



# Pat-MedMUNC III UNEP

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## *The Effects of Harmful substances on Daily Life*

Chemicals are an integral part of everyday life. There are over 100,000 different substances in use today. They play a role in every economic sector and nearly every industry, and many are critical to human well-being and sustainable development. Yet chemicals can also endanger human health and the environment if not managed properly.

Much work remains to be done to understand and mitigate these negative impacts, such as widespread contamination of land, water and air. This work is especially critical today as new and potentially hazardous substances continue to emerge.

The global economy is generating increasing amounts of hazardous waste in countries that lack the systems and resources for their proper management. This waste poses serious risks to people and the environment and has the potential to contaminate other non-hazardous waste and substances if it is not adequately controlled.

Keeping the environment and people safe from harmful substances and hazardous waste goes beyond management. It means working to avoid these dangers entirely by removing them, wherever possible, from production and use.

UNEP's Harmful Substances and Hazardous Waste sub-program assists countries and regions in managing the life cycles of chemical substances and waste that could pose a threat to the environment and human health. For more than 30 years, UNEP's work has supported initiatives related to specific chemicals or to critical elements of their life cycles.

UNEP's work also includes efforts to reduce risks from mercury, heavy metals, pesticides, persistent organic pollutants (POPs) and other chemicals of global concern.

### *Points to Consider*

- What harmful substances are prominent in your country?
- How do those substances affect people in your country as well as the environment?
- What other countries are affected by the same substances?
- What measures are being taken to reduce the amounts of these harmful substances?
- What can your country do to help other countries facing similar problems?