

## Report from the NorWHO Simulaiton 2018: Access to Essential medicines

I attended the NorWHO Simulation 2018, at the UN City in Copenhagen, from 20-24th of August. The NorWHO Simulation is a simulation of a World Health Organization assembly and this year the topic was access to essential medicines. The attendees were given the roles of representing a country, a non-governmental organization, a pharmaceutical company or work as a member of the press. During the week, the delegates meet within their regions to develop working papers that were presented to the whole assembly on the final day and voted upon. For a working paper to be considered on the final day of voting, it needs to be sponsored by two countries and have the signatures of one NGO and two pharmaceutical companies. This is very similar to how the WHO determines its policies during the yearly WHO assembly.

I was given the role of representing Novo Nordisk, one of the largest pharmaceutical companies in diabetes care worldwide. While the delegates meet within the regions the NGOs and pharmaceutical companies observed the discussions, made statements or answered questions. As the work progressed, negotiations intensified as the delegates began "hunting" our signatures. I really got to challenge myself in negotiations and networking to get the delegates to consider my company's interests. On one occasion the negotiations between me and the delegate representing United Arab Emirates got a bit heated, and the press called a press conference to elaborate on the conflict. Everyone took their roles seriously, so the press conferences were both interesting and intense.

Between regional meetings several visitors gave inspiring talks about access to essential medicines, from the doctor's point of view to the politician's. I learned a lot about WHO, the history and how it works but I also got a much deeper understanding of the issues related to access to medicines and how complicated the interplay between financial, political and human interests are. The knowledge I gained from this conference will be very useful as I pursue future work in global health, however the training in networking and negotiating has been useful right away.

In the end, I was honored to receive the award for best NGO/pharmaceutical company. I highly recommend PhD students to attend WHO simulations or UN simulations. The simulations are a great way to learn about these organizations and the work that they do. It's a challenging and rewarding experience, but lots of fun and a great chance to meet equal-minded students from different fields.

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