

BSBMUN VI

ECOSOC

Study Guide

Head Chair: Carolina Donà dalle Rose

Chair: Thomas Marques Lohmann

Table of Contents

Letter from the Chairs	2
Committee Description	4
Topic A:	5
Background Information:	6
Key terms:	10
Timeline of Important Events:	12
Guiding Questions For Debate:	14
Bibliography:	15

Letter from the Chairs:

Welcome delegates to BSBMUN VI,

We will be your Committee Directors for this year's BSBMUN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and we look forward to seeing you this October. Since we have been experiencing unprecedented circumstances, the world around us has drastically changed. Consequently, MUN has been forced to adapt to the current set of conditions. Conferences are now being held virtually, and the in-person debate and lobbying that once characterized this practice is now forgone. This conference will be a new experience for all of us, where we will undoubtedly face new challenges and obstacles, which we will be forced to overcome virtually.

Having said that, even though we are sitting in different parts of the world, we will have an opportunity to come together and debate throughout this weekend.

The topic we will be debating has major global implications. Being a pandemic, this virus has reached great dimensions and spread all over the globe. We, as a global community are facing the loss of thousands of people each day. These facts should unite us more than ever. Along with the sanitary concern, the international community as a whole is facing a drastic change in the social and economic system which has been followed and seen as normal, for each nation individually, for years. Not only have customs changed, but people had to adapt in order to feed their families. Stepping out of the civilian perspective, it is in the hands of governments to manage the economic situation of the country in hand. Reopening economic

activities in order to keep the economy following might result in more deaths and a bigger range of cases, but keeping restrictive lockdown or social distancing measures could easily harm and even damage the financial state of citizens and of the country as a whole. When addressing specifically about third world countries and developing ones, these impacts are even more drastic. Bearing in mind that the Republic of India fits this description, and has a population of over 1.3 billion, the threat this virus represents is even greater.

As a delegate, your job will be to navigate the crisis currently facing the nation, dealing with the economic and social ramifications of this pandemic. We have high expectations for this conference and the advanced debating level that delegates are expected to bring, for that reason we ask that delegates do extensive research before the committee begins. Delegates should be prepared to debate and present their points and solutions to the committee.

Thank you, and welcome to BSBMUN VI,

Carolina Donà dalle Rose - Head Chair

+55 61 998332812

eab202302944@eabdf.br

Thomas Marques Lohmann - Vice-Chair

+55 11 995071005

tlohmann@stnicholas.com.br

Committee Description

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is a committee which was founded in 1945 along with the UN. This is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations, and stands in its headquarters, in New York. The purpose of this council is to promote higher standards of living, full employment, and economic and social progress to the international community as a whole. The committee strives to achieve the promotion of these points by tackling issues surrounding social and economic health concerns, encouraging and facilitation of international educational and cultural cooperation, and encouraging the implementation of the Human Rights and fundamental freedoms that people should have access to as basic necessities. The council consists of 54 member states. These Governments go through a process of selection, being elected by the UN's General Assembly for a 3 year mandate.

In the ECOSOC BSBMUN committee, delegates will be joining together to achieve the exact same points. By cooperating and engaging in hopefully fruitful debates to reach productive and viable solutions. The resolutions which will be presented in this committee shall strive to achieve a balanced outcome to such an important and current global concern.

Topic A - The Social and Economic Impacts of Covid-19 in The Republic of India:



As we all know the Covid-19 virus has hit the world pretty hard, causing the closing of public places, unemployment and consequently, the downfall of the world economy. With this year's BSBMUN ECOSOC committee, we aim to raise awareness of the grand impact that the recently discovered virus has caused all over the world, trying to find solutions to multiple current problems. We will be focusing mainly on the socially unequal country of India. The focus of the discussion will be pointed towards the positive and negative consequences of this lockdown, with delegations staging the debate between countries on what to do with the current situation in India, a place to call home for 17.7% of the world's population.

Background Information:

How the Covid-19 Virus has Affected India and the Current Situation in the Country:

The coronavirus pandemic, which originated in the city of Wuhan, China, has quickly spread to various countries, with many cases having been reported worldwide. As of October 14th, 2020, in India, 7,301,804 positive cases have been reported. Being the second country with the largest population in the world, with more than 1.38 billion, the Indian government is having difficulty in controlling the transmission of virus. Multiple strategies would be highly necessary to handle the current outbreak, ranging from computational modeling to the rapid development of a new treatment. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of India has raised awareness about the recent outbreak and has taken necessary actions to control the spread of COVID-19. The central and state governments are taking several measures and formulating several wartime protocols to achieve this goal.

According to “The Print”, an Indian news website, in 2019 only 2.9 million people in India considered themselves Atheist. With India having 1.383 billion people, the percentage of atheist people in India totaled to 0.21%, an incredibly low number. Therefore more than 1.38 billion people in India are religious, most of them going to church and having daily obligations to their religion.

With the Covid-19 pandemic, places of religious gathering such as temples, mosques and churches had to be closed, in order to avoid coronavirus transmission. India is a country where religious tourism is high and community gatherings for celebrating festivals are huge, a big part of the Indian tourist economy. With these religious gatherings being cancelled, millions of people are going to be unemployed and India’s economy, together with the stock markets of many other countries, are going to go downhill.

Another major cause of the economic downfall worldwide is the closure of restaurants and shopping malls which have large local attractions. According to data from the National Restaurants Association of India (NRAI), the Indian

restaurant industry directly employs close to 7.3 million people. Of these, a large percentage includes busboys, dishwashers, line cooks and cleaners who support their families back in their villages. Their livelihoods being lost and its ripple effect on the rural areas is just the tip of the iceberg. Multiple small scale industries and businesses across the country depend on restaurants to keep their cash registers ringing. From farmers to cheese manufacturers, delivery agents to craft breweries and realty firms, the network that supports this industry is as vast as it is intricate.

The unemployment rate in India was a stable 7.2% in January 2020. When coronavirus cases spiked in the country during the month of May, 2020, the rate skyrocketed an astonishing 27%. This means that by May 373,430,000 people didn't have a job. The social inequality in India has always been big but after during this pandemic they have never been higher. The volatility of the unemployment rate in India has also become surprising. The unemployment rate in India surged to 31% in the second week of the lockdown. Then, in the following two weeks it fell to 23% and 25%. This is a rather sharp fall in the unemployment rate in the country, although it remains quite elevated. Over time it increased back again as previously mentioned and it is now slowly decreasing again.

Another point to focus on is the fact that not all has had a negative outcome in India. The air quality index, a red banner indicating how each intake of breath is really just a toxic blast on the lungs, was replaced instead by a healthy, cheerful green. New Delhi's pollution levels fell into the category of good! A nationwide lockdown imposed across India on 24 March to stop the spread of the coronavirus has led to widespread chaos and suffering, especially among the country's 300 million poor. Yet in Delhi, the world's most polluted city, it has also resulted in some of the freshest air the capital has seen in decades.

In Delhi, air quality index (AQI) levels are usually a severe 200 on a good day (anything above 25 is deemed unsafe by the World Health Organization). During peak pollution periods last year they soared well into a life-threatening 900 and sometimes off the measurable scale. But as 11 million registered cars were taken off the roads and factories and construction were ground to a halt, AQI levels have regularly fallen below 20. As Dr Shashi Tharoor, a politician and author who has

been vocal on environmental issues, said, “The skies are suddenly a rare, piercing blue. Even the birdsong seems louder.”



Past UN Actions or Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue:

On March 25th, 2020, the International Labour Organization (ILO) made an assessment that showed that the COVID-19 pandemic could increase global unemployment by around 25 million. ILO then called for an internationally coordinated policy response, which they thought would be of particular benefit to South Asian countries like India, since a large part of its working population lacks social security and employment benefits. By April 8th, 2020, with new research, the UN started to think that instead of 25 million people being unemployed in the world, 400 million were at risk of being unemployed only in India.

A representative of the United Nations stated, “About 400 million people working in the informal economy in India are at risk of falling deeper into poverty due to

the coronavirus crisis which is having catastrophic consequences, and is expected to wipe out 195 million full-time jobs or 6.7% of working hours globally in the second quarter of this year.” Later, in the month of May, the unemployment rate in India reached 27%, as previously stated, which meant that 373.4 million people were jobless. This showed that 93% of people who the UN thought were at risk of losing their jobs actually did go home without a job at the end of the month.

As the economy starts to regain some of its previous force, and as lockdown’s around the world start to weaken, restaurants are beginning to reopen and commerce around many countries are commencing their sales and trades. With that in mind, the world economy is starting to grind again and with the Indian unemployment rate following this path, many are starting to get back either their rural or urban jobs. The number of Indian people that were unemployed fell to 6.7% in August, 2020, according to the economy website “Trading Economics”. This showed that the 373.4 million people that were without a job fell to 92.7 million people by August of 2020. 280.7 million people, a number greater than Brazil’s population, regained their jobs in under 3 months! Meaning that unemployment rate levels had gone back to normal, surprisingly, rates were even better than before the pandemic!

The UN didn’t manage to do much financially, but the way that they pinpointed predictions in April, helped the Indian government and people to prepare themselves, looking for temporary jobs in markets that were unaffected. Now, as things are starting to approach the norm, millions of people in India and around the world have already proceeded working and sustaining their families, lifting the global economy up again.

Key Terms:

HDI

HDI stands for Human Development Index. This index is used to measure basic achievement in human development. It consists of life expectancy, education, and a decent living standard.

GDP / GDP per capita

GDP stands for Gross domestic product. It is the total measurement of goods and services produced in a country per year. It also includes the measurements of incomes that result from that production.

GDP per capita is a measure of a country's spendings. It divides its country's gross domestic product by its population. This number represents the income per person if the money was spread out evenly.

Sovereignty

Sovereignty is the full right and power of a nation over itself. It's the autonomy and right to make decisions based on what they believe is right without relying on others acceptance.

Social Progress Index

The Social Progress index measures aspects pointed primarily on the citizens of a country. It aims to meet the basic needs of citizens and provide them with the opportunity to reach their full potential as individuals.

Positions of Major Blocs and Countries

United States

The United States, under president Trump's leadership, are opting for a more flexible form of lockdown. Even though Donald Trump stated on April 18th, 2020, that he did not want to use the lockdown method if it meant harming the economy,

other members of the government, such as senators and congressmen, decided that the nation should indeed follow a lockdown plan, because it meant less casualties.

China

Being the nest of the coronavirus, China has had extremely strict lockdown rules, where people need to ask the government if they are allowed to leave their homes every time they have to run errands or go to the supermarket. There have been security officers roaming around the streets and asking civilians to show the government's confirmation. Nobody knows for sure what is going on in the grand asian nation since the government of China has remained low, dealing with national matters from within their borders, ever since the virus broke out in their own territory.

Italy

Being one of the countries with most cases and the pioneer hosts of the virus in Europe, Italy has faced a rough patch in decision making in order to provide financial and sanitary assistance and stability for their country. Italy had implemented very strict measures regarding social distancing and lockdown for several months. Once the numbers started to decrease and the virus was almost gone from the country, the government relaxed as did the people. Now, cases have started to increase again, and Italy has blocked all borders to prevent the passage of people in the country. Restrictive measures are slowly starting to appear, and Italian citizens who are not in the country and wish to return, must oblige to 14 days of quarantine and isolation before living "a normal life" in the country.

Brazil

Brazil, as big as it is, has also faced many cases and deaths as a result of the virus. Even though this is the case, the federal government has decided to leave it up to each district to decide what should be done in regards to the peoples safety and economic state. There have not been any strict rules or consequences for "unsafe" practices at the moment.

Timeline of Important Events:

December 31st, 2019	Chinese Health officials inform the WHO about a cluster of 41 patients with mysterious pneumonia. Most are connected to Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market.
January 1st, 2020	Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market closes.
January 7th, 2020	Chinese authorities identify the virus that caused the pneumonia-like illness as a new type of coronavirus.
January 11th, 2020	China records its first death linked to the new coronavirus.
January 13th, 2020	Thailand reports the first coronavirus infection outside of China.
January 23rd, 2020	Chinese authorities place the city of Wuhan under quarantine - and the rest of the Hubei province days later.
January 30th, 2020	WHO declares a global public-health emergency.
February 11th, 2020	WHO announces that the disease caused by the new coronavirus will be called "COVID-19".
February 12th, 2020	Coronavirus cases start to spike in South Korea.
February 21st, 2020	COVID-19 cases start to spike in Italy.
March 8th, 2020	Italy places all 60 million of its residents on lockdown
March 11th, 2020	WHO declares the outbreak a pandemic.
March 11th, 2020	President Trump bans all travel from 26 European countries.
March 13th, 2020	Trump declares a national emergency in the US.
March 26th, 2020	Total confirmed cases in the US reach 82,404 - the highest in the world - surpassing China's 81,782 and Italy's 80,589.
March 31st, 2020	More than 1/3 of humanity is under some form of lockdown.
April 2nd, 2020	The world passes 1 million COVID-19 infections.
April 24th, 2020	Coronavirus cases start to spike in Brazil.

May 11th, 2020	Several countries, such as Spain, Iran, Italy, Denmark, Israel, Germany, New Zealand and Thailand, begin to ease their lockdown restrictions.
May 16th, 2020	Coronavirus cases surge in India.
May 21st, 2020	The number of global COVID-19 cases surpasses 5 million.
June 28th, 2020	The number of global COVID-19 cases surpasses 10 million and global deaths surpass 500,000.
September 22nd, 2020	US deaths from COVID-19 top 200,000.
September 28th, 2020	Global COVID-19 deaths surpass 1 million.
October 7th, 2020	The number of COVID-19 cases in Brazil surpasses 5 million.
October 10th, 2020	The number of COVID-19 cases in India surpasses 7 million.
October 12th, 2020	The number of COVID-19 cases in the US surpasses 8 million.

Guiding Questions For Debate:

1. How stable is the situation surrounding the ratios of cases and of deaths per infected in India, and consequently is it coherent to reopen economic activities?
2. How has the pandemic and measures taken by the Indian government in response to it, affected the population in terms of basic living necessities?
3. How is the situation concerning the health system in the country?
4. What measures have other countries taken that could have possibly affected the international system and therefore India's stability regarding the issue at hand?

5. Does the Indian government seek aid, and are other countries willing to provide such assistance?
6. As a developing country, how much can India afford to restrict when pointing out employment and productivity rate.
7. Why has India failed to decrease the number of infected people despite the strict lockdown?
8. Is the Indian government to be held responsible for the drastic numbers of deaths in the country?
9. Should the Indian government have done more to protect the population from dying?
10. Does "protecting the population" mean protecting literal lives, or does it refer to the financial stability of citizens and decent living conditions (HDI)?

Bibliography:

Cohen Signe, "There are 2.9 million atheists in India and it's been around in Asia for centuries", *The Print*, April 7 2020, theprint.in/features/there-are-2-9-million-atheists-in-india-and-its-been-around-in-asia-for-centuries/215680/, accessed October 14 2020

"Coronavirus in India: how the COVID-19 could impact the fast-growing economy", *Pharmaceutical Technology*, 30 April 2020, www.pharmaceutical-technology.com/features/coronavirus-affected-countries-india-measures-impact-pharma-economy/, accessed October 14 2020

"Coronavirus Outbreak Timeline Fast Facts", *CNN Health*, October 13 2020, edition.cnn.com/2020/02/06/health/wuhan-coronavirus-timeline-fast-facts/index.html, accessed October 14 2020

"COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic", *Worldometer*, October 13 2020, www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/, accessed October 14 2020

"COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in India", *Wikipedia*, 9 October 2020, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic_lockdown_in_India#:~:text=To%20control%20the%20spread%20of%20coronavirus%20outbreak%20in%20India.&text=On%2024%20March%202020%2C%20the,COVID%2D19%20pandemic%20in%20India., accessed October 14 2020

"Impact of unemployment rate due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdown in India from January to September 2020", *Statista*, October 2020, www.statista.com/statistics/1111487/coronavirus-impact-on-unemployment-rate/#:~:text=COVID%2D19%20impact%20on%20unemployment%20rate%20in%20India%202020&text=In%20September%202020%2C%20India%20saw,rate%20of%20over%20six%20percent.&text=A%20damaging%20impact%20on%20an,percent%20on%20May%2017%2C%202020., accessed October 14 2020

"India's unemployment rate hits 26% amid lockdown, 14 crore lose employment: CMIE", *Business Today*, May 25 2020, www.businesstoday.in/sectors/jobs/india-unemployment-rate-hits-26-amid-lockdown-14-crore-lose-employment-cmie/story/401707.html, accessed October 14 2020

"India Unemployment Rate", *Trading Economics*, tradingeconomics.com/india/unemployment-rate, accessed October 14 2020

"It's positively alpine!": Disbelief in big cities as air pollution falls", *The Guardian*, April 12 2020, www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/apr/11/positively-alpine-disbelief-air-pollution-falls-lockdown-coronavirus, accessed October 14 2020

Kantis Caroline, Kiernan Samantha, Socrates Bardi Jason, "UPDATED: Timeline of the Coronavirus", *ThinkGlobalHealth*, October 9 2020, www.thinkglobalhealth.org/article/updated-timeline-coronavirus, accessed October 14 2020

"Lockdown Reveals Fresh Air, Cleaner Rivers in India", *VOA News*, April 22 2020, www.voanews.com/south-central-asia/lockdown-reveals-fresh-air-cleaner-rivers-india, accessed October 14 2020

Menon Smitha, "The impact of your favourite restaurant closing is bigger than you think", *Condé Nast Traveller*, March 27 2020, www.cntraveller.in/story/covid-19-coronavirus-impact-restaurant-india-closing/, accessed October 14 2020

Neilson Susie, Woodward Aylin, Mosher Dave, "A comprehensive timeline of the coronavirus pandemic at 9 months, from China's first case to the present", September 29 2020, www.businessinsider.com/coronavirus-pandemic-timeline-history-major-events-2020-3, accessed October 14 2020

Rincon Paul, "Coronavirus: Is there any evidence for lab release theory?", *BBC News*, May 1 2020, www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-52318539, accessed October 14 2020

Silver Laura, Devlin Kat, Haung Christine, "Unfavorable Views of China Reach Historic Highs in Many Countries", *Pew Research Center*, October 6 2020, www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/10/06/unfavorable-views-of-china-reach-historic-highs-in-many-countries/, accessed October 14 2020

Udhaya Kumar, Thirumal Kumar, Prabhu Christopher, Priya Doss George, "The Rise and Impact of COVID-19 in India", *Frontiers in Medicine*, May 22 2020, www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fmed.2020.00250/full, accessed October 14 2020

"What does ECOSOC do?", www.un.org/en/ecosoc/meetings/2005/hl2005/ECOSOCinfo%20rev%20et.pdf, accessed October 14 2020

"World / Countries / India", *Worldometer*, October 13 2020, www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/india/, accessed October 14 2020