



University of  
Pittsburgh

Asian Studies Center

University Center for International Studies

\*NOTE: Since there is no real delegating body within Asia that functions in the same way as the United Nations or European Union, we have selected the recently formed 15-member Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) to serve as the body to debate, respond to, and resolve issues that are pertinent to Asia and the surrounding region.

### Asia Challenge High School Simulation

The second annual Asia Challenge Simulation\* for high school students will take place on Thursday, February 10, 2022 virtually via Zoom. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), comprised of Australia, Brunei, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, Vietnam, China, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Philippines, Republic of Korea (South Korea), and Thailand will meet to address immediate and long-term issues affecting the partnership. There will be two sessions for the day.

In the morning session, the debates will center around **climate change**. According to the UN body for assessing the science related to climate change, the [IPCC](#) (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), climate change is reaching widespread, rapid, and intensifying levels. The IPCC projects “increasing heat waves, longer warm seasons and shorter cold seasons” with heat extremes impacting “critical tolerance thresholds for agriculture and health.” The specter of global warming of “1.5 C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse emission[s]...threaten sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty.” Additionally, according to the IPCC, climate change is intensifying the water cycle with more intense rain fall, flooding, and drought, and “coastal areas will see continued sea level rise throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century” with “extreme sea level events that previously occurred once 100 years” happening “every year by the end of this century.” The warming trends will further the crisis by quickening permafrost thawing, melting glaciers and ice sheets (leading to the loss of Arctic sea ice), and adversely impacting ocean ecosystems.

Similarly, [The World Economic Forum](#) reports that “The [conservative](#) scientific consensus is that a 1.5°C increase in global temperature will generate a global sea-level rise of between 1.7 and 3.2 feet by 2100.” Around 90% of all coastal areas world-wide will be affected by this to varying degrees, with Asian cities being particularly vulnerable because “about four out of every five people impacted by sea-level rise by 2050 will live in East or South East Asia.” So called “delta cities” such as Guangzhou, Ho Chi Min City, Hong Kong, Manila, Melbourne, and Tokyo are particularly threatened by the reality of rising sea levels. Of further concern, according to [McKinsey](#), “by 2050, between 600 million and one billion people in Asia will be living in areas with a nonzero annual probability of lethal heat waves...[and] the probability

of being exposed to a lethal heat wave at least once in the decade centered on 2050 could increase to 80 percent.” This statistic could lead to a loss of between “\$2.8 trillion and \$4.7 trillion of GDP in Asia annually” and “\$1.2 trillion loss in capital stock in Asia...[due to] riverline flooding in a given year by 2050.”

The member-states will strategize ways in which they can mitigate the threat of global climate change while also ensuring their countries’ individual economic prosperity and security. *A breaking news event will be introduced at some point in the morning session related to the climate change crisis that will require an immediate response by the RCEP delegation.*

In the afternoon session, debate will center around **democracy protests** that have been occurring throughout Asia in the past few years. Social unrest prompted by calls for the preservation or expansion of democratic freedoms has erupted across our region over the past several years and promises to continue and possibly increase if compromise by all parties is not achieved. RCEP has particular concerns about the economic impact of such unrest and heavy-handed government responses to it. According to the [International Monetary Fund](#), “on average, major unrest events are followed by a 1 percentage point reduction in GDP six quarters after the event...unrest impedes growth.” As a trade partnership, RCEP has a vested interest the economic health of all of our member states. As such, political unrest is damaging to not only the member states experiencing it but to their trade partners and RCEP as a whole. At the same time, we recognize the importance of rule of law and the value of engaged citizen participation in politics. Our future economic, political, and social well-being is impacted by our success in achieving equity, liberty, and opportunity while maintaining the rules-based international order and stability.

The afternoon debate will address these challenges within RCEP, and attempt to tackle the next steps for inter-regional consensus and collaboration around these issues. *An additional crisis will also be introduced at some point in the afternoon session that will require an immediate response by the RCEP delegation.*

Participating schools, upon assignment of countries, will be invited to write position papers on any of the four topics:

1. Climate Change: Global Warming and Greenhouse Gas Emissions
2. Climate Change: Global Warming and Its Effects on Coastal Cities
3. Democracy Protests: Hong Kong
4. Democracy Protests: Myanmar

Position papers will be due by Monday, January 24th.

## **ASIA CHALLENGE SIMULATION SCHEDULE, Thursday, February 10, 2022**

The schedule for the day will be as follows:

8:00 am- 8:30 am—Log in to assigned simulation room in Zoom; verify technology is working  
8:30 am-8:50 am—Virtual welcome by the Asian Studies Center and instructions for the day

**8:50 am-11:30 am-MORNING SESSION**

8:50 am-9:00 am—Setting the agenda-determine the order of discussion for the topic

9:00 am-9:30 am—Introductory statements by member states—deliver a two-minute introductory position on the first agenda item (Climate Change)

9:30 am-11:30 am—Debate the crisis and work toward a resolution

11:30 am-12:05 pm—Break

**12:15-3:00 pm-AFTERNOON SESSION**

12:05-12:15 pm-Setting the agenda-determine the order of discussion for the topic

12:15 pm-12:45 pm—Introductory statements by member states—deliver a two-minute introductory position on the second agenda item (Democracy Protests)

12:45 pm-2:45 pm—Debate the second agenda item and work toward a resolution

2:45 pm-2:50 pm—Complete an anonymous self-evaluation to assess the skills gained by preparing for and participating in Asia Challenge 2022

2:50 pm-3:00 pm—Awards announced for best delegations and position papers in each room