



Committee: World Health Organization (WHO)

Topic: Health System in Venezuela

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Background

When the United Nations was formed in 1945, one of the topics discussed was setting a global organization that focused on the health of the people, and on the 7th of April 1948 the WHO's constitution came into force, a date that now is celebrated every year. Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, and WHO focuses on each of those aspects. The primary role of World Health Organization (WHO) is to direct and coordinate international health within the United Nations system. Working with 194 Member States, across six regions, and from more than 150 offices, WHO staff are united in a shared commitment to achieve better health for everyone, everywhere.

Venezuela's Health Care

About 25 years ago Venezuela had one of the best health care systems in South America. Between 1978 and 1980, Venezuela had 14,771 doctors, 8,805 nurses and 2,804 medical personnel. The former president Luis Herrera Campins created a national plan to increase medical funding by 9.7% annually for four years, with hopes to reach 2.1 billion in 1985. Luis Herrera's main plan focused on the opening of medical clinics to avoid big hospitals.

The fall of the country was caused by a series of factors, for starters former President Hugo Chavez and the now President Nicolas Maduro created a political regimen that has stoped the imports of food and medical aid, leaving the citizens of the country isolated. The social spending of Maduro and Chaves's government, with the decline of oil prices and the U.S sanctions all contributed to the economic collapse.

Thanks to the mismanagement of the country's oil wealth means the government can no longer afford free public health care and is unable to pay Cuban Doctors that once came into the country during its boom.

The supply of medicine and medical equipment has steadily declined since the cuts to dollar funding in 2013, while the U.S. government began to impose sanctions in August 2017.

A drain of medical personnel have already brought Venezuela's once cutting-edge health care system to its end. No medicine, water or even soap has made more than half of the hospitals to shot down since no patient can be treated, the doctors blame and note that Maduro's government since 2015 has systematically suppressed national health statistics, leaving it in the dirt like it is today.

Children have paid an especially heavy price from the collapse in Venezuela's healthcare system. The most recent figures from Venezuela's Health Ministry show that infant mortality, covering children age 1 and below, rose 30% to 11,466 cases in 2016 from the year before. There is no official data on children's' deaths from cancer.

According to the humanitarian group Save the children, the mortality rate for children under the age of 5 has risen 40% in the last eight years.

Venezuela's Government has allowed the country's infrastructure to crumble, with fatal consequences for ordinary Venezuelans. Without regular reports on basic health indicators, assessment of the impact of the crisis is difficult. However, "Encuesta Nacional de Hospitales 2018", the survey shows a shocking decline in health-care performance and a failure of the system. Aware of this humanitarian crisis, as declared by the political opposition in 2017, worldwide humanitarian aid has been offered by multiple countries and the UN. Yet Venezuela's Government has refused this humanitarian aid, denying the existence of a crisis.

Guide Questions:

What is your country's position regarding Venezuela's health crisis?

Is your country taking action for or against this situation?

What would be a plausible solution for the crisis?

How should your country intervene in order to avoid a similar problem?

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