

**Houston Area  
Model United Nations  
Standard Committee**



**UNEP**

**Chair | Annie George  
Topic A Background Guide  
Houston Area Model United Nations 48  
February 2-3, 2023**

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# Note to Delegates

## Delegates,

My name is Annie George, and I have the privilege of being your chair for the United Nations Environment Programme. I am currently a sophomore at the University of Houston. My major is Computer Information Systems, and my minor is in Business Administration. I am a part of a couple of programs, such as Women in Stem and the Council of Cultural Activities. I love volunteering, walking my dog, and reading!

I started Model UN during my first year of high school and was in a mix of Standardized Committees and Crises. I did UNHCR, DISEC, A Crisis, and Security Council; then, last year, I was a vice chair at UNOOSA. I joined Model UN because I love researching different topics and debating them. When I learned about Model UN, I was excited because I got to look at such a painful thing as international warfare and think of numerous solutions for the said problem, work with others, and come up with a final answer to the issue at hand. Problems such as the ones that we will be talking about in UNEP.

UNEP, if you didn't know, is a council of countries that sets the agenda for environmental problems that we face worldwide. Their goal is to care for the environment. They want to enable nations to improve their citizens' quality of life. I look at our environment a lot and think about how we could solve that issue, whether on a small scale, like in our neighborhoods, or a big scale, like in our state or the country. My hope for this conference is that you will do the same. You, as a delegate, have the task of looking at an issue from the point of view of your country and then taking that point of view and using it as a starting point for your argument in the debate as well as a solution in your final papers. So you and the other countries will have to work collectively to devise a final solution to our two topics.

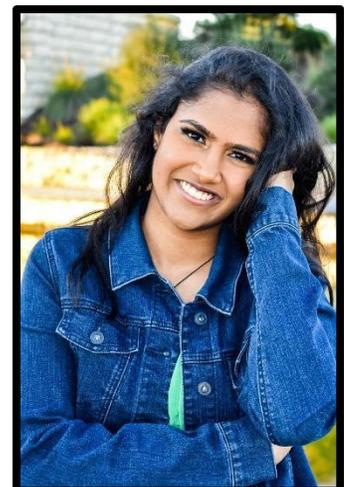
During our committee sessions, you will go in with an open mind and think about all the different ways to solve the problem. Go out of the box, don't be scared to share your opinions on matters, and most importantly, have fun.

My final word to you all shall be that this year's conference will be unique, and I wish you the best of luck!

**Annie George**

Chair of UNEP

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# United Nations Environment Programme Chair | Annie George Houston Area Model United Nations 48 February 2-3, 2023

## International Water Crisis

This year's topic A is about the International Water Crisis. Water as we know it is essential to our existence, but due to events such as Industrial Revolution our water resources have been polluted. Today over 1 billion people worldwide lack access to safe water, and around 3.42 billion people in the world live in isolated rural places due to the lack of clean water around them, they have to spend hours every day walking in order to be able to collect water for their families. We as a committee will be tasked with finding a way to make sure there is clean water for their country and every community so that the citizens can have a proper education, a job, and good health.

### **Topic Concept**

Clean, uncontaminated water is something that billions of people, most in rural areas, still lack today.

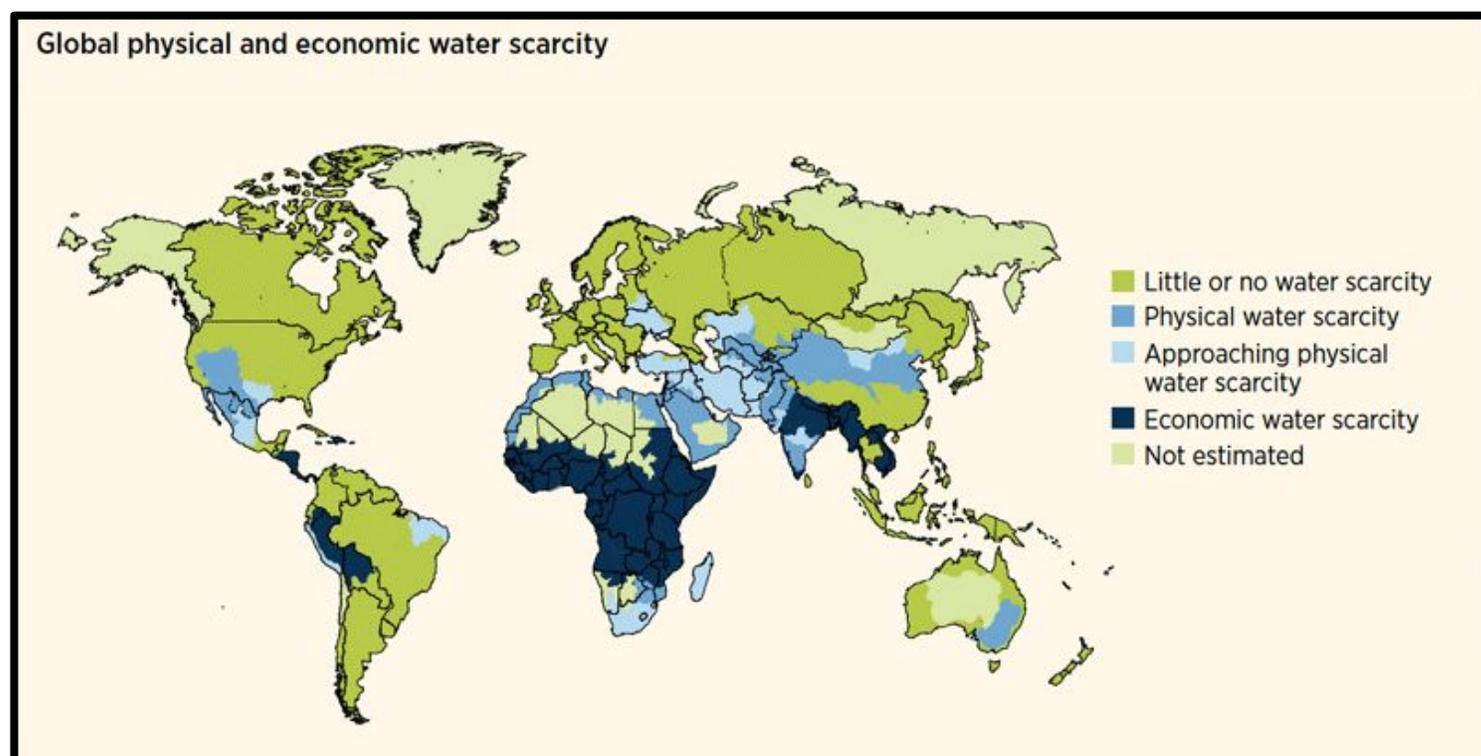
People around the globe today are getting contaminated water which leads to a slew of issues, from people being unable to bathe their children to women and children dying from water-related diseases.

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 6 is to ensure access to water and sanitation for all; drinking contaminated water is a problem that has affected people worldwide, from India to Jackson, Mississippi. The global water crisis is a women's issue, as women are responsible for finding a resource for their families to survive so that they can cook and meet basic sanitary measures in their homes. Women and children spend over 200 million hours collecting water daily ("Billions Lack Access to Safe Water"). The trek to get water is dangerous and highly time-consuming due to the time it takes to get to the water source and back; because of this, women and children

are left with no time to care for their families. or go to school(“Impact of Clean Water on Education: Charity: Water”). Access to safe, uncontaminated water is necessary for women and children to be successful. Having clean water can give women and children the ability to take care of their families, attend school full time and grow as people.

Another thing that is detrimental and is affecting the growth of people is the health risks that people go through because they don't have access to safe water. Children are the most vulnerable to stunted growth due to their young age and weak immune systems (“No Access to Safe Water”). Having

contaminated water nearby creates water-borne illnesses in their designs, such as diarrhea, typhoid, and dysentery. Children get these diseases because they are consuming this water and cannot develop into healthy children, and they most likely will die from these illnesses. Another illness that developed rapidly due to no clean water was COVID-19. Hand hygiene was one of the most important things during this time in the world so that we wouldn't get the virus and wouldn't spread it. So we needed water to clean our hands every time we went out, but there was a lack of water sanitation globally, especially in rural areas and slums of certain countries.



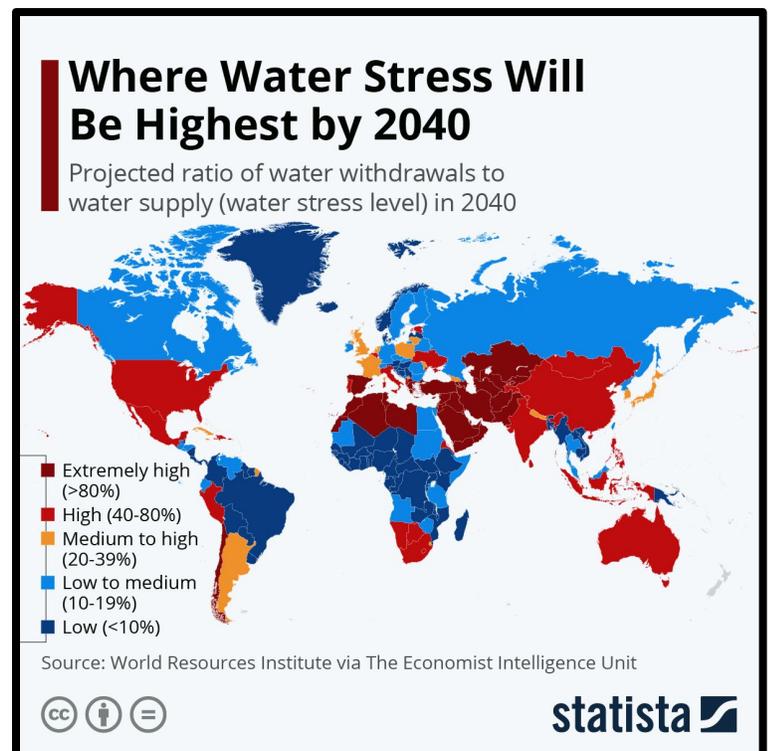
Let us as a committee work together to find a solution to get clean water to our citizens and make sure that they live a safe and healthy life, get to school, and don't have to worry about what will happen tomorrow.

### Topic History

We know that the beginning of people drinking contaminated water was way before the industrial revolution, but we shall start from the Industrial revolution. During the 1840s, there were overpopulation issues due to people moving from rural areas. At this time, there wasn't much known about sanitary practices, so whenever someone would release their human waste, it would mix with the human water. According to CNN, one gram of human waste has 1 million bacteria and 10 million viruses. Due to this being in the water, people would contract cholera and typhoid.

The Industrial Revolution was when water started to become dangerous to drink. There were mass advances in technological developments, but with these advancements, a slew of

destructive issues followed in its wake. One of the opposing sides was that the factories were starting to discharge their waste into rivers. People understood that unsanitary living conditions were the reason for the large disease epidemics, so in the 1850s, Chicago built the first-ever system that filtered water for towns across the US. The technique they used for water filtration was chlorination, which is when you add chlorine to drinking water to kill parasites, bacteria, and viruses. By the late 20th century, though, more biological hazards began to enter our water, increasing tenfold as time progressed.



Source: <https://www.statista.com/chart/26140/water-stress-projections-global/>

# Questions to Consider

This next page has several questions you should consider when formulating your responses to this topic. First, you don't have to answer every question in your paper. Instead, these questions are just made to kick off your thought process.

- What can we do to help countries gain access to safe and healthy water?
- What can international organizations and the UNEP do to ensure water is distributed to rural areas across different countries?
- How is water pollution affecting children and women?
- Is there an efficient way to clean water and give it to the citizens of your country?
- How can we ensure that women can provide for their families and attend school/ work?
- What steps should other nations take to ensure there is never water pollution in our rivers and oceans again?

## Chair's Notes:

These are my last few words to you. This particular topic is extensive; you can take this issue and look at it from any angle you want. The goal of any paper is to look at the issue from your country's point of view. Water pollution has plagued the world for a long time and has affected women, men, and children. It has caused death and health issues and has made it so that no



one can prosper. So when you do research, look at this issue and create a paper that will create a unique dialogue between the other countries and hopefully create a fantastic solution that can cure the world of this problem step by step. Happy researching!

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