

**Health**

Briefing Paper

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**HABSMUN 2024**

Hello delegates! We are Seb and Alex, your co-head chairs of the Health committee for the upcoming HABSMUN 2024. We are hugely looking forward to welcoming you into the Health committee for a weekend of fruitful debate. For the both of us, this will be our third HABSMUN conference and we hope that it will provide the same benefits to you, both in public speaking skills and the ability to get a feel for what a real UN conference would be like, as it has to us. We cannot wait to welcome delegates of all ability levels, both experienced and first time – if you have any questions, we would be delighted to answer them; just drop an email to [WAS100@habsboys.org.uk](mailto:WAS100@habsboys.org.uk) or [MAL400@habsboys.org.uk](mailto:MAL400@habsboys.org.uk) .

## **What you need to prepare**

**Resolutions**

We ask that all delegates write a resolution on one of the three topics in preparation for the conference. Tips and tricks for writing a resolution can be found at habsmun.com, but here is some advice we would give you in order to make it more likely that your resolution is picked for debate:

* **Be careful when using AI.** It can usually be fairly easy to tell when a resolution is written by AI through the way in which the clauses are written and its use of command words. Resolutions written purely by AI are almost always terrible!
* **Don’t make it too long.** Long resolutions are more difficult for delegates to read thoroughly and often a pain to debate as well. We’d recommend that you don’t go over seven or eight clauses – keep it short and sweet!
* **If you’re going to create a UN sub body, make the acronym vaguely humorous.** Be careful with this, of course, but also have fun with it – we’ve seen resolutions debated with acronyms from ‘FUND’ to characters from *Finding Nemo*.

Good luck!

**Policy statements**

A policy statement is a really short speech given by every delegate at the start of the conference to make their position clear on each issue being debated. When we say a really short speech, we mean a *really* short speech - we usually recommend that delegates keep to a sentence on each issue.

## **The Question of Sanitation in Sub-Saharan Africa**

Access to safe and adequate sanitation facilities is far from universal in Sub-Saharan Africa. Despite some progress, significant gaps persist, affecting millions of people. Within the last 25 years, the population of Sub-Saharan Africa has nearly doubled without significant improvement in sanitation facilities, leaving many behind. For example, roughly a quarter of those who defecate in the open live in Sub-Saharan Africa, due to lack of access to safe toilets, and the common use of contaminated water leads to water-borne diseases. In this paper, we will often refer to WASH services – that is, water, sanitation and hygiene. Whilst the question does technically focus on the sanitation arm of these services, references to them in resolution will be accepted, as it is important to take these issues into account. However, we recommend that you utilise the UN definition of sanitation when writing your resolution - *a system for the collection, transport, treatment and disposal or reuse of human excreta, and associated hygiene.*

### **Key Issues**

**Increasing urbanisation**

According to a research article from the University of Oviedo in Spain, the global urban population is increasing by 220,000 people daily, with much of this occurring in Sub Saharan Africa. This puts huge amounts of stress on existing WASH services, as in many cases they are unable to keep up with a rapidly increasing urban population compounded by a high birth rate. In rural areas, the situation is often even worse, with a lack of existing infrastructure due to existing funding being uneven and inefficient. For example, between 1990 and 2010, about 28.7% of the rural population received access to improved sanitation, in contrast with 51% of the urban population. These trends have continued towards today.

**Poor disaster response**

Flooding and droughts, which are becoming exponentially more common due to climate change, pose significant challenges to building lasting, sustainable access to WASH services. Flooding can wreak havoc on hygiene and wastewater systems, as well as contaminating drinking water. Meanwhile, droughts create food insecurity through faltering crops, speeding up hunger and health crises. Both of the above also direct funding away from sanitation, and the funding that remains is often spent on maintaining and repairing existing facilities, making it more difficult to improve them.

**Poor management of the sanitation chain**

Inefficient handling of faecal waste not only exacts a substantial toll on public health but also incurs significant economic burdens. The mismanagement of the sanitation chain, particularly in the safe disposal of faecal waste, is a major source of health challenges and financial implications. Estimates suggest that the inadequacy in providing basic sanitation services results in an economic loss ranging from 1% to 5% of Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) annually. This underscores the far-reaching consequences of neglecting proper sanitation management and emphasises the need for funding to be directed towards sustainable solutions to the issue.

### **Legal Frameworks**

According to the OHCHR, sanitation is a human right. In their own words*, the human right to sanitation entitles everyone to sanitation services that provide privacy and ensure dignity, and that are physically accessible, affordable, safe, hygienic, secure, and socially and culturally acceptable.* A UN resolution relating to sanitation was passed on 28th July 2010, but not much action was taken – it just vaguely called upon states to provide more funding. In essence, there are no major legal frameworks prohibiting you from making positive change; this change is in almost all cases encouraged.

We won’t have covered every point here, so find below some useful further reading:

1. [WP400.pdf (umass.edu)](https://peri.umass.edu/media/k2/attachments/WP400.pdf)
2. [GIZ\_2018\_Access\_Study\_Part I\_Synthesis\_Report.pdf (oecd.org)](https://www.oecd.org/water/GIZ_2018_Access_Study_Part%20I_Synthesis_Report.pdf)
3. [Water and Sanitation - United Nations Sustainable Development](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/water-and-sanitation/)
4. [Book2\_Frameworks.pdf (ohchr.org)](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Water/Handbook/Book2_Frameworks.pdf)
5. [About water and sanitation | OHCHR](https://www.ohchr.org/en/water-and-sanitation/about-water-and-sanitation#:~:text=On%2028%20July%202010%2C%20the,RES%2F64%2F292).)

Good luck with your resolution writing – we look forward to debating some fantastic resolutions!