also requires limited social interactions which was adopted by Swedish authorities. Some have interpreted this strategy as aiming to neglect extreme limitations like China by developing herd immunity at an early stage. Individuals major institutions in Sweden focus on abiding by basic social distancing policies yet are allowing schools to operate regularly

so they could continue their academic schedules. The government is also prioritizing elderlys and patients with severe conditions to hospitalization and healthcare resources. Virtually preserving all of the essential functions of society, this strategy does a fairly decent job in halt the expected trends, yet it requires a great deal of time and a competent and sustainable healthcare system.

### To fly medical supplies in regions needing the more support

As states face massive shortages in medical supplies such as medical grade face masks, and protective equipment, the UN has made substantial efforts to launch flights of equipment into the most vulnerable regions of the world. Charter planes have been hired to fly in deficient supplies such as goggles, face shields, gloves, and gowns. With outside aid from addis abba, covid-19 gear is transported to different parts of the world and successfully relieves distressing situations. Aside from the demands for financial support, this method can be implemented along with the previous two and it can ensure an immediate remedy to the situation.

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