

MODEL UNITED NATIONS SIMULATIONS MANUAL

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INTRODUCTION¹

Model UN is one of the most popular ways to learn about the workings of the United Nations. Conferences are organized by hundreds of educational institutions at all levels to engage young students in diplomatic debates and conversations that resemble those at the United Nations. It is often the first time that students are exposed to international affairs.

It has been noted, however, that due to a lack of knowledge of the procedural and substantive roles played by UN diplomats and UN staff, Model UN simulations don't accurately reflect the true UN decision-making process.

As a first step to improve MUN simulations, the UN Department of Public Information (UNDPI) organized three Global Model UN (GMUN) conferences in Geneva (2009), Kuala Lumpur (2010) and Incheon (2011) to provide a model of best practices. Having learned from these successful events, UNDPi Outreach Division recognized that its role in supporting Model UN needed to evolve and decided to focus its efforts on organizing workshops and training sessions for student leaders and MUN advisors who organize MUN conferences around the world instead.

Starting in 2012, the Division launched a series of workshops with the aim of giving students and MUN advisors a basic understanding of: the General Assembly's Rules of Procedure; the discussion and action phases of General Assembly Committee meetings; how to draft and review resolutions; the duties and responsibilities of the General Assembly and UN Secretariat officials and how to capture the relationship between these two main organs in the leadership structure within MUN simulations; and, the role of consensus in making decisions and how this is achieved. The main motivation for organizing these workshops is to train those who are in charge of MUN programmes in a new approach that more accurately represents the way the UN functions and that deepens students' knowledge of the art of diplomacy and the critical role it plays in the work of the UN.

¹ <https://www.un.org/en/mun/model-un-guide>

As a companion to the workshops, this online guide details the structure, procedures, negotiation process and skills needed to conduct a simulation that accurately captures the essence of the decision-making process at the UN.

Educational Value of MUN simulations

Model UN helps students to develop public speaking, writing and research skills. In addition, they often provide the first entry point into international affairs and introduce students to the wide range of peace and security, human rights, development and rule of law issues that are on the UN agenda.

What is often overlooked is the important role that MUN simulations can play in teaching students about the UN as an institution, its role in world affairs, and the art of diplomacy that underlies the unique way in which it makes decisions that affect our lives.

Most MUN simulations are very competitive in nature and use rules of procedure that prevent students from acquiring a true picture and appreciation of how the UN actually functions. This document aims to provide a comprehensive guide to assist MU programmes in organizing simulations that are more accurate and provide students with an opportunity to learn about the role that diplomacy plays in the decision making process.

UNDPI is grateful to the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations for allowing content of the [PGA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly](#) to be included in the Guide as well as the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) for allowing the inclusion in this Guide of content from the UNITAR publication Manual for UN Delegates - Conference Process, Procedure and Negotiation, developed by the Multilateral Diplomacy Programme.

It is our hope that you will find this guide a useful resource, and that you will share with us your questions, comments, or suggestions.

GETTING READY

This section provides useful information to help you in your preparation before attending a Model UN conference. There are two sections:

- [Decisions before a conference](#) - how a conference is to be structured and the duties and responsibilities of key officials.
- [Delegate preparation](#) - how to prepare your research in advance, where to go for resources and how to draft position papers.

Please review the links below to familiarize yourself with the types of decisions that need to be considered before planning a MUN conference.

Choosing Leadership Roles

- [Leadership positions to include in General Assembly simulations](#)
- [Leadership positions in the Secretariat to include in General Assembly simulations](#)
- [Leadership positions in Security Council simulations](#)
- [Selecting candidates for leadership positions](#)

Roles and Responsibilities of Elected Officials

Oversight of the Conference - Things to Consider

Agenda, Workplan, Documents and Rules of Procedure **Adopting an agenda**

The adoption of the agenda in the plenary meeting of the GA is usually a formality, confirming the outcome of long preparations and consultations undertaken ahead of the conference. All participants who want a successful conference want the agenda adopted with as little discussion or division as possible.

The steps for adopting an the agenda for each GA session are as follows:

1. A “Preliminary list of items to be included in the provisional agenda of the General Assembly” is issued early in the year (usually February).
2. An “Annotated version of the preliminary list of items to be included in the provisional agenda of the General Assembly” is circulated in mid-June. This gives the history of each item proposed for inclusion on the agenda, lists selected documents from the previous sessions and projects major documents (reports, etc.) to be submitted for discussion under the individual items.
3. A “Provisional agenda of the xxth annual session of the GA” is issued in July and lists all new items that have been proposed up to sixty days before the opening of the session.
4. A “Supplementary list of items proposed for inclusion in the agenda” comes out in mid-August and includes all new items that have been proposed after the issuance of the provisional agenda and up to thirty days before the opening of the session. Issued thirty days before the opening of the session.
5. A draft agenda, included in the “Memorandum of the Secretary-General on the Organization of the xxth regular session of the General Assembly, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items” is submitted to the General Committee in mid-September and is the basis for its deliberations. Some of the listed items may be deleted or deferred.

6. The “Report of the General Committee” (based on the Memorandum of the Secretary-General) includes recommendations on the items to be included in the agenda, on the allocation of items to the Plenary or the Main Committees and on organizational aspects of the GA session.

7. The “Agenda of the xxth session of the GA”, is adopted by the Plenary and becomes the basis for the work of the GA session. Additions made after the adoption are issued as Addenda to the Agenda.

8. The “Allocation of agenda items for the xxth session of the GA” details the final allocation of items to the Plenary or one of the Main Committees based on the recommendations of the General Committee. Changes or additions made after the adoption are issued as Corrigenda or Addenda to the Agenda.

The Programme of Work and Agenda page on the UN General Assembly website lists all the documents associated to this process. The number of items included in the GA agenda varies from session to session. The agenda for the 67th session included 170 items.

How it might be done at a MUN conference: Normally the General Assembly and ECOSOC Affairs Division (GAEAD) drafts the GA agenda on behalf of the Secretary-General. Within the context of a MUN simulation, the MUN Secretariat should draft the agenda under the leadership of the Secretary-General and then submit it to the MUN GA General Committee. After reviewing the draft agenda, the General Committee offers its recommendations as to which items it thinks the General Assembly should adopt, which items should be allocated to each committee and the order in which they should be addressed. These recommendations are included in a “Report of the General Committee” for adoption during the opening Plenary of the GA.

Defining a Work program

The next area of importance that needs to be discussed is the organization of work. Once the items have been allocated to the Plenary and GA Main Committees, a programme of work must be prepared. The organization of work essentially consists of a timetable in which the work will have to be performed (e.g., how much time should be spent debating each item on the agenda, how long should speakers be allowed to speak, how much time should be scheduled to take action on resolutions that have been tabled) including the scheduling of any special events (e.g., when substantive experts should be invited to speak to the delegates, etc.) While the General Committee puts together the Programme of Work for Plenary meetings of the GA, the Bureaus do the same for work carried out within each Committee with the assistance of the Secretariat and in consultation with delegations.

Once the programme of work has been informally agreed, it will be submitted to the delegates at the opening session. Thereafter it is an important reference for all delegates.

How it might be done at a MUN conference: Normally the General Assembly and ECOSOC

Affairs Division (GAEAD) drafts the Programme of Work for each Committee. Within the context of a MUN simulation, the Secretary of each Committee can draft the Programme of Work with assistance from other members of the Bureau.

Preparing Documents

In order to carry out the Programme of Work, delegates need to access documents related to each agenda item. These documents might include Secretary-General reports on the agenda items being discussed, letters submitted by Member States on the agenda item, substantive reports written by UN experts, the programme of work itself, etc. All such documents need to be available for ready reference by delegates.

How it might be done at a MUN conference: Once the provisional agenda has been discussed by the General Committee and its recommendations have been determined, the MUN Secretariat (i.e., the Secretary-General and USGs) should prepare Secretary-General reports on each agenda item. These reports should provide a detailed history of the agenda item including actions the UN has already taken. These reports will be used by the delegates as a resource to assist them in preparing their Position Papers.

In many cases, secretariats maintain a website from which documents can be downloaded. Such websites need to be monitored regularly as new documents are posted there.

Choosing the appropriate Rules of Procedure

The recommended Rules of Procedure for use by MUN Programmes simulating the General Assembly can be found on the [Global Model UN website](#). They are based on the actual Rules of Procedure used at the UN. Almost all the simulations of the General Assembly that are organized around the world use parliamentary rules of procedure that are very different from what is used at the UN. **We strongly recommend that the Rules of Procedure included in this guide be used instead of what is currently being used.**

The Rules of Procedure play a critical role in making sure that the deliberations that take place during formal meetings be carried in the most efficient way possible. The Rules of Procedure at MUN conferences are more complex and figure prominently during meetings. At the UN, the rules are simpler and invoked less frequently. This detracts from the work that needs to be carried out. By adopting the Rules of Procedure suggested in this manual, meetings should be easier to manage and the Programme of Work completed in a more efficient manner.

CHOOSING LEADERSHIP ROLES

When planning a MUN conference one of the first decisions is who will be included in the leadership roles and how will they be selected. An accurate simulation of the United Nations needs to take into consideration the leadership structure of those UN entities that

will be simulated in a given conference.

This guide focuses on the General Assembly, Security Council and UN Secretariat. A list of other leadership roles in the UN Family is provided in the Appendices. To a certain extent the number of leadership positions will depend on the size of the conference. That being said, the following list of leadership positions is recommended when doing a simulation that includes these three Organs of the United Nations:

Leadership positions to include in General Assembly simulations

Leadership positions in the Secretariat to include in General Assembly simulations

Leadership positions in Security Council simulations

Selecting candidates for leadership positions

LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN GENERALASSEMBLY SIMULATIONS

- **President of the General Assembly (PGA)**

The PGA is the guardian of the General Assembly (GA) Rules of Procedure but has no say in the actual decision-making of the GA. In this role the PGA, opens and closes each GA plenary meeting, rules on points of order, and presides over discussions in plenary meetings. In addition, the PGA organizes thematic debates and plays an important role in raising the public visibility of the GA

- **Vice-Presidents (VPs) of the General Assembly** (while the GA elects 21 VPs, the number can be adjusted to the size of the conference)

The Vice-Presidents replace the president of the General Assembly, when he is absent, as Acting President. The Acting President has the same powers and duties as the President and remains under the authority of the General Assembly. *An Acting President does not vote.* If need be, the Acting President has to designate another member of his delegation to vote in his place. The VPs are frequently tasked by the PGA with the facilitation of complex negotiations. In this capacity, the Vice-President will conduct consultations on a specific assignment and chair informal meetings of the plenary at ambassadors and experts level.

- **Chair of a General Assembly Main Committee** (up to a maximum of six, the number will depend on which GA Main Committees are included in the simulation)

The Chair or Chairperson declares the opening and closing of meetings of the committee. In these meetings he directs the discussions, makes sure that the rules are observed, accords the right to speak, puts forward questions, and announces decisions. The Chairperson has complete control of the proceedings at any meeting and has the responsibility of maintaining order at all times. Because the Chairperson represents the whole Committee,

he/she cannot simultaneously represent one of the participating delegations.

Chairpersons are expected to cease operating as a member of their national delegation as long as they are acting as Chairman and do not vote. If, as is often the case, they are a delegation leader, another member of that delegation must take over the role of speaking and voting on behalf of the delegation. The Chairman should speak and act impartially on behalf of the Committee as a whole and not seek to promote any national or personal views.

- **Vice-Chairs** (while the GA elects 18, three per Committee, this number can be adjusted according to the size of the conference)

In the event that the Chairperson is not available for a meeting or any part of the meeting, the Vice-Chairperson shall take his/her place. While acting as Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson shall have the same powers and duties as the Chairperson.

- **Rapporteur** (up to a maximum of six, the number will depend on which GA Main Committees are included in the simulation)

Although report writing is left to the Secretariat, the Rapporteur takes responsibility for reviewing the report on the Committee's work drafted by the Secretary at the end of each session of the GA and presenting it at the closing Plenary meeting. Like the Chair and Vice-Chair, the Rapporteur is elected but sits alongside the Chair on the podium.

Leadership positions in the Secretariat to include in General Assembly simulations

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, at UN Headquarters in New York

Equal parts diplomat and advocate, civil servant and CEO, the Secretary-General is a symbol of United Nations ideals and a spokesman for the interests of the world's peoples, in particular the poor and vulnerable among them. The Secretary-General is appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council.

The Charter describes the Secretary-General as "chief administrative officer" of the Organization, who shall act in that capacity and perform "such other functions as are entrusted" to him/her by the Security Council, General Assembly, Economic and Social Council and other United Nations organs. The Charter also empowers the Secretary-General to "bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security". These guidelines both define the powers of the office and grant it considerable scope for action. The Secretary-General would fail if he/she did not take careful account of the concerns of Member States, but s/he must also uphold the values and moral authority of the United Nations, and speak and act for peace, even at the risk, from time to time, of challenging or disagreeing with those same Member States.

The Secretary-General's day-to-day work includes attendance at sessions of United Nations bodies; consultations with world leaders, government officials, and others; and worldwide travel intended to keep him/her in touch with the peoples of the Organization's Member States and informed about the vast array of issues of international concern that are on the Organization's agenda. Each year, the Secretary-General issues a report on the work of the United Nations that appraises its activities and outlines future priorities. The Secretary-General is also Chairperson of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), which brings together the Executive Heads of all UN funds, programmes and specialized agencies twice a year in order to further coordination and cooperation in the entire range of substantive and management issues facing the United Nations System.

One of the most vital roles played by the Secretary-General is the use of his/her "good offices" - steps taken publicly and in private, drawing upon his/her independence, impartiality and integrity, to prevent international disputes from arising, escalating or spreading.

Each Member of the United Nations undertakes to respect the exclusively international character of the responsibilities of the Secretary-General and the staff and not to seek to influence them in the discharge of their responsibilities.

Deputy-Secretary-General (DSG)

United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed, at UN Headquarters in New York

The post of Deputy-Secretary-General was established by the General Assembly at the end of 1997 as part of the reform of the United Nations, to help manage Secretariat operations and to ensure coherence of activities and programmes. The purpose was also to elevate the Organization's profile and leadership in the economic and social spheres.

The main duty of the Deputy-Secretary-General is to support the Secretary-General. Some of his/her duties may include, but are not limited to: assisting the Secretary-General in managing the operations of the Secretariat, assisting the Secretary-General in making sure that the different activities and programmes are in line with the Secretary-General's task of raising the profile and leadership of the United Nations, representing the Secretary-General at conferences, official functions, ceremonial and other occasions as deemed necessary by the Secretary-General, and acting for the Secretary-General in his/her absence.

Under-Secretaries-General (USGs)

While there are many Under-Secretaries-General and other senior staff at the same rank,

the position listed below are often the most important to include in a MUN simulation; this may depend to some extent on the substantive issues to be considered during the simulation.

- **Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs**

The Department of Political Affairs (DPA) plays a central role in the efforts of the United Nations to prevent and resolve conflict around the world and to consolidate peace in the aftermath of war. To that end, DPA:

- monitors, analyses and assesses political developments throughout the world;
- identifies potential or actual conflicts in whose control and resolution the United Nations could play a useful role;
- recommends to the Secretary-General appropriate action in such cases and executes the approved policy;
- assists the Secretary-General in carrying out political activities decided by him, the General Assembly and the Security Council in the areas of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding;
- advises the Secretary-General on requests for electoral assistance received from Member States and coordinates programmes established in response to such requests;
- advises and supports the Secretary-General in the political aspects of his relations with Member States;
- services the Security Council and its subsidiary bodies, as well as the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Special Committee of 24 on Decolonization.

The head of the Department, the Under-Secretary-General, also undertakes consultations and negotiations relating to peaceful settlement of disputes, and is the focal point for UN electoral assistance activities.

- **Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs**

The key function of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) is to provide advice and support to the Secretary-General relating to economic and social issues, to the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly and to the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies.

The Department assists to establish a coordinated framework to promote and monitor the implementation of agreed plans, strategies, programmes or platforms of action. DESA supports the coordination functions of central intergovernmental bodies and assists the Secretary-General in enhancement of policy coherence.

It monitors, analyses and assesses economic and social policies and trends, including population trends and development linkages; compiles and disseminates analytical data, statistics and economic and social indicators.

It provides the Secretary-General with advice and support to promote human rights, especially of women, to reach the targets defined in the strategic plan of action for the improvement the status of women in the Secretariat.

It offers policy advisory services to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to strengthen national capacities. It promotes the sharing of development expertise and dialogue with non-governmental organizations and major groups in civil society.

The Under-Secretary-General is responsible for the overall management, supervision and administration of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. He/She is expected to provide the Secretary-General with the information on issues that fall within the competence of the Department. The Under-Secretary-General also represents the Secretary-General at meetings that address issues overseen by the Department, assists in system-wide coordination of responsibilities by providing substantive support of the Administrative Committee on Coordination. He/She also serves as a chairperson of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs.

- **Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Management**

The main function of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM) is to support the effectiveness and efficiency of intergovernmental activities and provide technical secretariat services to the General Assembly and its Committees. The Department facilitates conferences and ad hoc meetings held under the auspices of the United Nations and provides relevant documentation services.

It plans and organizes the regular, special and emergency special sessions of the General Assembly. It coordinates activities and the provision of services related to all sessions of the General Assembly, and assists the President of the General Assembly on all matters relating to the session and work of the General Assembly and its General and Main Committees.

DGACM prepares a number of legislative documents, including the reports of the General Committee of the Assembly; preliminary list of agenda items and the provisional agenda of

the Assembly; supplementary list of items and the final agenda of regular sessions; programme of work of the Assembly and schedule of plenary meetings; lists of resolutions and decisions and text of decisions adopted by the Assembly.

The Under-Secretary-General is accountable for all the activities of the Department of General Assembly and Conference Management that involves New York Headquarters and the United Nations offices at Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi. This includes the establishment of conference management policies, practices, standards and procedures. The Under-Secretary-General also acts as chair of the Inter-Agency meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications.

- **Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information**

The Department of Public Information (DPI) raises global awareness of the activities and concerns of the United Nations and promotes understanding of its work. DPI uses outreach programmes, information campaigns, news and feature services, radio and television programmes, press releases, publications, documentary videos and special events to communicate the Organization's messages. DPI spearheads the UN's international campaigns; engages prominent personalities as UN Messengers of Peace; and organizes exhibits, concerts, seminars and other events to mark occasions of international importance. It also provides library and knowledge-sharing services. In addition to its staff at UN Headquarters, DPI has 63 UN information centres, or UNICs, worldwide and a regional information centre (UNRIC) in Brussels.

The Department consists of three divisions. Its Strategic Communications Division develops communication strategies and campaigns to promote United Nations priorities. The News and Media Division produces and distributes UN news and information to the media, including daily press briefings and statements by the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, the UN websites, radio broadcasts and live TV feeds. The Outreach Division, which includes the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, publishes books, notably the *Yearbook of the United Nations*, and periodicals such as the *UN Chronicle* and *Africa Renewal*; works with NGOs and educational institutions; organizes special events and exhibitions on priority issues; and offers an annual training programme for journalists from developing countries. It also develops partnerships with the private and public sector to advance UN goals.

- Secretaries of the GA Main Committees (up to a maximum of six, the number will depend on which GA Main Committees are included in the simulation; this position is often left out of MUN simulations but fails to recognize that this position is vital to the functioning of the Bureau)

Leadership of the Security Council in MUN simulations

Security Council

The main leadership position in the Security Council is its President.

According to Section 30 of the UN Charter, "The Security Council shall adopt its own rules of procedure, including the method of selecting its President." Accordingly, under rule 18 of the Security Council's provisional rules of procedure, the presidency of the Council is held in turn by the members of the Council in English alphabetical order for a one-calendar-month period and under rule 19, the President presides over the meetings of the Security Council and, under the authority of the Council, represents it in its capacity as a UN organ.

Selecting Candidates for Leadership Positions

The leaders of the General Assembly (GA) and the Bureau of the Main Committees are elected in advance.

Election of the President of the General Assembly (PGA), Vice-Presidents and Members of the Bureau

How it is done at the UN:

The PGA is elected by a simple majority vote of the GA at least three months before formally assuming office. The Presidency of the General Assembly usually rotates among the five regional groups (Group of Asian States, Group of Eastern European States, Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, Group of African States and the Western European and other States). The Member States of a regional group decide on one candidate and present a clean slate.

The Main Committees usually elect their Chairs and other officers on the day of the election of the PGA. No Member State can serve both as Vice-President and Chair of a Main Committee during the same GA session. Main Committee Chairs usually rotate among the five regional groups. Each regional group is allocated one chair. The sixth chair rotates among the Groups of African, Asian, and Latin American and Caribbean states based on an agreement that will expire at the end of the 68th General Assembly. The three Vice-Chairs and the Rapporteur are allocated to the four regional groups that do not hold the chair. Each regional group usually agrees on a clean slate which allows for election by acclamation. As clean slates are not always ready in time, the election of some bureau members can be postponed until the first formal meeting of the respective Main Committee.

How it might be done at a MUN conference:

MUN conferences that have assigned countries from all five regional groups can try to mirror the process followed at the UN in the following way

1. Ask delegates who are interested in being a GA Official (i.e., the PGA, a Vice-President, Chair, and Rapporteur) to submit an application describing their past experience participating in MUN conference and an essay explaining why they want to be a GA official.
2. Convene a steering committee to review the applications. If you want to mirror the process used at the UN, select a candidate to represent a regional group for each position that matches the regional groups chosen for these positions during the most recent GA session. If, for instance, the PGA is from the Eastern European Group, then choose a candidate to represent the same regional group at the conference. Do the same for the remaining positions. If you want to submit a clean slate to the opening plenary session then the delegates would elect the candidates selected by acclamation.

If you want to offer a slate of different candidates, convene a steering committee to review the applications and have them recommend two candidates for each position. The candidates for each position should represent the same regional groups as those currently holding these positions at the UN. Post each candidate's MUN experience along with their essay and conduct an online election before the conference convenes. The election of officials at the start of a GA plenary is usually a formality, having been informally agreed to long before the conference. Debate or any manifestation of disagreement over the selection of the leadership would be highly negative for the conference, so prudent management will not permit any discussion.

Whichever way you choose to select GA officials, it is important to show that the candidates are chosen in a way that ensures the leadership is geographically diverse.

3. Each GA Main Committee should have at least one Chair and one Rapporteur but the number of Vice-Chairs can vary depending on the size of the conference.
4. Although it would be possible to recreate the process for selecting the Secretary-General as it occurs at the UN, if the membership of the Security Council is chosen well in advance of the conference, this would probably be too difficult for most MUN conferences. As an alternative, the same process used for selecting the PGA can be used to select the Secretary-General. First, ask delegates who are interested in being the Secretary-General to submit an application describing their past experience participating in MUN conferences and an essay explaining why they want to be the Secretary-General. Then convene a steering committee to review the applications and nominate a candidate for the General Assembly to appoint at its first plenary meeting. Since there will only be one candidate that is nominated, the Secretary-General will be appointed by acclamation. Once the Secretary-General has been nominated, he/she would be involved in the decision-making process to appoint the remaining leadership positions within the MUN Secretariat. An application process for these positions should be implemented to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to be in a leadership role. Appointments should strive to be gender-balanced and geographically diverse.

5. The leadership structure of the simulation (i.e., the GA and MUN Secretariat officials) should be chosen from the pool of delegates who will be attending the conference.

Oversight of the Conference - Things to Consider

Organizing a MUN conference entails a great deal of planning over a long period of time. There are many details from the choice of the venue, the set up of rooms, registration, social activities, etc. that need to be carefully thought out. In addition to the leadership structure of the simulation of UN entities like the GA or Security Council, organizing a conference often requires a separate management structure to oversee all of the details of the conference.

If a MUN programme is large enough, it is recommended to have one group of leaders overseeing the entire conference and another group, comprised of the leaders of the simulation, focused on managing the simulation. When this is possible, the leadership structure of the conference should include a Chairperson who manages the overall conference in close consultation with a steering committee or series of committees comprised of students who participate in making decisions about the topics to be discussed in the Committees, financing and budget, fundraising and sponsorship, the conference logistics (e.g., choice of venue, managing the registration process, etc.), and communications strategy for promoting the conference. Here is an example of what this structure might look like:

Executive Committee, headed by a Chairperson, that oversees the work of the following Committees (not to be confused with the GA Main Committees that are part of the simulation):

- Programme Committee
- Communications Committee
- Logistics Committee
- Fundraising and Sponsorship Committee
- Financing and Budget Committee

Although the Chairperson has prime responsibility for the management of the conference, many others share in that responsibility. The Chairperson would also consult the leaders of the simulation once they are elected or appointed. Some of the responsibilities of the Committees might even be taken over by the simulation leaders once they are chosen. The Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Management, for example, could take over the supervision of the logistics of the conference and the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information could contribute to determining the communications strategy.

Roles and Responsibilities of Elected Officials

General Committee

The PGA, Vice-Presidents and Chairs are collectively referred to as the **General Committee**. The role and responsibilities of the General Committee includes discussing the GA agenda that has been drafted by the UN Secretariat, making recommendations to the GA on the inclusion of items and their allocation to the Main Committees. It also makes recommendations on organizational issues and on issues such as the conduct of meetings, meeting records, and documentation. The General Committee does not make declarations on political questions.

The General Committee usually works by consensus. If it decides by a vote, a simple majority rule applies. During its first meetings, the General Committee discusses the draft agenda and the organization of the session and immediately submits its report to the GA. This report contains recommendations on the inclusion of agenda items, on the allocation of agenda items and on the organization of work of the GA.

Each agenda item is allocated to a Main Committee of the GA or to the Plenary. There are no set rules. The allocations are based on well established practice, and agenda items almost never change committees. The allocation of new items is decided on a case by case basis. Occasionally, an agenda item is allocated to more than one Main Committee, or to both a Main Committee and the Plenary. In such cases, the General Committee recommends in detail which aspect of an item should be considered by which body.

The General Committee also suggests time frames for the work of the Main Committees, recommends voluntary time limits for speeches by Member States, and makes suggestions about other organizational matters based on the GA revitalization resolutions.

Most Model UN simulations of the GA do not include a General Committee or any GA officials. This can give a misleading impression about the power structure at the UN. Although the roles and responsibilities of GA officials and the General Committee could be performed by the MUN Secretariat, this would not convey the appropriate power structure that places the GA at the center of the UN system and the UN Secretariat in a supporting role. **It is vital to any simulation of the GA to include the main GA officials in the leadership structure of the conference to avoid giving over emphasis to the role of the Secretary-General and the UN Secretariat.**

Committee Bureau

The elected officers of a GA Main Committee (the Chairman, Vice-chairmen and Rapporteur) are collectively referred to as the **Bureau**. In some conferences they never meet as such but particularly in large conferences, the Bureau serves to assist the chairman with important aspects of managing the Committee proceedings. This includes, drafting the Programme of Work for the Committee, reporting on the Committee's work in the

Plenary meetings of the GA, choosing facilitators to assist the Committee in reaching consensus. The role the Bureau plays in helping the negotiation process move forward is a critical part of its work that is often left out of MUN simulations. In defining the functions of the Bureau it is important to keep in mind at all times that the Bureau does not tell a committee what to do, it recommends a certain course of action. Even though the Committee usually goes along with the Bureau's recommendations it always has the right to question, make changes or even put those recommendations to a vote. **Adding this element into the simulation can be a rewarding experience that leads to a deeper understanding of how the UN works.**

Many Model UN simulations do not have a complete Bureau in place nor do they use the same titles for the leaders of the Committee or the same terminology used at the UN to refer to itself. For example, the position of Rapporteur rarely occurs in Model UN, many refer to the leader of a Committee as a Director instead of a Chair and often refer to the leaders as members of the "dais" instead of the Bureau.

Delegate Preparation

Gathering Information

The first step should be to read the UN Charter.

Then, here are four important areas for delegates to research as part of their preparation for a conference:

1. The UN system. Delegates should be aware of the 6 main organs of the UN plus the UN family and how it relates to the General Assembly (see overview in this guide). The history, culture, political structure, and current political affairs of the countries that have been assigned for a simulation. In addition to resources on these topics, it may be useful to read fiction and non-fiction books (e.g., biographies) written by authors who live in the country you have been assigned. They may offer insights into the culture of the country delegates will be representing.
2. Government positions on the topics will be discussed at a MUN conference. In order to adequately represent a country during the conference, a delegate will need to interact with delegates representing other countries. Knowing the viewpoints and policies of "their" country as well as those positions of other countries that will be represented will help delegates predict what will be said during the debate phase of the conference. This will be very useful in helping delegates identify which countries will be in agreement with their position and which ones will be opposed. In addition, it will help them decide in advance where it might be useful to seek cooperation or compromise.
3. Positions of the main political groups, such as the Group of 77 and China, Non-Aligned Movement, European Union, African Union, etc. (see list of Groups of

Member States) are equally important since many negotiations at the UN often take place between political groups.

4. Current statistical data on assigned countries and topics.

Research Tips

When preparing for a conference, it is useful for delegates to divide the research into four categories:

1. General research on the assigned topic. A delegate should be well-versed on the topic they will be debating.
2. General research on the background and culture of the country they have been assigned.
3. Research on the policies of "their" country on the topics they will be debating.
4. Research on the policies of other countries that will be represented at the conference so that they can anticipate the arguments that might be put forward by other delegates.

Researching country policies on an assigned topic

Delegates should look for books and websites that give a general overview of the topic as well as information on more specific aspects of your topic. *It is important to get an idea of how complex the subject is and how many different aspects of the topic might be discussed during the conference.*

When delegates use the Internet for their research they should make sure to carefully select their sources. The amount of materials available is likely to be far greater than what they can digest in the amount of time they have available to prepare for a conference.

It is also important for them to keep in mind that web resources must be selected carefully. Not all web sites are reliable sources and many of the sources may be biased. If possible, delegates should try to find independent confirmation of the information they have obtained from more than one source.

Moreover, when gathering information it is important to distinguish between opinions and facts. Facts are used to support opinions. Whenever possible, delegates should use facts to support their arguments. Sometimes, however, there are instances when facts are not available. Ultimately, delegates will be presenting an opinion and must defend it against other opinions. Therefore, it is crucial for them to be familiar with different viewpoints and opinions on the topics they are assigned. *Delegates should study arguments that are different from the one their assigned country is likely to take on a topic.* Therefore, they need to analyse the facts that are used to support opposing arguments. Sometimes the same facts can be used to support two different positions on a topic. Delegates will need to decide which particular points they want to focus on in their arguments and this decision needs to be guided by their country's policies on the topic they are debating!

When searching the Internet for information it is usually a good idea to vary the keywords used to research an assigned topic. This will sometimes lead you to additional sources of information which you might not have found if the keyword search is too narrow.

Here are some common internet resources to help delegates get started:

1. Permanent Missions to the United Nations Many Missions to the UN post statements and other information about their positions on issues of importance.
2. Ministries of Foreign Affairs The foreign affairs websites often contain information about governmental policies on different issues.
3. UNBISNET This UN library reference also provides voting records for all General Assembly resolutions adopted since 1946 as well as an index to speeches. This database allows users to search all speeches given by a country on a specific topic.
4. UN Member States on the Record This official UN website provides information about the membership of each Member State, an index to their speeches in the General Assembly, Security Council and ECOSOC, draft resolutions they have sponsored, and periodic reports on human rights conventions they are parties to.
5. UN Global Issues This official UN resources gives an overview of each issues on the UN agenda as well as useful links to other UN related bodies and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), past summits and conferences and important documents on each issue. NGOs are a good source of information that should not be overlooked. In addition to performing a variety of services and humanitarian functions, bringing citizens' concerns to Governments, monitoring policies and encouraging political participation at the community level, they also provide analysis of issues, serve as early warning mechanisms and help monitor and implement international agreements. Some are organized around specific issues, such as human rights, the environment or health. The UN works with thousands of NGOs all over the world: around 4,000 have a formal association with the UN, through the Department of Public Information and the ECOSOC. The main UN website contains an extensive list of NGOs organized alphabetically as well as by region and topic.
6. Finally, *delegates should read UN resolutions on their assigned topic to find out what issues tend to be discussed when their topic is debated. Resolutions passed by the General Assembly, Security Council, and ECOSOC can be found at the UN Documentation Centre.*

Position Paper Guidelines

Introduction

The position paper is a brief and concise description of a State's, international organisation's or NGO's position and priorities for a given committee. The position paper allows delegations to plan their course of action before the meeting by taking into consideration each country's positions on the topics to be discussed at the conference. Once the position paper is finalized it should be shared with the chairpersons of the committee, it will allow them to give delegates useful feedback on what they have written prior to the conference.

Content

The position paper on an assigned topic should contain the following elements:

- A general sentence in the beginning clearly stating the country's position;
- A succinct policy statement for each topic representing the relevant views of the country that has been assigned;
- An elaboration of the position that includes one or more of the following: quotes from the UN Charter; agreements/resolutions your Member State has ratified; quotes from statements made by your Head of State, Head of Government, ministers, delegates to the UN, and any other relevant international documents including but not limited to
 - Reports from the UN Secretary-General on the topic;
 - Recommendations for actions to be taken by the committee; and
 - A conclusion restating assigned country's position on the topic.

Relevant statistics, quotes etc. should be cited in an accepted scholarly citation format.

Do NOT use the first person in a position paper. Instead simply use the delegation's name or alternatively expressions such as "our government", "our country", "our nation". Long essay-type position papers presenting a nation's history or background information on the topic are not useful. A simple and concise overview is best.

Step-by-Step Outline for Organizing a MUN

PRE-CONFERENCE

- Step 1: Decide on leadership structure
- Step 2: Decide which leadership positions are needed
- Step 3: Promote and set up registration
- Step 4: Select leaders
- Step 5: Provide training for officials
- Step 6: Set timeline for important tasks
- Step 7: Assign countries and topics
- Step 8: Create an online space for collaboration before the conference
- Step 9: Schedule online sessions
- Step 10: Distribute the conference programme
- Step 11: Assemble MUN Officials for preparation
- Step 12: Recruit volunteers
- Step 13: Organize workshops at conference venue

DURING THE CONFERENCE

A. Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly

- Step 1: Order

B. Committee Meetings

- Step 1: Make sure each Committee has a Bureau
- Step 2: Review the Programme of Work
- Step 3: Allot time for expert session
- Step 4: Schedule time for the review of progress
- Step 5: Assign facilitators
- Step 6: Draft resolution should be tabled and distributed
- Step 7: Schedule an informal meeting to review the draft resolution
- Step 8: Introduce amendments, if necessary
- Step 9: Repeat for each tabled resolution

STEP-BY-STEP IN DETAIL

PRE-CONFERENCE

Step 1: Decide on a leadership structure for the overall conference

This entails choosing a Chair to lead the team that will organize the conference; setting up a Steering Committee or group of Committees that will get the ball rolling until the leaders of the simulation are chosen. Here are the examples of the type of Committees you might set up:

- Executive Committee, headed by a Chairman, that oversees the work of the steering committee(s) and makes basic decisions about the duration of the conference, the Rules of Procedure that will be used, how many days will be devoted to pre-conference activities and how many will be devoted to simulating GA Plenary and GA Main Committees, etc. The following committees are recommended:
- Programme Committee that makes recommendations on which GA Main Committees will be simulated, how many topics will be discussed in each Committees, drafts a Programme for the conference
- Communications Committee that develops a communication strategy
- Logistics Committee that proposes a venue, looks at housing and transportation for delegates, proposes social events, manages the registration process
- Fundraising and Sponsorship Committee that looks for sponsors of the conference in the private sector, among foundations, etc.
- Financing and Budget Committee that determines how much it is all going to cost and manages the budget

Step 2: Decide which leadership positions are needed

The number of officials will depend in part on the size of the conference. We recommend the following structure for GA and Secretariat officials:

General Assembly

- President of the General Assembly (PGA)
- Vice-Presidents (this will depend on the size but it would be ideal to have at least one VP from each regional group)
- Chair (one per Committee)
- Vice-Chair (up to 3 per Committee depending on the size of the conference)
- Rapporteur (one per Committee)

Secretariat

- Secretary-General
- Deputy-Secretary-General (optional, again depends on the size of the conference)
- Under-Secretary-General (USG) for Political Affairs (especially important to have when doing Security Council simulations as well)
- Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs (very important to the work of the Second and Third Committees, this USG is useful in making presentations on substantive issues to these Committees)
- Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Management (this position is critical to the success of the conference because he/she oversees every logistical aspect of the conference that includes set up of rooms, signage for delegates, registration, housing for delegates, making sure that copies of draft resolutions are disseminated to delegates during Committee proceedings, as well as copies of resolutions that have been adopted in time for the closing Plenary meeting, etc.)
- Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information (this USG is important to raise the visibility of the conference by liaising with the media to cover the conference and conduct interviews, issuing press releases, documenting the conference and publishing a newsletter that keeps the delegates up to date on what is happening, etc.)
- Secretary (one per Committee, perhaps the most important position on the Bureau, the Secretary is responsible for advising the Chair on matters dealing with the Rules of Procedure, providing scripts of what the Chair needs to say during each Committee meeting, liaising with delegates regarding requests to be put on the Speaker's List, tabling resolutions and amendments, etc.)

Other positions can be added depending on what makes most sense given the content of the conference.

Step 3: Promote the conference and set up a registration process

Step 4: Select the leaders of the simulation in a fair and transparent manner from those that have registered for the conference (see Step 2 above on the suggested selection process) ensuring that they represent as many as the regional groups as possible and are gender balanced.

Step 5: Once the leaders are selected, the GA and Secretariat officials training should be provided to make sure they are familiar with the Rules of Procedure as well as their roles and responsibilities.

Step 6: Set timeline for important tasks to be completed by the GA and Secretariat officials including the following:

- Memorandum of the Secretary-General on the Organization of the xxth regular session of the [insert name of MUN] General Assembly
- Annotated version of the preliminary list of items to be included in the provisional agenda of the [insert name of MUN] General Assembly
- General Committee Report
- Secretary-General Reports on each topic to be discussed that gives the delegates an overview of the issue, the challenges that need to be faced, what the UN has done so far, and what still needs to be done
- Scripts for the Chair of each Committee. These need to be done in advance of the conference to guide the Chair on what to say when managing each phase of the Committee's work. These scripts need to be written with the objective to try to address any situation that might come up
- A Delegate's Guide that contains information about organization of the conference, what will be simulated, what topics will be debated, guidelines on writing position papers, how to submit them, what will take place during Plenary and Committee meetings, how to inscribe on the Speaker's List, digital tools to help delegates communicate prior to the conference and documents they will need to prepare, important details about the Rules of Procedure and how they may differ from other conferences delegates have participated in, a description of what is meant by consensus, information about regional groups, an overview of the process for tabling resolutions and amendments, description of the awards policy, and information about the selection and role of Head delegates.
- The Programme of Work for each Committee that will be distributed at the beginning of the first meeting.

Step 7: Assign countries and topics to conference participants



MUN delegate representing Belgium

addresses his peers

This is a crucial step that needs to be carefully thought through. In many Model UN simulations, schools send teams of delegates that work together. In these cases, a country and topic is assigned to a team of students who attend the same school.

An alternate way of organizing delegations that takes more work but is more rewarding, is to put together delegations comprised of students from different locations. In other words, no two students in any delegation are from the same school. We used this system in our three Global Model UN conferences and the experience of having students from different countries working together to represent the same country was one of the highlights of the conference.

When choosing the composition of a delegation it is important to take into consideration the following factors:

- The geographical distribution of the delegates who are working together;
- The gender balance of the delegation; and,
- The number of MUN conferences delegates have attended.

What you want to obtain are delegations that are geographically diverse, gender balanced and include delegates with a range of MUN experience. This way the more experienced delegates can mentor the less experienced ones. The most experienced MUN delegate should be the Head delegate.

Set a deadline for submitting Position Papers to the Committee Chairs and make sure the guidelines for writing these papers are available to all participants. Chairs should review each Position Paper and return them with feedback prior to the conference.

Step 8: Create an online space where delegates can work together prior to the conference

In addition to having a website about the conference where delegates can access information about when it will take place, how they can apply, etc., it is important to create

a space where delegates can communicate with each other. If you choose to put students from different locations on the same delegation, they will need a way to prepare for the conference before it starts. Check in regularly with the Head delegates to make sure they are in touch with all of the students on their delegation and respond to any issues that may come up.

Step 9: Have live video chats, Google+ hangouts or some other similar format with experts on the topics to be discussed or other important aspects of the conference such as how to write a resolution, the Rules of Procedure, or discussions on which regional or political groups are most likely to table resolutions in each Committee.

Step 10: Distribute the conference programme as soon as possible prior to the conference.

Step 11: Assemble MUN officials several days before the conference to allow them time to complete their preparations for the conference including but not limited to writing speeches, creating scripts for Chairs, preparing the venue, etc.

Step 12: Recruit volunteers to assist in as many aspects of the conference as needed and organize training before conference begins. Create a manual for volunteers detailing what they need to do.

You can never underestimate the importance of volunteers in helping the conference run smoothly. Make a list of all the tasks where additional assistance is needed and organize a training session for them prior to the conference so that they are clear about what is required of them.

Step 13: Set aside one or two days before the conference actually begins to organize workshops at the conference venue ([see sample programme here](#)).

These workshops should include training on the Rules of Procedure and briefings on topics of interest to the delegates. These can focus on substantive issues related to the items to be discussed during the conference or issues of general interest such as information about the work of UN agencies or employment at the UN.

DURING THE CONFERENCE

A. Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly

Step 1: The order of the items during the first Plenary Meeting should be as follows:

1) Statement by the President of the General Assembly
2) Minute of silent prayer or meditation
3) Statement of the Secretary-General
4) Organization of work, General Committee report, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items
5) Statements by Head delegates; delegations should request to be put on the Speaker's List by sending an email to the MUN Secretariat prior to the Plenary meeting; the number of delegates that can speak will depend on how much time is available and how many delegations there are; if time is limited, first priority should be given to the Heads of Regional Groups and then with what ever time remains to individual delegations



Committee

GMUN Delegates deliberate within their

B. Committee Meetings

Step 1: Make sure each Committee has a Bureau comprised of a Chair, Vice-Chair, Rapporteur and Secretary. The only people that need to be seated on the podium at any one time are the Chair, Rapporteur and Secretary. If there is a guest expert that has been invited for an interactive session with the Committee, then he/she would be seated on the podium as well.

Step 2: At the beginning of the first meeting of each Committee, the Chair should go over the Programme of Work that will provide the framework for its deliberations. During the formal meetings, deliberations on each agenda item allocated to a Committee are split into two parts: 1) a discussion phase and 2) an action phase. The discussion phase is the time in which delegations make statements on the agenda item that is being discussed. Delegates must let the Secretary of the Committee know that they wish to be put on the Speaker's List. The order of speakers is on a first come, first served basis. It is up to the Chair to decide whether the Speaker's List will remain open during the meeting or whether there should be a deadline for requests. While the discussion phase is taking place, the sponsors of a resolution should be working behind the scenes to build support

and to identify which delegations want to be a co-sponsor. Research should be conducted prior to the conference to determine which delegations, regional or political groups are most likely to sponsor or co-sponsor a resolution on the agenda item that has been allocated to the Committee. The blocs should work together on the draft resolution before it is tabled.

Step 3: Allot time at the beginning of the first Committee meeting for an interactive session with an expert on the topic that is being debated. If one is not available, one of the MUN USGs should be able to brief the delegates.

Step 4: Schedule time each day for the General Committee and Bureaus to meet to review the progress that is being made and identify differences between their positions on the topics being debated that might impact whether a resolution is adopted by consensus or not. Also allow time for the Head delegates to meet with their delegations.

Step 5: Assign facilitators (e.g., GA Vice-President, a Head delegate or any other delegate that possesses the diplomatic skills as outlined in the section on the negotiation process) **to help delegations reach consensus where needed.**

Step 6: Once ready, the draft resolution should be tabled with the Secretary of the Committee so that they can be distributed to all delegates before action is taken on it. After delegates have had sufficient time to read the draft resolution, then the main sponsor can introduce it during one of the formal meetings of the Committee.

Step 7: Soon after a draft resolution is tabled, an informal meeting should be scheduled to review the draft resolution line by line. Following each review a “compilation text” should be circulated that reflects how the current status of the negotiation process. (See page 57 of [The PGA Handbook](#) for an example of what a compilation text would include). Sometimes a draft resolution needs to go through a few reviews before consensus is achieved. If consensus is reached during the review process, the Bureau should be informed before hand that the resolution will be adopted by consensus. However, if there is difficulty in reaching consensus, the Chair can appoint a facilitator to help resolve what ever issues remain. Given the time constraints within Model UN conferences, delegates need to be cognizant of how much time they have to take action on a resolution. When consensus is not possible, even with the assistance of a facilitator, the delegation that wishes to request a vote needs to notify the Secretary of the Committee of this request beforehand.

Step 8: At the first formal meeting following the informal meeting(s) to review the text of the draft resolution, if consensus was not reached on the text, any of the non-sponsors wishing to introduce an amendment to the draft resolution can do

so. Amendments, like draft resolutions, must be tabled with the Secretary of the Committee in advance to allow sufficient time to distribute the proposed amendment before a vote is taken on it. If there is more than one amendment, action will be taken on each amendment in the order in which it was received. **Please note that there is no such thing as friendly and unfriendly amendments at the UN.** Amendments are introduced if consensus cannot be achieved and they are tabled by Member States that have not co-sponsored the draft resolution that has been tabled. In some cases, Member States who strongly oppose a draft resolution or an amendment to the resolution will raise a Point of Order and make a Motion for Adjournment of Debate. This is referred to as a No Action Motion because if a majority of Member States who are present vote in favor of adjourning debate, no action is taken on the resolution or amendment. While it has the same outcome as if there had been a vote and the resolution or amendment was defeated, the Motion for Adjournment of Debate can be used to severely limit discussion of the item before action is taken.

Step 9: Repeat these steps for each resolution that is tabled. One thing that must be carefully considered is how many items should be allocated to each Committee. Given the time constraints, it is better to leave enough time to do one resolution really well than to find you have to rush on the last day of the conference to complete the work because there is more than one resolution to take action on. The steps proposed in this guide include elements that are not ordinarily included in Model UN simulations. The review of draft resolutions alone, if done correctly, will add time to the negotiation process but at the same time make it more manageable. At the same it will create the need for more informal consultations in order to resolve different views on the how the text should be revised.

Formal and Informal Meetings

This section outlines both the formal proceedings and informal processes you will experience while participating in a Model UN conference.

Informal Processes

Informal Processes refer to the accepted truth that delegates talk to each other from the moment they arrive at a conference. This section includes information on the purposes of consultations, how to make consultations happen and the significance of groups. [Find out more about these informal processes here.](#)

Formal Proceedings

The Formal Proceedings section includes information on Rules of Procedure, discussions, making decisions, the difference between plenary and committee meetings, adoption of agenda, workplan and documents, along with the opening and closing of the Plenary. [More on these formal proceedings can be found here.](#)

Formal Proceedings

This section provides an explanation on formal processes including:

- [Rules of Procedure](#)
- [Discussion Phase - General Debate](#)
- [Action Phase: Making Decisions](#)
- [Plenary vs. Committee meetings](#)
- [Adoption of Agenda, Work Programme and Documents](#)
- [Opening and Closing of the Plenary](#)

Action Phase: Making Decisions

The debate of an agenda item is usually followed by the adoption of resolutions/decisions. GA resolutions reflect the degree of intergovernmental agreement, the evolution of political ideas and the state of global cooperation on a given topic.

This section deals with the process leading to the adoption of a resolution or decision. It involves drafting a text, tabling a draft resolution and deciding (“taking action”) on it. Various forms of consultations and negotiations take place during the process in an attempt to reach consensus or at least get as close as possible to it.

1. Drafting a resolution text

Most draft resolutions are initially written by a Member State. Upon request, the UN Secretariat may assist Member States in the drafting process. The Member State initiating and drafting a resolution text is called the “sponsor” of the resolution, or the “main sponsor” if there are co-sponsors.

Many resolutions are based on past decisions and contain only few changes from year to year. When this occurs, sponsors are strongly encouraged to highlight the parts of the texts that are different from previous resolutions.

Sometimes, new resolutions are based on reports of the Secretary-General or of a subsidiary body that contain recommendations for draft resolutions.

2. Tabling the draft resolution (L-document)

“Tabling” is a technical term for formally submitting a draft resolution text to the GA. The GA Rules of Procedure refer to draft resolutions as “proposals.”

Only Member States or the PGA can table draft resolutions. When a group of Member States tables a resolution, it is usually done by the group's chair on behalf of the group.

A draft resolution must be tabled under a specific agenda item. The main sponsor of a draft resolution does not have to wait for the General Debate to be concluded to table a resolution. **This is possible from the moment the GA agenda is adopted.** No resolution can be tabled after the agenda item is closed, unless the GA formally decides to reopen it. While delegations try to table all draft resolutions before the debate on a particular agenda item takes place, *this is much more difficult to accomplish at MUN simulations.*

To be tabled, the draft text needs to be submitted in person to a GA Affairs Officer during any formal GA meeting or at the Department of General Assembly and Conference Management offices. The submission must include one electronic version and one hard copy of the draft text, signed and dated on every page, and a list of initial co-sponsors. It also must indicate the agenda item under which the draft resolution is tabled. The draft text is considered formally submitted when the submission certificate has been signed by the sponsor and DGACM. *This is something that could be easily implemented at a MUN simulation by requiring all draft resolutions are tabled with the Secretary of a Committee.*

Once tabled, the text is formatted by the Secretariat into an official GA document, called an "L-document", which is translated into all six official languages and circulated to all Member States. The Secretariat requires a minimum of three days to process a draft resolution. The "L" in L-documents stands for "limited distribution." In the era before e-mail, hard-copies of L-documents were only distributed to the Permanent Missions and not sent to Member States' capitals. *Within the context of MUN simulations, draft resolutions are usually not translated and need to be circulated to all delegates in a Committee as soon as possible.*

- **Co-sponsoring**

XUpon invitation of the main sponsor, Member States can formally express their support for a draft resolution by "co-sponsoring" it. Co-sponsoring is done by signing an official co-sponsor form, available from the main sponsor. The "L-document" lists only the co-sponsors who sign the co-sponsor form before the draft is tabled. An addendum to the "L-document" lists Member States who sign the co-sponsor form later. Their names are read out by a GA Affairs Officer before the adoption of the resolution. The list is closed immediately after the resolution is adopted. *Some MUN simulations requires a specific number of co-sponsors in order for a resolution to be considered. There are no such limitations in the GA.*

Sponsors or co-sponsors 'own' a draft resolution. That is to say the text is theirs and, although they will usually discuss it with other delegations, any changes are made by them. Changes made to a draft proposal by the proposer(s) are called **revisions**.

Many delegations spend much of their time at a conference discussing their draft proposals with other delegations and in co-sponsors' groups considering what revisions are to be accepted. To co-sponsor a resolution is to give it strong support.

All co-sponsors will be included in the verbatim record of the meeting when the draft resolution is adopted. However, the list of co-sponsors is not part of the final published version of the resolution.

- **Drafting and Negotiation**

Drafting and negotiation are closely related because the subject of negotiations often involves agreeing on the words that are used to describe an action that is to be taken on a particular agenda item.

- **Consideration and action on a draft resolution**

Once tabled, a draft resolution/decision is considered by the GA. This means that the L-document is introduced and a decision on its adoption is taken. The latter is called "taking action."

DGACM will consult with the sponsors to decide on the date of the formal plenary meeting that will consider the L-document. If there is more than one resolution introduced under the same agenda item, the resolutions are scheduled for action in the order they were tabled. Until action is taken, the main sponsor can withdraw the draft resolution/decision anytime, as long as no amendments have been proposed by another Member State. A withdrawn draft resolution can be reintroduced by another Member State.

The "24-hour rule" requires that a draft resolution be circulated to all Member States the day before it can be considered for adoption. This rule can be waived by an oral decision.

- **Formal introduction of the L-document**

At the formal meeting considering the L-document, the sponsor of the draft resolution/decision can introduce the draft text, summarizing its content and purpose and pointing out possible spelling errors and other mistakes. The introduction can be followed by action on the draft resolution/decision. Taking action can also be deferred, if further

consultations and negotiations are warranted. Usually there is no action on resolutions/decisions before the debate on the agenda item has been concluded.

In the Plenary, Member States do not make statements in response to the introduction of the L-document, with the exception of exercising the right of reply or if the debate on the item continues. Upon action on the draft resolution, explanations of vote can be made. In Main Committees the introduction of an L-document can be followed by general comments.

3. Taking Action

A draft resolution/decision can be adopted by consensus or by a vote. Decisions in the GA are taken by simple majority or by a two-thirds majority. According to the GA Rules of Procedure the following “important questions” require a two-thirds majority:

- maintenance of international peace and security
- the admission of new members
- the suspension and expulsion of members
- all budgetary questions.

The GA decides by a simple majority to include additional issues among the “important questions.”

A majority is calculated based on the number of “members present and voting” (i.e., casting an affirmative or negative vote). Abstentions are not counted as “voting.”

In the case of a tie in the Plenary, the vote is repeated once. The draft resolution/decision is rejected if the second vote also results in a tie. In the case of a tie in a Main Committee, the draft resolution/decision is rejected without a second vote.

- **Negotiation and consultation practices**

There is a myriad of practices for consulting Member States on a draft resolution or decision before its formal adoption. Three basic models can be distinguished.

1. Negotiations before tabling

The main sponsor consults with Member States and holds informal negotiations on the draft before tabling the “best version possible.” This allows for action to be taken

immediately after the introduction of the L-document. This is the normal practice in the Plenary.

2. Negotiations after tabling

The main sponsor tables a draft resolution or decision without prior consultations. After the introduction of the L-document, informal negotiations take place, led by either the main sponsor or by a facilitator appointed by the Chair of a Main Committee. If consensus is reached, the negotiated text will replace the original draft. This is done in two ways. Either the sponsor withdraws the original L-document, and a new L-document is issued after a bureau member has tabled the negotiated text. Or, the sponsor submits the negotiated text as a revision of the original L-document (issued as L.xx/Rev.1). In both cases, the resolution/ decision is adopted by consensus. If the negotiations do not result in consensus, the sponsor can either request action on the original L-document or on the negotiated text (issued as L.xx/Rev.1). In both cases, the draft resolution/decision is submitted to a vote, often accompanied by proposals for amendments and requests for paragraph votes.

3. PGA-led consultations

GA resolutions can mandate the PGA to lead consultations on a specific issue or on resolutions/decisions such as an outcome document or the modalities for a high-level GA event. In such cases, the PGA appoints one or more Permanent Representatives as facilitators.

If consensus is reached, the PGA can table the resolution/decision in his/her name. If no consensus is reached, a procedural decision is adopted, sometimes requesting further consultations at a future session of the GA.

- **Proposals, revisions, amendments**

At some stage a proposal must be formally **tabled** or **introduced** to the conference. In most conferences the text has to be circulated by the Secretariat to all delegations at least 24 hours before it is formally introduced. In formally tabling the draft resolution or other proposal, the sponsor or lead co-sponsor makes a statement explaining the purpose and contents of the proposal and giving argumentation in support of it.

Up to that point it has no formal existence. Thereafter it can still be **revised** (or indeed withdrawn) by its proponents and once it comes up for decision, it can be changed –this time by the conference as a whole. Changes by the conference as a whole are called **amendments** and each draft amendment must be formally proposed (i.e. tabled) to the conference.

Proposals for procedural matters are called **motions**. Rules of Procedure typically provide for procedural motions to be treated differently from substantive proposals. They usually provide for limitations on debate and often allow them to be decided by voting.

- **Programme budget implications of draft resolutions**

Before action can be taken on a draft resolution, the Committee must consider if there are any budgetary implications that might occur as a result of the actions that are proposed in the draft. According to Rule 153 of the GA's Rules of Procedure:

"No resolution involving expenditure shall be recommended by a committee for approval by the General Assembly unless it is accompanied by an estimate of expenditures prepared by the Secretary-General. No resolution in respect of which expenditures are anticipated by the Secretary-General shall be voted by the General Assembly until the Administrative and Budgetary Committee (Fifth Committee) has had an opportunity of stating the effect of the proposal upon the budget estimates of the United Nations."

Before taking action on a resolution the Secretary-General submits a statement of the programme budget implications (PBI) associated with a particular draft resolution. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) then issues a related report. The Fifth Committee considers both before submitting its report to the Committee. Just before Member States take action on a resolution, the Secretary reads the report to all the delegates because it is important for them to know what the financial implications are if the resolution is adopted.

Model UN simulations do not include this component but it is important for delegates to be aware of the budgetary implications of what they are proposing. We recommend that MUN simulations find a reasonable way to work this in. If the Fifth Committee is not being simulated, you could ask a few delegates with a background in economics to serve as representatives of the Fifth Committee, have them review each draft resolution and submit a short report to the Committee before action is taken on it. It is a nice addition to the simulation because it forces delegates to consider whether their proposals could ever be implemented given the resources that are available.

Voting versus Consensus

1. Why consensus is preferred

Originally, the United Nations and its specialized agencies took all decisions by voting; but that practice caused dissatisfaction, especially on the part of the developing countries, so much so that today, throughout the United Nations system there is a strong preference for taking decisions by consensus instead of voting. Even those bodies that most frequently resort to voting (notably the General Assembly and the Security Council) take considerable trouble to avoid doing so if possible.

This preference is even stronger outside the United Nations system, where many bodies

take all their decisions by consensus (or in some cases vote only on procedural matters, deciding all substantive issues by consensus). Some Rules of Procedure do not allow voting or allow it only on procedural issues. Many regional associations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Pacific Forum and political groups such as the G77 and the G8 never vote. There are many reasons for this preference:

- Many delegates and governments dislike the confrontational element that is unavoidable in taking a decision by vote.
- Many governments consider voting (in which some are defeated) an inappropriate mode of decision-making between sovereign states. At times, some delegates and governments wish to avoid having to choose how to vote.
- At times, some delegates and governments wish to reduce the possibility of pressure or recriminations about the way they vote.
- If a delegate or government does not hold a strong view on a particular issue, it can seem more appropriate to join consensus on that issue rather than vote in favour of it.
- If a delegate or government has reservations about a proposal or even considerable objections, that delegate or government might be willing to join consensus on the grounds that this is the will of the vast majority, but would find it difficult to vote in favour of the proposal. This gives any delegation that supports the proposal an incentive to avoid a vote.
- Many governments consider that decision-making by consensus increases their ability to influence the outcome of negotiations. It gives them a veto, which can not only enable them to prevent a conference from taking a decision they find intolerable, it can also enable them to achieve conference outcomes that they want. (How it does this is more fully explained below under Consequences of the preference for consensus).
- The governments of some large or otherwise powerful countries may prefer to avoid decision-making in a process (voting) where they count for no more than the smallest and weakest Member State.

2. Why conferences sometimes vote

With such strong reasons for preferring consensus it may seem surprising that conferences ever vote. But they can have many reasons to do so:

- Taking a decision by consensus is quicker than voting, but negotiating to consensus is sometimes very time-consuming. This is probably one reason that procedural questions are more readily put to the vote than substantive ones.
- The most obvious reason for voting, however, is inability to reach consensus. This may occur, for example, if positions are simply too far apart or if delegates lack the time or the empathy and ingenuity to develop proposals on which consensus would be possible.
- At times, when divisions are deep, governments or their delegates may wish to make a demonstration of the strength of their attitude.

- At times, it suits governments or individual delegates to engineer a demonstration of how isolated a government is or perhaps of how defiant that government is, despite the majority being against it.
- Some delegates seem to have a preference for the drama and confrontation involved in a vote. Some get so heated in negotiation that they become unwilling to adjust their position to meet the concerns of others, thereby making consensus impossible.
- Sometimes a government or delegate may wish to create a situation in which a vote is unavoidable, for reasons that have little or nothing to do with the issue before the conference (e.g. to put pressure on another government on an entirely different issue).

3. *Consequences of the preference for consensus*

The strong preference for consensus often shapes negotiations on a proposal before the conference. If a formal objection by a single delegation is sufficient to block consensus, every delegate has that power and many try to use it to extract concessions from other delegations. If the rules or traditions of the conference do not allow voting, every delegation has the equivalent of veto power. Even if a conference has the legal ability to vote, the preference for a consensus decision may be so strong that each delegation effectively has a veto.

So delegates promoting a proposal will often make concessions (i.e. accept compromises) for the sake of securing consensus. This gives other delegations an increased ability to have the conference take decisions that are closer to their wishes. These other delegations rarely want the conference to take no decision and may support some aspects of what is proposed. Adoption of the proposal, especially with compromises that accommodate their concerns to a degree, is far preferable from their point of view than the conference taking no decision. Therefore in negotiating compromises they are conscious not only of their government's preferences on particular points but also of its wish that the conference reach a decision. For both the promoters of a proposal and those who have problems with certain aspects of it, there are then strong incentives to find a text which they can both accept. This makes for productive negotiations.

As more and more delegations reach what they judge to be the most acceptable outcome available, those still holding out (i.e. using their ability to block consensus and thus prevent the conference from reaching any decision at all) are increasingly isolated and may come under growing pressure to accept what is on offer.

The issue remains of a government whose views are so out-of-step with those of the overwhelming majority in a conference and moreover is so selfish as to wish to prevent the conference from taking a decision it wants to take –perhaps to meet what most governments see as a pressing need.

As long as there is a possibility of voting, a delegation which presses a minority view too far runs the risk that others will insist on a vote (which it will lose). Then not only will the conference be able to take its decision but the terms of that decision may be different from the compromise text that was developed in an attempt to reach consensus. The majority may have no need to make concession to the minority. So, if there is a vote, some delegations who have achieved concessions they consider important may see these concessions withdrawn. They will have reason to be displeased with the delegation(s) blocking consensus and to try to persuade it to desist and avoid a vote –and thus protect the concessions they have won. Again, this favours productive negotiations.

Methods of expressing votes

For questions other than elections, most votes are not secret. There are two ways in which delegates can be invited to vote:

1. By show of hands



GMUN delegates voting

The routine way of voting is that the Chairman or secretary asks, 'All those in favour please raise your hand (or name plate).' The secretariat then counts these. The Chairman/secretary next calls for those against the proposal to signify their position in the same way. After these are counted, the Chairman/secretary calls on those abstaining. The secretary or Chairman then announces the outcome and the Chairman announces the consequent decision.

Although the votes of those voting 'yes' or 'no' and those abstaining are totalled and recorded, it is not always easy to see how each delegation voted and that is not reported in the records of the conference. This is called an **unrecorded** (or **non-recorded**) vote.

2. By roll call

The Rules of Procedure of many conferences provide that, if any delegation so requests or if the conference agrees, there will be a roll-call vote. In that case a letter is drawn at random and the secretary, starting with the first delegation whose name begins with that letter, calls on each delegation in turn to say how they vote. In this case, the conference Secretariat records for the conference report not only the number of 'yes' and 'no' votes and abstentions, but also how each delegation voted. For this reason, a roll-call vote is called a **recorded vote**.

Adoption of Agenda and Work Programme

Adoption of the agenda

The adoption of the agenda (like the election of officers) is usually a formality, confirming the outcome of long preparations and consultations undertaken ahead of a GA Session or UN conference. Because agenda items are enshrined in tradition, it would be very unusual for any delegation to have any objection to the provisional agenda. *In the case of Model UN simulations, given the time constraints, the provisional agenda needs to be decided in advance so that delegates have sufficient time to prepare their positions on the topics to be debated.*

Nonetheless, it is worth pointing that the provisional agenda must be adopted at the beginning of a conference before deliberations can begin. The Rules of Procedure do allow delegations to propose amendments to the provisional agenda if they so choose but this would have to be submitted to a vote like any other amendment. While it is unlikely that this would occur, the possibility that it could occur underscores the power that lies with Member States to make all final decisions.

Work programme

For a conference of short duration the organization of work has to be decided in advance in consultation with others so that it can be formally agreed with little or no debate.

For a large conference, with a long agenda, the organization of work has essentially three aspects that need to be decided:

- how many main committees are needed to enable the conference to complete its work in time
- which agenda items will be allocated to which committee or handled directly in Plenary, and
- a timetable in which the work will have to be performed, including the scheduling of any special events

Considerable preliminary work is usually undertaken on these issues before the conference begins. In the case of the GA Plenary meetings, the process has been outlined in the description of the General Assembly in the Structure section of the UN Guide for MUN. And suggestions on how to incorporate this process in MUN simulations is outlined in the section on Decisions to Make Before the Conference. In the case of the PGA, he/she should consult with the General Committee. Once the programme of work has been informally agreed, the Programme of Work is submitted to GA Plenary for adoption the first time they meet. Thereafter it is an important reference for all delegates.

Before leaving the topic of the opening session, we should also note that not only Plenary but each Committee also has an opening session at which it will adopt its own agenda and begin its work. The Chairman of each Committee will also have to prepare a programme of work, with the assistance of the secretariat and in consultation with delegations.

Discussion Phase -- General Debate

Consideration of an agenda item begins with a debate on the item in a formal meeting. Only one debate is scheduled per agenda item either in a Plenary meeting or one of the Main Committees. No Member State makes more than one statement on an agenda item in the same debate. The one exception to this practice is when a delegation feels his/her country has been criticized by one of the speakers. In this instance, a representative of that delegation is entitled to exercise their right of reply and respond to what has been said. (see glossary for definition).

Before debate of an agenda item begins, documents and reports on the item that have been prepared by the UN Secretariat are distributed to all Member States. These documents provide information on the agenda item that helps inform the debate. Senior UN staff that are responsible for writing reports on agenda items on behalf of the Secretary General are often invited to introduce these reports to Member States in a formal meetings. The introduction of a report is usually followed by an interactive session with Member States to allow them to ask questions on the agenda item before debate on it begins.

The word **debate** is applied in international conferences to everything that is said formally. That is to say, everything that is said to the conference by:

- the Chairman and
- a speaker (usually a delegate) to whom the Chairman has given 'the floor' (i.e. permission to speak).



Opening of 67th General Debate of General Assembly

At big, formal conferences, the first item of business after the preliminary procedural issues is called the **General Debate**. Less formal conferences usually do not have an agenda item for 'General Debate', but nevertheless start their work with a number of delegations making general statements.

The most elaborate General Debate takes place in the General Assembly. Almost every delegation makes a statement, which is always delivered by the most senior person available: the delegation leader or sometimes a Minister, Head of Government or Head of State who has travelled to New York especially for this purpose.

With so many delegates wishing to speak, time has to be strictly rationed. Each delegation is only allowed to speak once and a set amount of time is allocated for each statement.

This manner of proceeding requires a Speakers' list to be prepared in advance. Delegations approach the Secretariat to ask to be placed on the Speakers' list. Some of them have a preference for speaking at a particular time. If a delegation finds that the slot it would prefer has already been allocated to another delegation, it can talk to that delegation and see whether it is willing to exchange time slots.

When a delegation has finished delivering its General Debate statement, a number of other delegations may approach it to ask for copies of the text. In some conferences this can lead to disorder after certain statements. To avoid this, the tradition in many large conferences is that the secretariat distributes one copy of each General Debate statement to each delegation desk as the statement is being delivered. This is a very rare exception to the rule that the secretariat only distributes conference documents (General Debate statements are not official conference documents; each one is a document of the individual delegation making the statement.)

Because of the very tight time constraint, many delegations prepare and distribute in hard copy a longer version of their General Debate statement than their spokesperson is able to deliver. In these cases, the speaker should mention that a fuller version of his remarks is being distributed for the information of delegates and other listeners. The speaker can also ask that this fuller text be reflected in the record of the conference. In the contrary case, where the distributed text may contain elements that the speaker does not wish to say or have recorded in his name, the text can be marked 'check against delivery.'

Although the rule for General Debate is that each delegation can only make one statement, Rules of Procedure (or in some cases tradition) also provide that a delegation that feels a need to respond to a statement by another delegation is allowed to make a **statement in reply**. (This is called the **right of reply**). That statement will be subject to an even stricter time limit than the General Debate statement and typically can only be made at the end of the day or at the end of the General Debate, when all delegations have had their opportunity to speak. In addition, most Rules of Procedure permit only one statement in reply per delegation.

The General Debate is not a 'debate' as that word is generally understood. Delegates do not normally respond to each other (except occasionally through use of the right of reply). Indeed, General Debate statements are usually written in advance, often in capitals, long before the authors have heard what other delegates are going to say.

This style of debate allows a person on an opposing team to raise a point of information at any time, which if accepted by the speaker, gives them the opportunity to interrupt a speech in order to counter or challenge what is being said. In the debate that occurs during UN meetings, this never occurs. Member States cannot interrupt a statement that is being made to ask the speaker a question or to challenge what is being said. Even when a Member State is granted the right of reply, they have to wait until the end of the speakers list to do that.



UN Interpreters at work during the opening of the 67th General Debate of the General Assembly

It is also unavoidable that, because of the publicity accorded to the General Debate statements at a big and important conference (especially when they are made by a dignitary), the speakers will be thinking at least in part about audiences beyond the conference room, including their domestic audience. This means that some of their

comments and the way they are phrased will not be quite the same as they would be if the speakers were only thinking of fellow delegates and the conference ahead of them.

However, good General Debate statements are also useful to other delegates. They are an opportunity for each delegation to:

- set forth its general thinking on the topics before the conference
- highlight any particular national concerns, and
- give advance notice of any initiative or other course of action it intends to pursue at the conference, to explain the reasons for this intention and why others might support it

For this reason it is important to know what is said, at least by key delegations, in the General Debate. But it need not tie up the resources of a delegation. Only one person is needed to listen to the debate and taking notes is not a taxing task for a delegation. As note-taking at the General Debate is tiresome, delegations usually charge several individuals with that task on a rotating basis. This is also a prime occasion on which several delegations can lighten each other's burden by sharing a single note-taker.

As the more senior members of each delegation have much more productive uses for their time, it is not unusual for the conference room to be relatively empty during the General Debate, except in the case of those delegations that have wanted to make an ostentatious display of honouring a particular speaker, by having a large and senior level of representation present for that speech.

Opening and Closing of Plenary

The first session of each conference starts with some necessary formalities, followed by a few formal decisions about the way in which the conference will work. These questions have already been the subject of extensive preparatory work and discussion, including agreements being reached among many governments or their delegations some time before the conference. However all of this has taken place at an informal level. It is only when the conference has assembled and been declared open that it is in a position to take decisions that actually engage the conference as a whole. This pattern will continue throughout the conference: informal discussion, often including informal negotiation and agreements among the more active delegations, which pave the way to formal decisions by the conference.

Formal opening

In most cases the Chairman has not yet been elected and the formal work of the conference cannot start without someone in the Chair. This means that someone else has to be in the Chair when the conference opens and until the conference gives itself a chairman.

Typically this interim Chairman will be one of the following, depending on the circumstances (e.g. whether the conference is one of a series) and unless the Rules of Procedure or statutory provisions dictate otherwise:

- a representative of the convener of the conference (the host country or international organization) or
- the outgoing Chairman, i.e. the Chairman of the previous session of the same conference, whose term of office often extends until his/her successor is elected or
- the conference secretary

The interim Chairman will tap his/her gavel and call the meeting to order. He/she will then 'declare the conference open'.

The conference is then in its first Plenary session.

Closing

Finally there is a closing session of Plenary.

It has received all the reports before it and taken all the decisions it was capable of taking.

All that remains are the closing speeches by delegates, expressing their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the course of discussions. Observers are often allowed to make a brief statement.

However, the principal and the final part of the closing process is the concluding statement by the Chairman. He/she will always attempt to put as positive a light as possible on what has transpired, drawing attention to the real achievements of the conference and to the possibilities that it has opened for the future.

Plenary vs. Committee Meetings

General Assembly decides to establish the Intergovernmental Committee on Sustainable Development Financing

Every conference has a Plenary (i.e. the conference meeting as a whole), but many conferences have so much work that they could never complete their agendas in the time allotted unless they allocated part of the work to committees or other subsidiary bodies. It has also been found to be more efficient and to produce better results if certain parts of the work are allocated to such entities.

For these two reasons, conferences typically divide their work between Plenary and a number of committees. Plenary is where the conference opens and closes, where major statements are made and broad-ranging debate may be conducted and where

all decisions by the conference are taken. The (main) Committees undertake a detailed discussion of issues, negotiation and drafting.

In addition, Plenary or any of its committees can form committees, subcommittees, working groups and/or other subsidiary bodies to undertake specified tasks. All subsidiary bodies report to the body that created them (known as their 'parent' body). They can make recommendations to that body, but they cannot make decisions on its behalf. *Given the time constraints of a Model UN Conference, subsidiary bodies are not typically included in simulations.*

It is important to decide in advance on the number of Main Committees, how the members of their Bureau will be selected, which delegations will compose them, which items they will debate and how many given the time constraints of the conference.

Some conferences form a single Committee of the Whole (CoW), with the same composition as Plenary but not meeting concurrently with it. At other, less formal conferences, the Chairman sometimes invites the conference to move into 'committee phase/mode/stage'. The rationale for all this is the belief, based on experience, that it is best to have in effect two conferences address each issue on the agenda: not just Plenary but also a committee. This results in two distinct processes: formal decision-making (which is the preserve of Plenary) preceded by detailed discussion, negotiation and drafting (which is the committee phase). This in turn allows Plenary to take a somewhat loftier, broader view of the question, knowing that the details have been thoroughly worked over in committee phase. It also allows the sometimes heated debate and negotiation over details to have a clear ending (the end of committee phase) and Plenary (even if it is composed of the same delegates) to put all that behind it before entering the decision-making phase. The practice of having different individuals as chairmen of Plenary and the committee reinforces this separation and cooling effect. This differentiation is also preserved in simulations of the GA when the PGA or Vice-President preside over the Plenary meetings and a Chair or Vice-Chair preside over the Committee meetings.

It is of course central to this system that committees cannot take decisions on behalf of the conference. All they can do is report and/or make recommendations to Plenary. It is therefore, important to keep in mind that no matter what action has been taken during Committee meetings, a different action on the same draft resolution could be taken during the Plenary meeting.

Rules of Procedure

Summary of Rules of Procedure

An short annotated guide to the Rules of Procedure gives an overview of the most important rules MUN simulations should follow. Further details follow below.

Rules Followed during Formal GA Meetings -- Discussion Phase

- Quorum

The quorum is the number of Member States who need to be present for the PGA/Chair to open a meeting and for the GA to take decisions. The quorum for opening a GA meeting is one-third of the Member States in the Plenary and one-fourth of the Member States in the Main Committees. This rule is usually waived at the beginning of a session, based on the recommendation of the General Committee. The quorum for the adoption of resolutions/decisions and elections is a simple majority of Member States.

- Points of order

Points of order can be raised by Member States at any point in the meeting. If a delegate believes that the Chairman is not following the Rules of Procedure or not being sufficiently active in ensuring others do so, he/she may raise a point of order. The Rules of Procedure require the Chairman to interrupt proceedings to hear the point of order and to rule immediately on it (where 'rule' means to declare either that the point of order has no merit or to accept it and direct any delegate who is out of order to conform to the Rules).

The Rules also provide that if any delegate believes that the Chairman's ruling is incorrect, he/she may appeal against the ruling. Because the power within a Committee rests ultimately with the delegates themselves, an appeal must immediately be put to a vote. The Rules further provide that if the appeal is successful, the Chairman must immediately rule according to the appeal.

If the Chairman's ruling on a point of order is appealed, the question put before the Committee is whether the Chairman's ruling should be accepted or rejected. If a delegate felt the Chairman's ruling should be accepted he/she would vote 'Yes' or would vote 'No' if he/she felt it should be rejected.

Any delegate at all times has an absolute right to raise a point of order or to challenge the Chairman's ruling. But he/she does not have an obligation to do so and, before exercising his/her right, he/she should consider whether it is constructive to do so.

There will be many occasions in the course of most conferences where minor –or,

sometimes, not-so-minor- departures from the Rules are in practice helpful to the conference. In such cases, chairmen may be tolerant for the sake of the greater good. On other occasions, some divergence from the Rules may be accidental and inconsequential.

Moreover, all points of order take up some of the time of the conference and they all have a confrontational dimension which may be unhelpful to the general mood of the conference.

There will be some cases in which the prudent and constructive thing to do is not to raise a point of order, even though one would be technically justified.

To appeal a Chairman's ruling would be a highly confrontational act and, in practice, it very rarely occurs. However, as with other such 'reserve powers' (as they are known to constitutional lawyers), the very existence of the ability to appeal gives every Chairman a very strong incentive to always behave and rule correctly.

There is a widely-used convention for signaling the Chairman that the reason you are asking for the floor is to raise a point of order rather than simply seeking to add your name to the Speakers' list. The delegate makes a 'T' with their hand and nameplate.

Some delegates at times attempt to abuse the right to raise points of order to 'jump the queue' of the Speakers' list and speak instead on substance. At other times they may be simply using up time, sowing confusion and souring the atmosphere in an attempt to prevent the conference from reaching the conclusion desired by the majority of delegations.

- Suspension of a meeting

A meeting can be suspended for a limited amount of time upon the request of a Member State or by the PGA. A suspended meeting is usually resumed on the same day.

- Adjournment of a meeting

A meeting can be adjourned upon the request of a Member State or by the PGA. An adjournment calls a meeting to a close. Any continued consideration of an item will take place at another meeting usually on another day.

- Adjournment of debate

Adjournment of debate ends parts or all of the consideration of the agenda item concerned. This can mean ending the debate, blocking action on a specific draft resolution/decision or ending the consideration of the item as a whole (i.e., closing the item for the remainder of the session). Member States requesting adjournment of debate specify which part of the consideration is to be ended. The motion to adjourn debate is put to an immediate vote, carried by a simple majority, after a maximum of two delegations have spoken in favour and two against. The term “no-action motion” is used when a motion for adjournment of debate is made to block action on a specific draft resolution or decision.

Seeking the floor and addressing the Chair

The most universal rules of debate are:

- no one (other than the Chairman) may **intervene** in the debate (i.e. speak so as to be heard by the conference) without having been given the floor by the Chairman; and
- when anyone other than the Chairman intervenes, they must address their remarks to the Chairman (although everyone understands that what they say is meant for the whole conference).



Delegates at a Human Rights Council session, hold up their plaques to request the floor

The purpose of these rules is clear. They ensure that only one person speaks at any given time and allow the Chairman to steer the debate. They also tend to dampen any tendency towards quarrels between delegates, at least in the formal setting. This is extremely important as quarrelsome behaviour is inimical to agreement.

The first rule also means that delegates have to exert themselves to be given the floor. A delegate can seek the floor (i.e. ask for permission to speak) in two ways, namely by:

- asking the Chairman or the secretary (who often helps the Chair to keep track of such requests) to add his/her name to the list of speakers. He/she can do this by approaching the Chairman or the secretary directly while the conference is not in session, or by passing a message to them
- signalling from the floor (i.e. from his/her seat, while the conference is in session) that he/she wants to speak. The widely-used convention is that the delegate raises his/her nameplate or sticks it vertically in its holder, lowering it when he/she believes his/her request has been noted or, at the latest, once he/she has spoken.

The Chairman (or the secretary as his/her assistant) keeps at all times a list of delegations wishing to address the conference. This is known as a **Speakers list**. While the Rules of most conferences specify that the floor should be given to delegations in the order in which their requests are received, in practice, the Chairman often has some leeway.

Rules followed when taking action on draft resolutions

- Voting on Resolutions

It is assumed that all tabled draft resolutions/decisions will be adopted without a vote (i.e., by consensus). If a resolution will not be adopted by consensus, the PGA/Chair is usually informed beforehand that a vote will be requested.

- Voting on Amendments

Amendments to a tabled draft resolution/decision are either formally submitted and issued as L-documents by the day before the scheduled action, or proposed orally from the floor, if no Member State objects. If there are several amendments proposed, the PGA/Chair decides on the sequence of consideration. If amendments are adopted, the draft resolution will be considered as “draft resolution L.XX as amended.”

- Voting on paragraphs (“paragraph vote,” “division of proposal,” “divided vote,” “separate vote”)

A Member State can request a separate vote on parts of a draft resolution before the adoption of the whole text. This can pertain to parts of a paragraph, an entire paragraph or several paragraphs. If challenged, the request for a paragraph vote will be put to an immediate vote, carried by a simple majority, after a maximum of two delegations have spoken in favour of and two against the request. A paragraph vote will be immediately

followed by the consideration of the whole draft resolution/decision. Adoption without a vote remains the assumption. If all operative paragraphs are rejected, the draft resolution/decision is considered rejected as a whole. These cases are rare.

- Explanation of a vote

Before and after action is taken on a draft resolution/decision, Member States can explain their vote or — in the case of an adoption by consensus — their position. The main sponsor and the co-sponsors of a draft resolution cannot make explanations of vote. An explanation of vote concerning a paragraph vote is made only after action is taken on the whole resolution/decision. Member States are asked to refrain from making explanations of vote on the same draft resolution/decision in both the Main Committee and the Plenary unless their vote has changed.

- The spoken word

Other rules of debate are not spelt out in the written Rules of Procedure but are enshrined in the tradition ‘culture’ of each conference. For example, normally it is the tradition for each Member State to make one statement during the General Debate and if they request to speak a second time, it is the tradition for them to start by apologizing. This is not articulated in any Rule of Procedure but is a long-standing tradition.

Sometimes a tradition may after many years be mistaken by a delegate to be a Rule of Procedure because it has been observed for such a long time.

Informal Meetings

MUN simulations refer to informal consultations as moderated and unmoderated caucuses. Although these types of meetings do occur at the UN this terminology is not used. Delegates at the UN engage in informal consultations. The different types of informal consultations are summarized in the article [The Process of Informals in the Fifth Committee](#) that was published in the UN Chronicle. A moderated caucus at the UN would correspond to an informal consultation where the Chair remains to preside over the meeting but the rules of procedure are suspended. This type of meeting would be referred to at the UN as a formal informal. The Chair, however, is

not always present at a formal informal meeting. It can also be led by a facilitator appointed by the Bureau. At other times, delegates may meet in the corner of a conference room or in another location to discuss a draft resolution. This type of meeting is called an informal informal and is most similar to what is called an unmoderated caucus in MUN simulations.

Differences between GA rules and MUN rules of procedure

The main difference between GA rules and MUN rules of procedure is that the latter use parliamentary rules of procedure, such as Roberts Rules of Order. **The United Nations is not a parliament and these rules, therefore, do not provide an appropriate format for guiding meetings at the UN.**

GA rules of procedure are simpler than the parliamentary rules used in MUN simulations. For one, GA rules only have one point, a Point of Order. MUN simulations also include Points of Information, Points of Inquiry and Points of Privilege. In addition, at the UN speakers do not yield time to another speaker and motions are not required to be seconded.

Some of the differences are superficial. Although a delegate cannot raise a point of information in a formal meeting, he/she can ask any question they want of another delegate during an informal meeting which are an essential element of the negotiation process. Thus, from an educational perspective, a MUN delegate still has the opportunity to enhance their learning by asking questions of other delegates as long as it occurs in the appropriate context.



GMUN delegates voting

Other differences are more meaningful. Within the context of the General Assembly, every Member State has one vote regardless of how large or small they are. Seconding motions may make sense in a parliamentary forum where an assembly may not want to waste time on motions that only one person wants. However, in the context of the UN General Assembly, each delegation represents an entire

nation. Given the level playing field established by the principle of 'one country, one vote,' requiring motions to be seconded would contradict this principle. As a result, each Member State has the right to table a draft resolution or an amendment to a resolution without needing it to be seconded by another Member State. Many MUN simulations require a certain number of signatures before a resolution or amendment can be tabled. While co-sponsors are common at the UN, this is not a requirement.

Likewise, any Member State can make a motion such as requesting a vote on a draft resolution or an amendment without requiring another Member State to second it. In parliamentary fora, if there is no one to second a motion it is not considered by the assembly. At the UN all it takes is one Member State to put forward a motion for it to be considered. Again, this is based on the principle that each Member State has the same right to bring a matter before the General Assembly for consideration as long as it is related to an item on the GA's agenda.

At MUN conferences, the rules of procedure figure much more prominently in the proceedings than they do at the UN. While part of the reason for this is due to the use of parliamentary procedures, another reason for it is that most of the proceedings in MUN simulations take place during formal meetings which increases the need to introduce motions during formal meetings. Since much of the negotiation process at the UN occurs during informal consultations, there is less of a need to introduce various motions during formal meetings. For example, due to the fact that the great majority of decisions at the UN are made by consensus these days, motions dealing with amendments are less frequent than they are during MUN simulations.

One final difference that has been noted between the way meetings are conducted at the UN versus MUN simulations relates to the power of the presiding officer. In some MUN simulations, the Chair's decisions are final. At the UN, a presiding officer, like the PGA or the Chair of a Committee, serves at the discretion of Member States. Presiding officers can make recommendations and rule on points of order but any decision they make can be appealed by any Member State and put to a vote by the full membership. This is an important principle that needs to be emphasized in MUN simulations. The power of the General Assembly lies with the Member States. Giving presiding officers final say on any matter contradicts this basic principle of the GA.

Informal Processes

An international conference is an interaction between States (primarily a cooperative interaction), but that interaction takes place between delegates as representatives of States. The principal way in which the delegates interact is by communicating with each other and

most of that communication takes the form of face-to-face conversations.

Delegates talk to each other from the moment they arrive at the UN until they leave. Some of their exchanges are social and some of them reflect the pursuit of extraneous objectives. Overwhelmingly, however, the conversations are about the business of the conference. These are called **informal consultations**.

This section is composed of the following areas:

- Purposes of consultations
- Making consultations happen
- The significance of groups

It is through these conversations that most of the business of the UN takes place. They are the principal means whereby delegates keep themselves and each other informed about all aspects of the work on the agenda items included in the Programme of Work, whereby they clarify their own thinking about the issues that are being discussed either in the General Assembly or Security Council and through which they seek to influence each other's thinking. It is in these conversations that most of the negotiation takes place and most of the agreements are reached.

Formal processes can be decisively important but often their main function is to formalize agreements previously reached informally and to provide the context for informal exchanges. Most delegations spend a large amount of their time in informal consultations, and the reason that many governments send sizable delegations is to increase the delegation's ability to participate in informal consultations.

Significance of Groups

Delegations very often work in cooperation with others. When several delegations work together for any sustained period, they are likely to be referred to as a group. Such groups can be called political groups or caucus groups because they focus on political issues. Interaction with the groups in which your delegation participates is one of the main activities of a delegate. You can see a list of the [main Member State groups here](#).



MUN delegates working together

This is particularly important when it comes to the work of the Security Council. Since the membership of the Council is limited to only 15 members at any given time, the participation of regional groups in Security Council meetings is vital to helping it realize the Council's duty to act on behalf of the entire Membership of the UN as enshrined in Article 24 of the UN Charter. Moreover, calling on regional organizations to assist in responding to international threats to peace and security has become more common in Security Council resolutions. As a result, there has been an increase in the number of requests since the 1990s to include regional organizations in efforts to maintain international peace and security under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter (see [example](#)).

The significance of groups

Well organized and long established groups like the G77 and the European Union have well-oiled systems to pool information and develop common policy positions on the large number of issues before a major international conference. For small delegations, the task of keeping track of everything that is going on and concentrating on matters of prime importance to them, would be much more difficult and at times overwhelming if they had to attempt it on their own. There is also a great comfort to delegations in knowing that they are not alone and to have people who (at least to some degree) are like-minded with whom to exchange impressions and concerns.



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (front, centre) poses for a group photo with representatives of the Group of 77

For larger delegations, participation in groups increases their workload (as they get involved in the coordination, information distribution and development of group positions); but these factors also increase their potential to influence the delegations in their group to see things as they do and this support in turn helps them advance their

objectives in dealing with delegations outside their group.

For smaller delegations there is a risk that they will be under pressure to support positions more in accordance with the objectives of other members of the group than of their own objectives. At the same time, there can be opportunities to advance their objectives by getting the weight of the group behind them.

From the point of view of the Council's work, political groups can make important contributions in a number of ways:

- They are a valuable means of distributing information on the Council's work. This plays a critical role in making sure that the Council's work is transparent.
- Likewise, information as to the views and wishes of members of groups and their positions can be gathered and conveyed by the group coordinator and spokesperson during Council meetings when they are invited to speak (see discussion on rule 37 of the Security Council Rules of Procedure).

Groups as pools of information



MUN delegates in the middle of discussion

All political groups discuss issues, exchange information and assessments and in this respect are immensely useful to their participating delegations. Indeed for most delegations, meetings of the groups in which they participate is their prime source of information about developing positions on various issues.

One delegate will bring to the group his/her knowledge and understanding of a particular issue or aspect of the issue, another will have had an informative conversation with the Chairman or delegates from another group, etc. The sum total is far more information and assessment than any individual delegation could bring to the issue. Often members of the same group have a degree of confidence in each other and are therefore able to speak more freely in that context.

Naturally the total amount of information available will be the greater, but also the better

analyzed, if all members of the group contribute their knowledge and understanding. Groups also have the benefit of being able to informally agree to divide tasks within the group. For example, Delegate A who has good relations with delegation X outside the group might take on the task of asking them their views on a particular point, Delegate B might have good relations with a different delegation and so on.

Likewise delegates should not feel shy about asking questions about any aspect they do not know or understand. This will not only help them but also other group members who benefit from the clarification. Moreover, such questions can help those who think they know to clarify their own minds or the way in which they articulate the answer. Questions can also help identify points on which the group needs more information or thought.

Meetings of such groups are also an opportunity for delegations to make their views known, to explain their positions and to seek to bring other delegations to think as they do.

Group positions

Political groups not only pool information and ideas but often seek to develop group positions, for guidance of their members and/or for common statements and/or group negotiating objectives and positions. Often a group spokesperson is chosen to speak or negotiate on behalf of the group. Typically each delegation belongs to several such groups.

Issue-specific groups

Some such groups focus on specific issues on which the members have similar views and on which they wish to develop common positions. On other issues they remain free to take differing, even opposed stances.

Alya Ahmed S. Al-Thani, Deputy Permanent
Representative of Qatar to the UN, addresses the GA introducing Draft resolution A/65/L.82
as one of its three co-sponsors — Dominican Republic, Qatar and Turkey

One common form of such a group is a co-sponsors' group. As the name implies, it is a group of delegations that have –or are planning to– put their name to a proposal formally submitted to a conference. As they are all co-owners of the proposal, they need to get together to decide on its original wording and on any subsequent changes. They will often

divide the work of lobbying other delegations seeking support for the proposal, report back to each other the reactions they hear from other delegations, discuss and then decide together what to do in the light of these responses.

A co-sponsors' group is specific to a particular proposal. Any delegation may simultaneously belong to several different co-sponsors groups, each of which has a different composition. And when the proposal has run its course, the group dissolves. Other issue-specific groups are formed by delegations that wish to extend their cooperation beyond a particular resolution and continue to work together on that issue on a long-term basis to develop their common views and plans. Such groups acquire names and some of them last many years. They can hold conferences of their own and may even give themselves secretariats.

These groups can be formed by either:

- delegations that find they have common views, or
- delegations whose governments wish for reasons of policy to unify their positions (even if initially these are far apart)

As with co-sponsor's groups, many delegations belong simultaneously to several of these issue-specific groups with differing memberships and again they are free to have different views from each other on other issues.

Broader political groups

By definition these are less issue-specific and have in varying degrees aspects of a coalition, a mutual support group, group solidarity and discipline. On occasion common position statements can be developed and articulated by larger groups composed of these groups plus other delegations.

Group statements



Group of Eminent Persons for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) briefs media, October 2010

There are many political groups that are important. Such groups at times make statements on behalf of the group but group statements. Within the Security Council, such statements are often heard in the context of thematic debates that organized on a broad range of issues. In accordance with rule 37 of the Provisional Rules of Procedure, delegates are also invited to make statements, on behalf of groups during briefings and other informal meetings when their interests are affected by a particular conflict that the Council is discussing (see verbatim records for 7024th meeting of the Security Council to discuss the Question Concerning Haiti). Groups that are invited to speak usually speak after Council members have been given an opportunity to deliver their statements first.

Inviting political groups to speak has distinct advantages:

- it limits the number of statements from individual Members, many of which may be repetitive, it saves both the time of the conference and the time of individual delegations which need not prepare and deliver an individual statement if they can be associated with a group statement that reflects their views.
- A single or combined statement is far clearer and internally consistent than a multitude of statements with different domestic audiences in mind, national emphases and preoccupations, modes of expression and even contradictions and incoherencies.
- A statement made on behalf of several delegations carries more political weight than one made on behalf of a single delegation.
- A group statement can also be a demonstration of solidarity or of the extent of support for a particular view.
- A group statement can draw on the knowledge and skill of several members of the group. It can therefore be a better statement than any one member of the group could have produced by himself/herself.

Some disadvantages are that when, as is often the case, there are differences of views or emphasis within the group:

- negotiation of a group statement can be very time-consuming and/or
- the group statement may not accurately reflect the views or the flexibility of all members of the group and/or
- it may expose areas of disagreement. (A gap in the statement will be understood by their delegations as an indication that the group does not have a common position on that point)



Small group of MUN delegates working together

As a matter of practicality, group statements for large groups tend to be originally drafted by a small number of delegations within the group, but it is essential to then ensure that all members of the group endorse it. This may require further negotiation with individual delegations or in the group as a whole. It is totally destructive of the benefits of a group statement if any member of the group disassociates himself/herself from it –as he/she is likely to do if not enough account has been taken of his/her views.

Indeed, when a Council member makes a statement, it is expected that it will start by associating itself with the statement made on behalf of the group in which it participates (this can be seen in the remarks by France in the verbatim record of the 7024th meeting of the Security Council) even before the delegate who will be speaking on behalf of the group has delivered his/her remarks. The same applies to statements made on behalf of a group whose members are also members of a wider group. Any failure to do so will be noticed by other delegations who may also place their own interpretation on it.

Group statements are given priority on the speaker's list over statements by individual delegations, and the statement of a large group is given priority over that of a smaller group whose members are also members of that larger group.

Things to Consider when organizing your simulation

If the Security Council simulation is part of a larger conference then it makes it easier to include a wider range of groups in Security Council briefings. However, if the simulation is

only focusing on the Security Council then the organizers must decide in advance if it wants to include one or more participants to represent a political group who would be invited to speak in addition to the 15 Council members.

The Purpose of Consultations

The reasons why you, as a delegate, will want to consult informally with other delegations include the following:

- to find out what they know
- to tell them what you want them to know (e.g. to forewarn them of an initiative planned by you or by others)
- to ask their opinion (e.g. by 'floating' a proposal)
- to learn their intentions
- to get their agreement to what you want
- to plan together, to develop a proposal or to advance an argument and
- to take decisions about how you will both act

Doing this will enable you:

- to demonstrate that your country is represented and participating in the conference
- to monitor the conference so as to gauge how it is progressing through its work programme and what agreements are emerging
- to gather information relevant to your delegation's objectives at the conference (e.g. the attitude of other delegations to particular proposals, their intentions etc)
- to influence the thinking and actions of others
- to negotiate
- to develop and maintain relations with other delegations, and
- to equip you to report on what happened to other members of your delegation

The specific tasks undertaken through informal consultation include the following:

- Developing relationships with other delegates
- Making your positions known to other delegations
- Gathering general information about attitudes, intentions, and positions of other delegations
- Assessing who is in agreement with your positions, who opposes them and who agrees with certain components of your position but not all
- Persuading others to go along with your position
- Negotiating with others to reach a compromise when positions differ

Whom to consult



MUN delegates consult with one another

This means that you will want to talk to:

- anybody who holds useful information
- anybody whom you want to inform
- anybody you want to influence
- anybody who is potentially helpful
- anybody who is potential trouble
- anybody who will become a problem if you don't consult them, and
- those with whom you want to maintain close relations

This in turn means that the people you should discuss Security Council business with are not primarily –and certainly not only – your friends or the people you find it easiest to talk to, but include:

- other delegates who fall into the categories set out above
- the President of the Council
- members of the Secretariat

Where to consult

Traditionally, informal consultations are said to take place in the corridors. These words are used to differentiate informal consultation from the formal exchanges that take place in the conference room(s) when the conference is in formal session. In fact such consultations can be conducted anywhere and in many cases you will want them to be where you are unlikely to be overheard.



Lebanese delegates conversing in the Delegates' Lounge at UN Headquarters

The most readily available and widely-used venues are the corridors, lobbies, stairways, coffee shops and cafeterias of the conference building. It is also easy to consult in the conference room, before, after and during a session. **And when appropriate, presiding officer of a meeting or a delegate can request that the meeting be suspended for a certain amount of time to allow delegations to talk informally if they feel this might help achieve consensus on an issue.**

If you want a more private conversation, many conference venues have terraces or gardens and sometimes it is possible to find an unoccupied conference room or office that you can use for a short while. You can invite other delegates to join you at a range of venues (e.g. restaurants) away from the conference.

Informal consultations, be they in small groups of two or three or in larger groups, are essentially private. Also, there is no official record of what is said and the conversation can be tentative or exploratory in nature. This means that delegates may speak much more freely in such conversations than they might in formal sessions of the conference where their words are often recorded.

In some instances, delegates choose to move to the Informal Consultations Room or another location for informal meetings. When this occurs the Rules of Procedure are suspended as well during the entire time the informal meeting is in session.



MUN delegates in a consultation

The essentially private nature of informal consultations means that you can adjust your manner and what you say to your particular audience. You may wish to say privately some things you would not wish to say publicly. It will quickly backfire on you if you convey different information to different interlocutors and often if you try to hide from them something they are likely to learn from other sources.

The other consequence of the informal nature of corridor conversations is that agreements reached in the course of these talks only engage the participants and then only informally. Agreements formally engaging the Council can only be reached in a formal session that meets in the Council chamber.

Skills

To participate effectively in a Model UN conference you will use a variety of skills. This section provides guidance on the four key areas:

- **Chairing** - Chairmanship is the art of managing meetings. The Chairman of GA Committee is its presiding officer, the individual who has accepted responsibility for ensuring that the debate within a Committee is orderly and that it takes all necessary decisions as outlined in its Programme of Work.
- **Speaking** - An international conference is primarily an exercise in communication between people of many different nationalities. It is very hard to communicate effectively across deep divides of language, culture, personality, professional and social background, experience and so forth. **Find out more about the skills required for effective communication and speaking here.**
- **Negotiation** - One of the most important parts of participating in an international conference is honing the skill of negotiation. **In this section the art of negotiation will be explored in greater detail.**
- **Drafting** - The main goal of a conference is to adopt an outcome document that Member States as a whole can agree on. The outcome document can be a decision, a declaration or a resolution. **Find out more about drafting here.**

Chairing a Conference

Definition

Chairmanship is the art of managing meetings. The Chairman of GA Committee is its presiding officer, the individual who has accepted responsibility for ensuring that the debate within a Committee is orderly and that it takes all necessary decisions as outlined in its Programme of Work.

The Chairman is almost never alone. He/she is supported, in varying degrees, by all delegations as well as by the secretariat. But he/she carries primary responsibility for the conduct of business in a Committee.

At the UN there are several presiding officers of formal meetings: the PGA or Vice-Presidents who preside over Plenary meetings of the GA and the Chairmen of subsidiary bodies (committees, working groups, etc). In addition, there are Chairmen of various political groups, who usually also act as a spokesperson for their group and lead sponsors, who act as conveners and spokespeople for a group of co-sponsors.

Of these individuals only the presiding officers of the GA Plenary meetings and those of its subsidiary bodies (i.e. committees, working groups, expert groups etc) are part of the formal structure of the conference. The other chairmen, although outside the formal structure, nevertheless play important roles in its work.

How chairmen are chosen in a MUN Conference is set out in the [Step-by-Step Organization of the GA](#).

General Considerations and Denationalization

The formal and procedural roles and responsibilities of a presiding officer, like the PGA or Chair of a GA Committee, are to ensure that the business of the Plenary/Committee meetings is conducted in an orderly and efficient manner and in accordance with the Rules of Procedure. Because the presiding officers represent all Member States, they cannot simultaneously represent one of the participating delegations. [Read more about General Considerations and Denationalization here.](#)

The Chairman's Activities in Guiding the Work of the Conference

Another essential role of chairmen is to ensure that the conference conducts its business in the manner he/she deems appropriate, in the light of the Rules of Procedure and his/her understanding of the mandate and the wishes of the conference. [Read more about the Chairman's Activities in Guiding the Work of the Conference here.](#)

Procedural Roles of the Chairman: A Step-by-Step

The Chairman is responsible for many duties including allocation of work and time management, keeping the debate orderly and decision-making, among others. [Read more about the Procedural Roles of the Chairman: A Step-by-Step here.](#)

Substantive Role of the Chair

One important task of the Chairman is to make sure the Committee achieves the substantive outcome set out in its Programme of Work. [Read more about the Substantive Role of the Chair here.](#)

General Considerations and Denationalization

General considerations

The formal and procedural roles and responsibilities of the Chairman are to ensure that the business of the conference is conducted in an orderly and efficient manner and in accordance with the Rules of Procedure. In many such Rules, functions and powers of the presiding officers are listed under a distinct heading although additional functions and powers are also often found elsewhere in the Rules.

In practice, the role, responsibilities and powers of the Chairman in formal and procedural matters are even broader. Thus, for example, the Chairman can represent the conference, thank the host country, congratulate individuals, express condolences and so forth on behalf of the conference. He/she may also hold a press conference or otherwise communicate with audiences outside the conference on behalf of the conference.



GMUN Chairman of the Third Committee.

More crucially, the Chairman also has a key role in the conference's decision-making process. Typical Rules of Procedure require the Chairman to put questions and announce all decisions. When he/she says the conference has made a decision, he/she speaks on behalf of the conference.

Indeed, the Chairman has a structural role in the conference: not only is the seating arranged so that all delegates face the Chairman, but also all statements intended to be heard by the whole Committee must be addressed to the Chairman. Once more, the Chairman personifies the Committee as a whole.

These three ways in which the Chairman represents and acts on behalf of the conference point to the central responsibility and constraint to which the Chairman is subject: he/she

is called upon to behave not in an individual or national role but as an embodiment of the whole conference.

In other words, the Chairman acts for the conference and only with its consent. This relationship is often expressed in the words:

‘The Chairman is the servant of the conference.’

This description should not, however, suggest that there is anything passive or merely reactive about the Chairman’s role. It is up to him/her to understand what needs to be done and to take appropriate initiatives, as required, to ensure it happens. He/she acts for the good of the conference and in the belief that his/her actions help produce the results desired by the conference participants.

Denationalization

Because the Chairman represents the whole conference, he/she cannot simultaneously represent one of the participating delegations.

Most Rules of Procedure specify that the Chairman shall not vote, but logic and tradition (and indeed some more recent Rules of Procedure) are far more constraining. Chairmen are expected to cease operating as a member of their national delegation as long as they are acting as Chairman. If, as is often the case, they are delegation leader, another member of that delegation must take over the role of speaking and voting on behalf of the delegation. The Chairman should speak and act impartially on behalf of the conference as a whole and not seek to promote any national or personal views.

The Chairman must all the times:

- treat all delegates equally
- be seen to behave impartially
- not appear to favour any party and
- not appear to favour any side of a contentious issue

Procedural Roles of the Chairman: A Step-by-Step

Procedural roles of the PGA and Committee Chairmen: Step-by-step through a conference

Allocation of work and time management

One of the first tasks of the GA General Committee is to decide what items to allocate to the GA Plenary and what items to allocate to its various subsidiary bodies.

The allocation of time is a more challenging task and must be a constant preoccupation of

the presiding officers. The secretariat is likely to be able to give helpful advice in this regard, but the responsibility remains with the presiding officer, whether it is the PGA or Committee Chairmen. He/she will need a timetable or timeline within which tasks need to be accomplished. This timetable is outlined in the Programme of Work which is distributed at the beginning of the first Plenary or Committee meeting.



Sixty-Second Session Open General Assembly President Declares

Opening the meeting

The presiding officer should arrive early before the scheduled start of each meeting. As soon after the appointed starting time that there are enough delegates in the room, the presiding officer 'calls the meeting to order', greets the delegates and declares the meeting open. He/she announces the purpose of the meeting and gives a brief oral introduction to the work at hand.

What a PGA/Chairman would say to open a meeting:

"The first plenary meeting of the General Assembly is called to order." [PGA bangs the gavel to mark the opening of the meeting]

"I call to order the 20th meeting of the Third Committee of the 60th Session of the General Assembly."

Announcing each phase of Committee activity

At the beginning of a meeting and as the meeting progresses, the presiding officer announces each procedural move: He/she explains any procedural matter that might be unclear and foreshadow subsequent moves. Likewise, the Chairman closes each phase of debate and explains what has been done and what is to follow.

At the beginning of any meeting a Chairman clearly outlines to the delegates what will take place and reminds them of important information they need to know.

This section will outline what a Chairman might say when announcing each phase of a Committee's activity.

General Debate

What a Chairman might say at the beginning of the General Debate in a GA Main Committee:

"Before opening the floor, I should like to remind all delegations once more that the rolling list of speakers for the general debate will close today at 6 p.m. All delegations interested in speaking should make every effort to inscribe their names on the list before that deadline."

"Distinguished delegates, this morning the Committee will continue its general debate on agenda item 86 in accordance with its programme of work and timetable. The first speaker on my list is the distinguished ambassador of Nigeria. You have the floor sir."

What a Chairman might say at the beginning of a meeting that will conclude the general debate:

"Today, the Committee will conclude the general debate on items allocated to it, in accordance with the programme of work and timetable."

At the end of the General Debate on an agenda item the Chairman would say:

"We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. The Assembly (or Committee) has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 43."

Introducing a draft resolution

After concluding the debate on an agenda item, the next step is to introduce a draft resolution on the agenda item that was debated. At this juncture he Chairman would say:

"We have heard the last speaker on the debate of this item 43. The Committee will now proceed to consider draft resolution A/67/L.8. I give the floor to the representative of Mexico to introduce the draft resolution."

Taking action on a draft resolution

The Chairman will always know in advance whether a particular draft resolution will be adopted by consensus or whether a recorded vote has been requested before action is taken. The delegation requesting a recorded vote on a draft resolution must do so in writing prior to the time action will be taken.

Introduction of amendments

If delegates have not been able to reach consensus on a draft resolution, sometimes certain

delegations choose to introduce amendments before action is taken. All amendments have to be tabled in the same manner as a draft resolution, i.e., deposited with the Secretariat in advance so that they can be distributed to all delegates before action is taken.

What a Chairman might say when amendments have been tabled:

“We will now move to the next phase of our proceedings, the introduction of amendments. I would ask those delegations who have submitted amendments to introduce them in the order in which they have been submitted. I call first on the distinguished delegate from Sri Lanka.”

“The next amendment will be introduced by India. I give the floor to the distinguished representative of India.”

Once all of the amendments have been introduced, action is taken on them individually in the order in which they have been submitted.

What a Chairman might say to initiate action on the amendments that have been tabled:

“All the proposed amendments to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.52 have now been introduced. We will take them up in the order in which they were introduced. We begin with Sri Lanka: amendment to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22.”

Once action has been taken on all of the amendments proposed, the Committee next takes action on the entire draft resolution.

What a Chairman might say after taking action on the amendments and before taking action on the draft resolution:

“All the proposed amendments to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22 have thus been considered. We will therefore now proceed to consider draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22. I call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes before voting.”

A delegation can decide to withdraw an amendment any time before action is taken on it. A delegation wishing to do so might say:

“India will not be seeking action on the draft amendment submitted by us in document...”

When this occurs, the Chairman would confirm this decision by saying:

“The draft amendments in documents...are therefore withdrawn.”

Voting on one part of a draft resolution before voting on the entire resolution

Sometimes a delegation requests a separate vote on just one part of a draft resolution. This takes precedence over voting on the entire draft resolution.

What a Chairman might say when a request for a separate vote on one paragraph of a draft resolution is made:

“The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/60/L.4. A recorded vote has been requested. A separate vote has been requested on operative paragraph 4. I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.”

Taking action on the whole resolution

After the results of the vote on the amendments are completed, or if there are no amendments, the Chairman proceeds to take action on the whole resolution. Before doing so, the Chairman gives all delegations an opportunity to explain their position or vote before taking action.

Here a Chairman might say:

“All proposed amendments to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22 have thus been considered. We will now proceed to consider the draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22 as a whole. I first call on those representatives who wish to explain their vote before a decision is taken.”

If no amendments were proposed and a draft resolution will be adopted by consensus, the Chairman would say:

We will now proceed to consider the draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22 as a whole. I first call on those representatives who wish to explain their position before a decision is taken.”

Explanation of position before action is taken or explanation of vote before voting

After a draft resolution is introduced, Member States have an opportunity to explain their position before action is taken (if it will be adopted by consensus) or to explain their vote (if a recorded vote has been requested). Unlike the General Debate, there is no speaker’s list. Delegates raise their placards to indicate that they want to speak and the Chairman calls on them in whatever order he chooses. Sponsors of the draft resolution cannot explain their position or vote. This is only

The phrase “explanation of position before action is taken” is used when a draft resolution will be adopted by consensus. The phrase “explanation of vote before voting” is used when a recorded vote has been requested in advance.

Once all the delegations who wish to explain their vote or position have spoken but before action is taken, the Secretary reads the title of the draft resolution, which Member State introduced it and which Member States added their names to the list of co-sponsors.

Concluding the decision-making process

If the resolution is to be adopted by consensus, the Secretary or Chairman mentions that “the

sponsors hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.”

What a Chairman might say:

“The sponsors of the draft resolution have expressed the wish that it be adopted by the Committee without a vote. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly. It is so decided.”

If this is not the case, then the Secretary or Chairman announces that “a recorded vote has been requested” and the Secretary proceeds to conduct a vote. Once the voting process has started it cannot be interrupted. After the voting process is completed, the results of a vote are announced.

Sponsors of a resolution cannot be added once action has been taken on a draft resolution.

Explanation of position after action is taken or explanation of vote after voting

Once action is taken, delegations have once last chance to put their points of view on the record. Those delegations that are not sponsors of the resolution are given an opportunity to explain their position if it is has been adopted by consensus or explain their vote after voting.

When the last speaker has finished, the Chairman may conclude by saying:

“May I thus take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly [or Committee] to conclude its consideration of agenda item 58? It is so decided.”

Decision-making

The action phase is a particularly sensitive component of a Committee's activity, to which the Chairman pays particular attention. In the case of written draft proposals, the Chairman explains the procedural situation to make sure that all delegations fully understand it. He/she makes every effort to ensure that the decision-making process is fully transparent and that the wishes of delegations are accurately reflected. The most common mode of making decisions is for the Chairman to declare that a resolution has been adopted by consensus. This requires the Chairman to have a very good sense of the wishes of delegations, since, as with all other decisions by the Chairman, it is subject to its being accepted by the entire Committee.

An important part of the Chairman's responsibilities is to ensure that all requisite decisions are taken and duly recorded.

Overnight

Each evening, after closing the meeting, the Chairman starts to plan the next day's work. It is important to make sure that he/she is informed of what has happened in the

consultations and other meetings at which he/she was not present, and of likely developments in coming meetings. For this purpose, a meeting of the Bureau in the morning before the day's session is often necessary. As appropriate, the Chairman prepares the interventions he/she will make in advance of the meetings. At times he/she may see advantage in meeting with some delegations and/or arrange to forewarn delegations of impending developments.



Close of the GMUN2011 Conference

Closing the conference

Finally, it is PGA's role to declare the conference closed. Before doing so he/she usually thanks delegates and the secretariat. He/she may also make some observations on the outcome of the conference.

Substantive Role of the Chair

The Chairman's responsibility is not only to manage the Committee's meetings so that they operate smoothly, but also to take responsibility for seeing that the Committee produces a result that is immediately acceptable to all, or at least an overwhelming majority of delegates.

These are criteria that should be met by every conference and that every Chairman should aim for –although that is at times difficult. They represent a good outcome and a Chairman presiding over a Committee that meets them is entitled to a sense of self satisfaction.

In pursuing his/her substantive aims, as with procedural matters, the Chairman acts as a representative of the entire Committee and his/her actions must be acceptable to it. That support is likely to be forthcoming, as long as the Chairman reflects a good understanding of the wishes of delegations.

In MUN simulations, the Chairmen play mostly a procedural role and their more substantive role is overlooked. Emphasizing the more substantive role of this key leadership position in MUN simulations can greatly enhance the negotiation process and lead to more decisions being adopted by consensus.

Key tasks

One of the important responsibilities of the Chairman is to be interested in the substantive outcome of the conference. The Chairman, however, must carry out this responsibility in a manner that maintains his/her impartiality.

Planning and agenda setting

The Chairman must have a clear idea of what outcome is possible and desirable and a plan as to how it can be achieved. Both of these will be subject to constant monitoring and possible revision as the conference unfolds. Their evolution will be strongly affected by the Chairman's monitoring of the debate and negotiations and what he/she hears in consultations with delegates. But the desirable outcome is more than the sum of the wishes of all delegates: it is also an outcome that is coherent, legally and technically correct and ideally one that will prove sustainable both politically and in terms of its practical implementation.

Implementation

As long as the conference is proceeding in accordance with this (flexible and evolving) plan, the Chairman's responsibility is to facilitate its course. If, however, the conference shows signs of stalling or losing its way, the Chairman's responsibility for the outcome requires him/her to take a more active role that may include encouraging delegations to act in a manner helpful to the conference resuming its progress. As a final resort, this role may require the Chairman to act more directly, for example by convening a consultative group, drawing the conference's attention to options or making suggestions, based on his/her knowledge and understanding of the wishes of delegations, and the applicable technical, legal and other considerations.

The resources and tools available to the Chairman

In this work the Chairman needs to manage and draw upon a range of resources:

Rules of Procedure

These support the extensive powers of the Chairman (see section on Rules of Procedure where this is discussed in greater detail).

Keeping a Positive Atmosphere

The atmosphere (or mood or 'chemistry') of the Committee is another factor to be managed and used by the Chairman. So long as this remains positive and constructive, it is helpful to the conference achieving its objective expeditiously. The Chairman will want to exert his/her managerial skills to keep it as close as possible to this ideal, and to resist any tendency for it to slide into lethargy, animosity or despair which are inimical to reaching agreement.

Time

The Chairman needs to manage the available time, not only with a view to its effect on procedure, but also because of the possible impact on the substantive outcome. Thus he/she may see a need to provide more time for consultation, when this seems likely to broaden the extent of agreement on substance. Subject to agreements with the venue, the Chairman may need to request that debate or negotiations continue in the evening.

Prestige

The Chairman is the acknowledged leader and representative of the whole Committee. As long as the Chairman retains the confidence of delegations, the prestige of his/her position has considerable potential influence.

Assistance

As noted above, all constructively-minded delegations will tend to be supportive of the Chairman and willing to assist with information, advice, forbearance and cooperation. The conference secretariat, likewise, assists the Chairman in his/her role as presiding officer in many ways.

For most conferences, the secretariat prepares a scenario, with suggested words for the Chairman to use as he/she makes his/her way through a succession of procedural steps. At times, the secretariat can be seen drawing the Chairman's attention to a procedural requirement or document to be cited.

Methods

The Chairman has a wide range of methods available for use in meeting the challenges of his/her role to secure the final acceptance by the conference of an outcome in accordance with its mandate. Some examples are:

a. The Chairman facilitates discussion and negotiation by providing time for that purpose. If a more active hand is needed to ensure this takes place, the Chairman can:

- suggest consultations
- appoint a Friend of the Chair, or facilitator to conduct consultations
- hold series of separate consultations

b. The Chairman will often influence the course of debate and thus the conference outcome by taking great care to ensure that delegates fully understand the purpose, context and past history of international consideration of the issue. He/she can also influence the outcome by making suggestions as to how the conference or its delegates should approach their work.

c. The Chairman can also step into the role of intermediary or ‘broker of agreement’ between delegations that are at odds, to help them find a satisfactory solution to their differences. This intermediary role can take many forms. It can consist of carrying messages between the protagonists, offering explanations for their respective positions, urging understanding and a willingness to compromise, making suggestions to both parties as to how they can act to advance their objectives and also as to what is realistically achievable.

d. Likewise the Chairman can take an escalating range of roles in ensuring that constructive texts appear on time. These can range from a compilation of agreed texts and square bracketed alternatives proposed by delegations to provide a starting point for negotiation, through the Chairman’s ‘non-paper’ to stimulate thinking, to a ‘Chairman’s text.’ The last is a proposal by the Chairman based on his/her assessment of what may be acceptable to the conference in the light of the foregoing debate and negotiation, supplemented by the Chairman’s consultations.

Matters for careful judgment include decisions on whether to produce such documents and if so, their timing, the extent of prior consultation or forewarning before doing so and the degree of assertiveness with which the Chairman advances his/her proposals.

In all these activities, the Chairman continues to act on behalf of the Committee as a whole and with its consent. This means, that by a combination of frequent consultation, knowledge and understanding of the concerns of delegations and empathy, the Chairman must have a very good sense of what the conference collectively wants and will approve or at least accept.

The Chairman's Activities in Guiding the Work of a Committee

The Chairman’s activities in guiding the work of a Committee

An essential role of chairmen is to ensure that a Committee conducts its business in the manner he/she deems appropriate, in the light of the Rules of Procedure and his/her understanding of the mandate and the wishes of the conference.



Secretary-General Meets New Chairman of ACABQ

To this end, the Chairman can use four different techniques (or combinations thereof) set out in the following sections. He/she can:

1. grant permission and allow things to happen
2. facilitate their happening
3. indirectly cause them to happen, and/or
4. do them himself or herself

1. Allowing things to happen

The Chairman keeps order by selectively permitting some activities and/or deciding when they take place.

Thus:

- a Committee cannot undertake any formal activity if the Chairman (or Vice-Chairman) is not chairing
- the conference is not in session until the Chairman says so
- no delegate may speak (formally) without permission from the Chair and the Chair can withdraw that permission
- the conference cannot act (e.g. start discussion on an agenda item) unless the Chair permits it
- the conference has not made a decision until the Chair confirms it
- the conference is in session until the Chair declares it closed

But just as keeping a gate shut blocks activity, opening it permits the same activity.

Thus, for example, the PGA:

- opens the first Plenary meeting of each session, thus enabling the delegations to start work and
- initiates each action or decision (e.g. closure of discussion on one agenda item and proceeding to the next)

Similarly, the Chairman of a Committee

- opens the first Committee meeting, thus enabling the delegations to start work on the agenda items that have been allocated to it, and
- initiates each action or decision (e.g. closure of discussion on one agenda item and proceeding to the next)

2. Facilitating the work of the conference

The Chairman has many techniques at his/her disposal for facilitating the work of the conference, including:

- allowing adequate time for debate and informal consultations
- resolving any issues over procedure, thereby enabling the conference to continue its work in the appropriate manner
- suspending the session for informal consultations

3. Indirectly causing things to happen

Examples of this technique include:

- inviting a delegate to make a statement
- suggesting that informal consultations take place
- appointing a 'Friend of the Chair' or facilitator to conduct consultations or to try to find consensus on a particular issue
- asking the secretariat to provide a particular service (e.g. interpreter service for a night session)

4. Personal initiatives by the Chairman

Ultimately (many experienced chairmen say 'as a last resort'), the Chairman can play a very 'hands on' role. He/she can, for example:

- personally convene a contact group and chair it
- act as intermediary, facilitator or 'broker' to resolve disagreements among delegates
- propose a procedural step, such as laying an issue aside or referring it to another body
- present formulations or whole draft texts to the Committee in his/her own name (as further explained below)

The Chairman as organizer

The Chairman accepts responsibility for seeing that the Committee performs and completes its work. Thus he/she plans, oversees and leads:

- - the development of a program of work, including:
 - the allocation of work to committees and other subsidiary bodies
 - the allocation of time for each task (e.g. for the discussion of an agenda item)
 - the execution of the work program, whereby he/she:
 - initiates debate on each agenda item
 - ensures that the debate is orderly
 - initiates decision-making

- ensures that results are recorded

Drafting Resolutions

Background

There are six principal organs of the UN. However, since the Trusteeship Council suspended operation on 1 November 1994, only three adopt resolutions, the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. This section will explore the nature of drafting resolutions which applies equally to all three organs.

If you consider that the Charter is the basic text for the organization, the Constitution of the organization, you can also consider that resolutions adopted by the General Assembly constitute the law of the Organization. And since it is the law of the Organization, it stands to reason that the text you produce should be clear. However, today, it's not always the case; sometimes resolutions adopted by the General Assembly may be obscure and even seem to be contradictory. This is not necessarily the fault of the drafter; because, contrary to what happened in the early days when every draft resolution used to be put to the vote, nowadays, every draft resolution, is the result of informal consultations. In the process compromises are made and the final language of the text may be sometimes unclear.

The main goal of a conference is to adopt an outcome document that Member States as a whole can agree on. Draft resolutions can be tabled as soon as the GA agenda is adopted and it has been decided whether a particular agenda item will be allocated to the GA Plenary or one of its Main Committees.

There is a myriad of practices for consulting Member States on a draft resolution or decision before its formal adoption. Two common practices include:

- Negotiations before tabling

The main sponsor consults with Member States and holds informal negotiations on the draft before tabling the "best version possible." This allows for action to be taken immediately after the introduction of the L-document. This is the normal practice in the Plenary.

- Negotiations after tabling

The main sponsor tables a draft resolution or decision without prior consultations. After the introduction of the L-document, informal negotiations take place, led by either the main sponsor or by a facilitator appointed by the Chair of a Main Committee. If consensus is reached, the negotiated text will replace the original draft. This is done in two ways. Either the sponsor withdraws the original L-document, and a new L-document is issued after a bureau member has tabled the negotiated text. Or, the sponsor submits the negotiated text as a revision of the original L-document (issued as L.xx/Rev.1). In both cases, the resolution/decision is adopted by consensus.

If the negotiations do not result in consensus, the sponsor can either request action on the original L-document or on the negotiated text (issued as L.xx/Rev.1). In both cases, the draft resolution/decision is submitted to a vote, often accompanied by proposals for amendments and requests for paragraph votes.

Drafting and negotiation are closely related because the subject of negotiations often involves agreeing on the words that are used to describe an action that is to be taken on a particular agenda item.

Life history of text

Texts that international conferences adopt begin as a draft of the words that will advance a particular aim (such as increased safety of shipping, measures to remedy a public health problem etc.).



Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia

introduces a draft resolution

Until they are adopted at the conference, these words are no more than proposals –and are usually soon forgotten. Once adopted, they are texts of the conference and carry its authority.

Structure of Resolutions and Words Commonly Used

The most common form in which a conference expresses itself is by way of resolutions. Resolutions have a particular format.

Each resolution consists of one long single sentence. It begins with the name of the main organ that is adopting the resolution (e.g., *The General Assembly* or *The Security Council*). This is followed with several preambular paragraphs. These are not really paragraphs, but clauses in the sentence. Each one starts with verb in the present participle (e.g., *Recalling*, *Considering*, *Noting*), which is capitalized, and ends with a comma. Sometimes the clause begins with more than one keyword, such as, *Noting with satisfaction*, *Noting with regret*, etc. These words are always italicized.

After the preambular paragraphs come the operative paragraphs, each of which begins with a verb in the present tense, also capitalized, and finishes with a semi-colon, except for the last, which has a period at the end of it.

Words commonly used at the beginning of preambular paragraphs:

Acknowledging Affirming Appreciating Approving Aware Bearing in mind Believing Commending Concerned Conscious Considering Convinced Desiring Emphasizing Expecting Expressing Fully aware Guided by Having adopted Having considered Having noted Having reviewed Mindful Noting Noting with approval Noting with concern Noting with satisfaction Observing Realising Recalling Recognising Seeking Taking into consideration Underlining Welcoming Whereas

Tips on ordering paragraphs in the preambular section

If the preamble is going to refer to UN Charter, it should be put first. If the resolution starts with a general reference to the "purposes and principles in the Charter of the United Nations" there should be another clause in the preamble that refers more specifically to a Chapter or Article within the UN Charter that elaborates what principles are relevant to the issue that is the subject of the resolution. The first time it is mentioned in the preambular or operative section it should be referred to as the Charter of the United Nations. After that, it can be referred to simply as the Charter.

References to past resolutions or decisions usually come second (e.g., "*Recalling* its resolution 65/309 of 19 July 2011). If the resolution was adopted in the Security Council, the correct wording would be "*Recalling* Security Council resolution 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973". It is not considered good form to write, "*Recalling* resolution 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 of the Security Council ..." The first time a resolution of the Security Council is mentioned the date is included. After that only the resolution number and year needs to be mentioned, for example, resolution 338 (1973).

Next, it is proper to include general observations about the content or purpose of the resolution which serves as basis for the rest of the text. This helps set the stage for the call to action in the operative section of the resolution.

Finally, if it is considered desirable to include a reference to a report on this item, this would go last (e.g., "*Taking note* of the report of the Secretary-General). If this is done, it is

not considered proper to include the symbol of document in the text. This would go in a footnote.

Words commonly used at the beginning of operative paragraphs

Accepts Adopts Agrees Appeals Approves Authorizes Calls upon Commends Considers Decides Declares Determines Directs Emphasizes Encourages Endorses Expresses appreciation Expresses hope Invites Notes Notes with approval Notes with concern Notes with satisfaction Proclaims Reaffirms Recommends Reminds Repeals Requests Resolves Suggests Supports Takes note Urges

[Click here for more suggestions of terms used in resolutions.](#)

All resolutions have at least one operative paragraph, but they often have several preambular and several operative paragraphs. If several preambular or operative paragraphs begin with the same word (for example, 'noting' or 'notes') it is traditional to use 'further' for the second such use and 'also' for the third and subsequent uses (for example, 'Noting', 'Further noting', 'Also noting', etc.)

In the General Assembly and many other conferences the preambular paragraphs are not numbered, whereas the operative paragraphs are. However, if there is only one operative paragraph, it is not numbered.

Informally the preambular paragraphs are referred to as PP1, PP2 etc. and the operative paragraphs as OP1, OP2 etc.

Preambular paragraphs serve to explain the basis for the action called for in the operative paragraphs. They can be used to build an argument. They can also be used to build support. Sometimes they express general principles and the tone can be elevated. Some lack of precision in the wording of preambular paragraphs is tolerable.

Operative paragraphs express what the conference has decided to do. Precise clear language enhances political impact and facilitates implementation. Likewise brevity is preferable, as it is politically much more powerful.

Tips on ordering paragraphs in the operative section

First, refer to the past. While references to the Charter and previous resolutions should be put in the preamble, if you want to give a report more emphasis you can put it in the first operative section.

Next, specify current actions, for example, "*Decides*," "*Decides also*" and "*Decides further*."

Today's resolution format is, no doubt, a product of habit and tradition that can be traced to the days of the League of Nations (1919–46). It is language and form that is accepted

and understood by governments everywhere, despite differences of language, tradition and politics.

[Click here for an example: General Assembly Resolution 64/48 of 12 January 2010.](#)

[Click here for an example: Security Council Resolution 1805 \(2008\) of 20 March 2008.](#)

Tips on the choice of words

The most common and most neutral keyword that is used to begin an operative clause is "*Requests*." This is typically used when a resolution asks the Secretary-General to do something.

When a General Assembly resolution includes an operative clause that asks the Security Council to do something, it must remain polite and typically uses the keyword "*Recommends*" or "*invites*."

Sometimes the drafters of a resolution want to begin a clause with a word that contains more emotion. There is a crescendo of words to choose from depending on how strong they would like it to be. For example, "*Calls upon*" is stronger than "*Requests*" and "*Urges*" is considered to be even stronger. The highest level of emotion but rarely used is the word "*Demands*."

Key to successful drafting of resolutions

In the early days of the UN all draft resolutions were put to a vote, now every draft resolution is discussed beforehand in informal consultations where some of the language is sacrificed in a spirit of compromise.

The key to successful drafting of both oral proposals and/or draft resolutions is to consult widely so as to know the concerns of others before you put pen to paper, and then to factor these into your draft so as to recruit sponsors and disarm opponents. When your draft resolution is written, you should again consult widely and be ready to modify it in response to the concerns of other delegations. This process will often ensure the draft's acceptance when it is put to the committee for decision. At the very least, any points of serious disagreement will have been identified and isolated.

Checklist

Before you table a draft resolution, be sure:

- that your delegation is in agreement that draft resolution is ready to be tabled.
- that your resolution is supported by other delegations. This includes not only those with whom you usually associate but also others who support the thrust of the resolution. You need to know the resolution's chances of success before it is tabled.

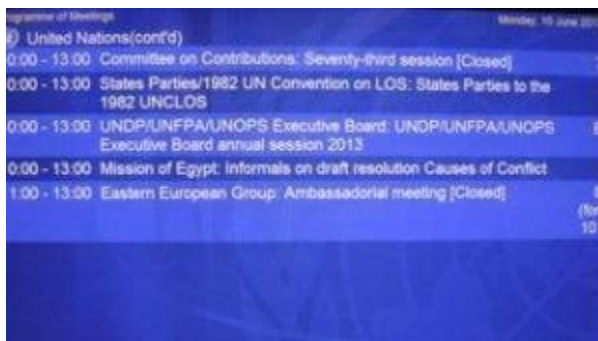
- that those delegations you want to co-sponsor the resolution have been consulted throughout, that they are happy with the final text and are willing to co-sponsor it.
- you are confident in the wording of the resolution. This relates both to its content and how it is expressed. If you are not proficient in English you should consult someone who is.
- that you have tabled your draft resolution with the MUN secretariat or committee bureau ahead of time so that they can distribute the text to all the delegations before the resolution is introduced.

Reviewing the Text after it is Tabled

In the case of long texts on which there are many proposals for amendments, the committee (or plenary), under the Chairman's leadership, will undertake successive readings of the text. The Chairman will invite the committee's attention to the first paragraph (or, if the Chairman expects the text to be contentious, the first sentence or first part of the first sentence). If there are no proposals for amendment, that passage is considered to have been provisionally agreed. The Chairman will then invite the committee to consider the next passage. If amendments are proposed, these will be discussed and, if there is agreement, modified wording will be incorporated into the text. This new text will then form part of the provisionally agreed draft.

If, on the other hand, the committee is unable to reach agreement on the proposed amendment within a reasonable time, the disputed words will be enclosed in square brackets and the committee will proceed to the next passage.

At the conclusion of the first reading, the text will consist of provisionally agreed passages and words or passages in square brackets. The square brackets signify that there is, as yet, no agreement on the words within them. Each set of square brackets may enclose a single word or several words. Or the square brackets may include alternative words or phrases, separated by a slash (/). This means that some in the committee prefer one option, while others prefer the alternative.



Mission of Egypt Informals on draft resolution posted on screens in UNHQ

Soon after completing the first reading (but sometimes after allowing time for informal

consultations), the Chairman will invite the committee to proceed to a second reading of the text. This time, the committee will not re-examine the provisionally agreed text. It will instead proceed to the first set of square brackets and the Chairman will seek new ideas on their content. This is often the case because the delegates who had objections have in the meantime:

- seen how the whole text is developing and consequently are now untroubled by the bracketed word(s)
- given the matter further thought (in some cases after discussing the issue with other delegations informally and/or consulting their headquarters) and come to the conclusion that they do not wish to maintain their objection or
- held consultations with other interested delegations ending in informal agreement to change the word(s) at issue.

If the committee can agree to accept the word(s) in question, or different word(s) in their stead, the square brackets will be removed and the newly agreed text will now form part of the provisionally agreed whole. This process is known informally as 'getting rid of square brackets'. If, on the contrary, agreement cannot be reached, the contested word(s) will be left in square brackets. Either way, the Chairman will invite the committee to proceed to the next set of square brackets and again attempt to reach agreement. This process will continue to the conclusion of the second reading, with the result that the text is fully agreed or substantial progress has been made towards agreement.

Thereafter, a third and any successive readings will be conducted until the text is approved. Where a text goes through several readings it can be called a rolling text.

The text provisionally agreed is 'provisional' in the sense that all concerned understand that in many cases delegates cannot definitively approve partial texts. They need to see the whole before knowing whether any of the parts are acceptable.

During consultations the facilitator or sponsor of a draft resolution can circulate "compilation texts" that reflect the evolution of the negotiations and the different positions of Member States in detail. After each round of negotiations, revisions of the text are compiled. This illustration shows the standard elements for compilation texts. *Please note that the example here is completely fictional:*

Compilation Text as of 21 October 2016 (Rev. 3)

The General Assembly,

PP1 *Reaffirming* its previous resolutions relating to the issue of chocolate, including resolutions 46/77 of 12 December 1991 and 63/309 of 14 September 2009;

PP2 *Recognizing* the role of the General Assembly in addressing the issue of chocolate, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations;

PP2 (Alt) *Recognizing* also the need to further enhance the role, authority, effectiveness, and efficiency of the General Assembly; [Proposed: Liechtenstein]

OP1 *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on “Chocolate for All”;

OP2 *Expresses* its support for the **active** ongoing **[replace : EU]** promotion of Swiss **[Delete: EU, G-77]** chocolate for the physical **and mental** **[Add: ROK]** well-being of people;

OP3 *Calls upon* the Secretary-General to mainstream the use of chocolate by providing chocolate in all meetings as a tool to increase happiness throughout the United Nations system and its operational activities;

OP3 (bis) Recognizes the positive contribution of increased consumption of chocolate to the economy of cocoa farmers in developing countries; [proposed: G-77 / supported: Mexico]

OP4 *Encourages* Member States to promote the consumption of chocolate; **[Comments: US, JPN, CANZ will get back on the paragraph after checking with their Ministry of Health]**

OP5 *Decides* to declare 2020 the International Year of Chocolate; **(agreed ad ref)**

OP6 *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of the present resolution including recommendations for future action at the 84th session of the GA. **(agreed)**

Terminology

To place brackets around text or to bracket text means to require it to be marked as not yet agreed.

Getting rid of square brackets means to work towards agreeing on the disputed words or passages.

A clean text is one without square brackets, that is to say, the text is acceptable to all who participated in its drafting.

However, there is a strong convention against re-starting discussion on any part of provisionally agreed text, as it can easily lead to prolonged negotiation. Nevertheless, ‘all conferences are sovereign’. This means that if delegates agree there is a good reason, a committee may decide to reconsider part of the provisionally agreed text. It is unlikely to agree to such reconsideration unless the proposal is acceptable to all delegates.

Tips for MUN simulations

The review of draft resolutions and the consideration of amendments is the most time consuming element of a conference. In addition, it is typically a time during MUN simulations when Rules of Procedure are frequently invoked which further slows down the process of taking action on a draft resolution.

Given the time limitations of a typical Model UN conference, the amount of time needed to take action on agenda items can be significantly reduced by:

- *reducing or limiting the number of resolutions that are tabled on a particular agenda item.*
- *making sure that the sponsor(s) of a draft resolution have consulted with other delegations to make sure it has wide support by other delegations. This includes not only those with whom they usually associate but also others who support the thrust of the resolution. It is critical for the sponsor(s) of a resolution to know whether their resolution has a chance of success before it is tabled.*
- *reviewing the text of a resolution line by line. In many MUN simulations amendments are made randomly rather than going systematically through the document. Following a more rigorous review as outlined above can help identify where delegates are in disagreement and allow more time for informal consultations to resolve their differences.*

Negotiation

One of the most important parts of participating in an international conference is honing the skill of negotiation. In this section the art of negotiation will be explored in greater detail.



GMUN delegates discuss within their committees

Negotiation is the art of reaching agreement. The basic aim is to make sure that other participants have sufficient incentives to agree to an outcome that serves your objectives. [Read more here.](#)

Process of Negotiation

The only way to achieve your delegation's objectives through negotiation is to reach

agreement with other delegations. This section focuses on strategies and tactics for reaching agreement on the text of a resolution. [More on the Process of Negotiation here.](#)

Competitive Bargaining vs. Cooperative Problem Solving

One of the biggest challenges of negotiation is that there are two different approaches which call for opposite strategies. This section gives an overview of both approaches and provides a rationale for why only one of them is appropriate for international conferences. [Find out more about Competitive Bargaining vs. Cooperative Problem Solving.](#)

Preparation

Negotiation is difficult and, like other difficult activities, preparation is essential. Successful negotiators prepare for negotiation by making a plan. [More on Preparation here.](#)

Competitive Bargaining vs. Cooperative problem solving

There are two different approaches to negotiation -- competitive bargaining and cooperative problem solving. This section will give an overview of these two approaches.

Competitive bargainingHistorically, the word 'negotiation' means 'business' and negotiation has a major role in business transactions.

The crudest form of negotiation in an international conference resembles crude commercial negotiations, for example, when you are trying to buy or sell a second-hand car and the only point at issue is the price. In that case the buyer wants to pay as little as possible, while the seller wants to receive as much as possible. A gain by one party means an equal loss by the other. This type of negotiation is sometimes referred to as 'competitive bargaining'. It has been extensively studied over the centuries by traders everywhere and, more recently, in business schools.

You probably already understand this form of negotiation. The essential feature is that each party receives something which they accept as the outcome of the negotiation. At the simplest they would receive equal shares; but the issues before international conferences are generally far too complex for that and the needs and capabilities of the nations concerned are too varied for any simple equilibrium. Instead, at the international level, the balance to be found is between trade-offs, in which not only the quantity but also the nature of what different parties receive is different.

Each party is concerned primarily to maximize its own gains and minimize the cost to

themselves.

Then some important tactical principles come to the fore:

- Always ask for more than you expect to get. Think of some of the things asked for as ‘negotiating coin’ that you can trade away in order to achieve your aim. You can also assume that the other party does not expect to get everything they ask for and that some of their requests are only negotiating coin.
- You might even start off by demanding things you do not really hope to achieve, but which you know other parties strongly oppose. By such blackmail you may hope that the other parties will make concessions to you just to refrain from pressing such demands.
- Always hide your ‘bottom line’. Because the other party’s aim is to concede to you as little as possible, you may get more if they are not aware of how little is acceptable to you.
- Take early and give late. Negotiators often undervalue whatever is decided in the early part of the negotiation and place excessive weight on whatever is agreed towards the end of the negotiation.
- As the negotiation progresses, carefully manage the ‘concession rate’. If you ‘concede’ things to the other party too slowly, they may lose hope of achieving a satisfactory agreement; but if you ‘concede’ too fast, they could end up with more than you needed to give them.
- The points at issue are seen as having the same worth for both sides –although they rarely do.

Precepts of this kind can readily generate a competitive or even combative spirit and encourage negotiators to consider a loss by their counterparts as a gain for themselves. **It should be evident that such sentiments at the international level are harmful to relations and thus to the prospects of cooperation and mutual tolerance.**

Cooperative problem-solving



A view of the Conference on Disarmament during a session on “Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations.”

An entirely different style of negotiation is more common in international conferences than

'competitive bargaining', both because it is generally more productive and is widely seen as more appropriate in dealings between representatives of sovereign states. This style of negotiation starts from the premise that you both have an interest in reaching agreement and therefore an interest in making proposals that the other is likely to agree to. In other words, each has an interest in the other(s) also being satisfied.

Achieving your objective requires that you also work to achieve the objectives of the other party (or parties) –to the extent that such effort is compatible with your objectives. The same applies to your counterpart(s): it is in their interest to satisfy you to the maximum extent possible. This makes negotiation a cooperative effort to find an outcome that is attractive to all parties.

To succeed in this type of negotiation, principles apply which are quite contrary to those that apply in 'competitive bargaining', namely:

- It is important not to request concessions from the other side that you know are impossible for them. If you do so, they will find it difficult to believe that you are genuinely working for an agreement.
- It is in your interest that the other party should understand your position. Indeed, perhaps they should even know your 'bottom line'. If they understand how close they are to that 'bottom line' on one point, they will also understand the necessity to include other elements that you value so as to give you an incentive to agree.
- Sometimes it is in your interest to 'give' a lot to the other side early in the negotiation process so as to give them a strong incentive to conclude the negotiation and therefore 'give' you what you need to be able to reach agreement.
- The 'concession rate' may not be important.
- There is a premium on understanding that the same points have different values for different negotiators and also on finding additional points on which to satisfy them.

Characteristics of winning proposals



GMUN Head Delegates' meeting

The most effective tool in international conferences is empathy for other delegations, acquired mainly through informal consultations.

On that basis, you can develop proposals which are attractive to a large majority of conference participants. You can lead by the quality of your idea.

Others may be only mildly interested in your country and its preoccupations. But a proposal that is broadened to encompass their preoccupations as well can result in a broader coalition of nations agreeing to support what you want to achieve.

Consider the following two statements:

- Free trade in agriculture would be good for country X farmers
- Free trade in agriculture would be good for all agricultural exporters and for consumers in food-importing countries

The first statement has less appeal for an international audience than the second statement. Both formulations make it equally clear that country X delegation supports freer trade in agricultural products but the second formulation explains why many others should support it as well.

Likewise principles and precedents can be very important considerations, well worth referring to; but only those principles and precedents which are widely known and respected by those whom you are trying to persuade to support the outcome you want.

In preparation for MUN simulations, delegates can learn about important principles and precedents that they could refer to in negotiations by studying records of speeches given by actual delegations during General Assembly or Security Council meetings on the agenda items of interest.

If a proposal is cogently expressed, it starts with considerable advantages. If beyond that it reflects the wishes of as many other delegations as possible, it is well on the way to being accepted. The challenge for you is to develop a proposal or see to it that one is developed, which meets these requirements and also reflects your wishes.

As pointed out earlier, each negotiation can be thought of as a search for a solution to the conundrum posed by the fact that different delegations have different objectives and ambitions. The solution is not to get irritated with or try to pressure individual delegates. Instead, as we have indicated, it is to find a formulation that is acceptable to all.

A proposal will have general appeal if all delegations like it. It may however also be accepted if some delegations like it and no others particularly object to it. It could also succeed if some like it, while those who do not particularly like it think that it gives them enough or that it is as good (from their point of view) as they can hope to get. Possibly even some decide that although they do not like the proposal there are reasons why they should not press or even express their opposition. In other words, a wide spectrum of attitudes may be hidden by a proposal's general acceptability; but the majority view must be positive.

The winning text will emerge from what all can agree on and what will advance the objectives of each to the extent possible, despite differences in views and objectives.

Negotiators will only agree to an outcome that they consider acceptable. They will agree more readily the more they see the outcome as advancing their objectives. This means that you have an interest in the outcome being one that advances the objectives of the other party (or parties) as well as your own. In your own interest, you should work to advance the objectives of the other side, to the extent that this is not incompatible with achieving your own objectives.

This is not a question of the goodness of your heart; it is a way of giving the other party(ies) an incentive to agree to an outcome which serves your objectives.

Logical argument

Reason is the most effective and thus the most widely-used line of argument in international conferences.

The most persuasive arguments will be those which appear reasonable from the perspective of the people you are trying to convince. Indeed your whole line of argument will be looked upon positively if it is developed from their perspective. At the very least you should not speak from your own perspective but from a general one.

Momentum

Closely related to this idea is that of **momentum**.

As the negotiations progress, it is often the case that a particular solution or approach to a solution gains support. More and more delegations come to expect this to be the outcome on which the conference will reach agreement. In other words their expectations focus on this approach or solution and consequently they discard other approaches and solutions, concentrating instead on how this solution can be adjusted to make it acceptable to them. The conference can then be seen to have increasing momentum towards this solution.

The analogy is often drawn with a **snowball**, which gains in size by accretion and momentum as it rolls down a hill. Such a solution can become irresistible.

Creativity

All of the approaches discussed here can benefit greatly from negotiators that can bring a new perspective to the issues which divide a conference and see the opportunities that can be found in the very differences between the objectives of

different delegations and the different values they place on different factors.

An important help to this is knowledge –gained by experience and/or reading– of solutions or approaches that have worked in other negotiations, together with the ability to adapt them to the situation at hand.

Agreements, including negotiated positions, are sometimes criticized for being the **lowest common denominator**. That is to say something the delegates could agree on; but far short of more ambitious agreements they could have reached. Such outcomes are often defined as that to which no participant objects. Winston Churchill accused his chiefs of the armed forces of producing advice that reflected ‘the sum of all their fears’. It is sometimes useful to identify this lowest common denominator, but then to treat it as a basis on which to devise an agreement of greater value to all participants.

Fundamentals of Negotiation

UN organs such as the General Assembly and Security Council, which are the main focus of this Guide, make decisions on a wide range of issues. The deliberations that take place in both bodies can only move forward and produce outcomes if there is agreement between Member States. Sometimes this agreement is reached by consensus. At other times it is reached by a majority vote. What we are concerned about in this section is the process leading to a decision by a conference. This process is negotiation.

Purpose of Negotiation



Kiyoo Akasaka (right) , USG for Communications and Public Information meets with Dato' Ahmad Shabery Cheek (left), Minister of Youth and Sports, Malaysia

Negotiation is well-known and practiced in all fields of human activity. It is a way of settling disputes without fighting, a way of making joint decisions when those who are making decisions hold different views or a way of achieving your own objectives despite other participants having different objectives.

This means that negotiation is a way of coping with disagreement, with varying views and with different objectives. In short, it is a way of coping with conflict.

But it can only deal with conflict in cases where the parties have a sense that they have common interests. They may for instance want a dispute to be settled without fighting or they may want a decision to be taken despite there being differences of views or again, they may be conscious of having substantial common ground on which they agree, but different views of some aspects of a question before them. If they did not think that they had common interests, they could shout at each other (unproductively) or ignore each other: they would not be interested in seeking agreement.

Negotiation is about finding a way to reach agreement. When agreement is reached, a dispute is settled and a joint decision has been made.

Some individuals or governments are reticent about engaging in negotiation because of a fear that they will be forced to accept outcomes that they consider damaging to their interests. Such fears come from a misunderstanding of the process of negotiation. The aim, and the only outcome to which any delegation should agree, is an improvement –from their own point of view– of the situation they face before the negotiations start (or in other words, an improvement over the alternative to agreement). This often falls short of one's ideal or preferred outcome; but the consideration that should be decisive is that it is nevertheless an improvement on the situation one would face without negotiation –usually because it involves other governments taking actions which you see as helping your interests. Also, it is not unusual for a negotiated outcome to include some elements which one regards as negative (i. e. some of your interests are actually worse off). This can be acceptable if they are part of a package which, overall, you rate as an improvement.

The word 'compromise' (and its translation into languages other than English) can have very negative connotations in everyday speech. To compromise your principles or your nation's interests (meaning to put them at risk) would obviously be very bad. But in international negotiation the word is used to mean 'to reduce your immediate ambitions, so as to accommodate the concerns of other parties to the extent needed to make them agree to an outcome that you regard as an improvement'. In that sense 'compromise' is in the interests of both you and the other parties. Conference negotiators often speak of 'the spirit of compromise' in terms that indicate they are talking of something desirable and admirable, not abject surrender.

Power in negotiations



GMUN delegates representing Malaysia

There is a widely-held belief among people who know little about international conferences that those delegates who represent the most powerful states will be able to impose their wishes. But military, economic or cultural power do not translate directly into an ability to impose one's will in an international conference. Reality is far more nuanced. The real source of power in international conferences is a combination of several of the following:

- whether your proposal is attractive to other delegations
- how willing other governments are to conform with your government's wishes because of bilateral relationships
- how well your delegation understands the issues before the conference and the attitudes of other delegations to them
- how active your delegation is and how hard it works
- whether your delegation is able to show flexibility in meeting the concerns of others
- whether your delegation can think creatively to produce proposals attractive to many other delegations
- whether your delegation has clear ideas on achieving certain objectives and a determination to do so.

It would be foolish to imagine that the relative real power of governments evaporates when their delegates enter a conference room. A delegation of a large, powerful country has distinct advantages over that from a weaker country. The value other governments place on their bilateral relationship with the powerful country predisposes their delegation to comply with the wishes of the powerful country's delegation. Governments of powerful nations are also well placed to brief their delegation well and to staff it with knowledgeable and suitable individuals. They can send many delegates. But sometimes smaller and poorer countries can also brief their delegations well and be represented by capable people. Finally, the power of the country that the delegation represents is not a major factor for most of the other points listed above.

In short, power relationships between nations are relevant in a conference room: but they are far from being the whole story. Weaker governments are often better placed in that context to achieve their objectives than they are in bilateral dealings. It is also important to remember that issues on which the objectives of different governments are strongly opposed to each other are the most difficult ones for conferences to handle and for agreed solutions to be found. Conversely, where governments of both powerful and less powerful countries have objectives that can be reconciled, conferences are well placed to produce results acceptable to all. Thus the issues which get referred to conferences are primarily those on which the interests on the participants are capable of mutual accommodation. Power struggles are not the point of many conferences nor relevant to the outcomes they produce.

Leading delegations

Typically, on any issue that comes up for negotiation in an international conference, many delegations do not feel compelled to take a particularly strong position. This can be because the question is not seen to have much impact on them or to be one on which they see much benefit in exerting themselves or, as is often the case, because what is proposed seems desirable or at least acceptable to them. Other delegations however may have a strong wish to influence a conference's decision on the issue and, in a number of cases, some delegations may have mutually opposed wishes.

These delegations –those that aspire to influence the outcome and particularly those that have mutually opposed ambitions– become the leaders and drivers of the negotiation. Each such delegation can only achieve its objectives (in so far as these depend on the conference outcome) by securing the agreement of the conference. They are more likely to be successful if they attempt to resolve the issue together and if they try to meet each other's aims. They will do even better if they also involve other delegations in the consultations because it may be one of the less involved delegations that actually finds the solution acceptable to all. The delegations that best accommodate differing concerns are 'leading delegations', because they will be followed.

The interdependence of negotiators

As long as they are not out to derail a conference, negotiators have important common interests. An international conference can only adopt words or make other decisions by agreement or approximations to agreement (consensus or a majority vote). Failure by the conference to agree means no outcome is achieved.



GMUN delegation from Samoa

This means that every delegation which wants the conference to adopt any particular set of words or to take any other decision, shares with every other delegate a common interest in the conference reaching agreement. This common interest is quite independent of whether or not the delegates have similar positions on the substantive and procedural questions before the conference.

This means each delegate has an incentive to produce or support proposals which are attractive to as many as possible –and preferably all– other delegations (because that is what will give these other delegations an incentive to agree). In short, it is very much in the interest of each delegate to exert him or herself to achieve as much as possible of the objectives of other delegations (as well as his/her own objectives) to the extent that this does not do unacceptable damage to his/her own aims.

Therefore, successful negotiation in an international conference often takes the form of a joint effort to achieve as much as possible of each other's objectives –notwithstanding any differences or even conflicts of objectives. Conversely, negotiations in which the participants lose sight of this factor are rarely very productive.

This awareness of the mutual interdependence of the negotiators is the cornerstone of successful strategies in multilateral conferences. Obviously, the more negotiators identify and value their common interest and objectives, the more likely that negotiation will be cooperative and result in agreement. Conversely, the more interests and objectives are seen to diverge, the more likely conflict will overshadow the negotiation process and the more challenging it will be to reach agreement.

The conference environment



GMUN delegates in the Main Hall

Just as a room full of people who are confused and angry with each other is extremely unlikely to reach agreement on anything at all, the reverse image would be an environment conducive to agreement.

It is therefore in the interests of the PGA and Chairmen, other officials of the General Committee and Committee Bureaus, and all those who want the conference to succeed to ensure that the conference environment and mood remains as positive as possible.

This has physical aspects such as temperature, ventilation, access to food and drink and all other factors which affect the comfort of delegates. But also conferences, like crowds and individuals, have temperaments and emotions. They can be optimistic, hopeful and cooperative. They can be animated by a strong wish to reach agreement. They can have a sense of momentum carrying them in a particular direction. Negatively, they can be despairing, irritated or tired etc.

Successful negotiators are aware of these factors, adapt to them and do what they can to create an atmosphere conducive to agreement.

Both time and timing are important. The successful negotiator must have a good sense of how much time will be needed by delegations to consult other delegations, for ideas to percolate and for individual delegations and the conference as a whole to reach the point at which they are ready to make a decision. The successful negotiator will also be able to judge at what moment he/she should approach another delegate, make an intervention or a proposal and so forth. There are occasions where a degree of discomfort can be deliberately inflicted on delegates to drive them towards agreement but this is a delicate strategy best left to those who know how to use it.

Making Consultations Happen

A delegate can initiate consultations simply by going up to another delegate and starting to talk with them.



Members of the Security Council gather informally for discussions

Delegation leaders make it their business to arrange meetings with their counterparts at chosen times – whether it be at a lunch or a meeting at the permanent mission or a visit to the presiding officer in his chambers or with a facilitator that has been appointed to help achieve consensus. They also see it as part of their business to ensure that the delegation as a whole undertakes all the necessary consultations. Planning consultations, including assigning responsibilities for doing so amongst delegation members, is one of the essential first tasks of a delegation. Making sure that consultation takes place and ensuring that the results are disseminated throughout the delegation is an ongoing aspect of effective delegation management.

When UN conferences are held, the conference organizers will sometimes invite delegates to a preconference get-together to enable them to initiate informal consultations before the conference begins. Once the conference has started, the organizers, often arrange social events, which provide excellent opportunities for delegates to meet and to engage in consultations in a clearly informal setting. Any tours or excursions offered to participants are similarly useful.

Conference managers are very conscious of the importance of informal consultations and consequently see allowing enough time for consultations to take place as part of their job. In particular, they understand that delegations need a certain amount of time to meet and get to know each other, to fully absorb a proposal and then to take action on it.

Preparation

Priorities

Each delegation will have many objectives they will want to achieve. Therefore, an important part of preparing for a conference is to be clear what your objectives are and to rank them in order of importance.

Making a list of priorities can help guide you in your negotiations. At the top of the list should be those objectives that are absolutely imperative and beneath them a list (in order of importance) of objectives you will also pursue but do not have the same compelling force as your top objectives. Priority rankings are an aid to deciding which of your objectives are worth more effort and which ones can be sacrificed for others if needed.

Here is a check list of questions to consider to help clarify your objectives:

- What are the questions to be decided at the conference?
- What are the views and aims of other delegations?
- What are my basic objectives?
- How could these be achieved?
- How much flexibility do I have?

Background information

Another important component of preparation is to be well-informed both about the issues to be negotiated and the positions of countries that will be represented at the conference.

At UN meetings delegates are people carrying credentials to represent the views of their government. As such, they typically have some form of instructions from their capitals on what their priorities and objectives are. *In MUN simulations, delegates are role playing these positions and the only information they have available are statements and speeches given by official representatives at meetings to help them to figure out what their priorities and objectives might be.*

In addition, it is equally important to be aware of the views of other delegations attending the conference as well. This knowledge will enable you to identify possible obstacles in the path of reaching a mutually acceptable outcome that will advance your objectives. You can then think of possible ways to overcome or get around these obstacles. The final step is to test your assessments by consulting widely to make sure others understand the solution you have identified and can be persuaded to agree with it.

The Process of Negotiation

he only way to achieve your delegation's objectives through negotiation is to reach agreement with other delegations. This section focuses on strategies and tactics for reaching agreement on the text of a resolution.



GMUN delegate representing Ghana raises a

point

An iterative process

Most negotiation at international conferences is textual: deciding on the particular words to be adopted by the conference. The process consists of narrowing down a broad range of possible answers or formulations to one the conference can accept. This range is not infinite: it excludes those formulations that are not acceptable to any one of the participants. These delimit the 'area of possible agreement'.

To identify this solution is an iterative process that starts with a exploratory discussion, so that all are aware of each other's concerns and preferences. The discussion (usually called **debate** in a conference) gradually shifts to narrowing down the area of possible agreement and finally to the formulation of specific proposals. These are then discussed informally and be subjects of informal negotiations.

At this stage in the proceedings, draft proposals that have been tabled, are reviewed line by line in an informal meeting led by a facilitator. This helps identify where there is agreement and where delegations wish to modify the text of the original draft proposal. There can be several reviews which review the proposed modifications of the text until agreement is reached. In those instances where agreement in the wording of a draft proposal is cannot be reached, the Chair may intervene to assist the delegations reached consensus and if this is not successful, a delegation may request that the Committee vote on the draft proposal to decide its fate.

The process is one of progression towards an outcome. That is why the concept of momentum is relevant and an important consideration for negotiators who are aiming for an outcome. Conferences can lose momentum, become bogged down or even stall. Some negotiations return to points which were previously thought to have been settled and reopen debate and/or negotiation. Thereafter the conference must resume its progress if it is ultimately to reach an outcome.

Getting your wishes into the proposal

The formal submission of specific proposals is of crucial importance, because of the obvious truism that a conference can only agree on something that has been proposed. It follows that if your wishes are not reflected in the proposal formally tabled in the conference, they will not be reflected in the decision. To advance your objectives, the proposal should contain elements that go some way towards your aims.

From previous sections it should be clear that there are several ways in which this can be achieved:

- You can put the proposal yourself (alone or in association with other delegations)
- You can encourage another delegation to put forward a proposal responsive to your wishes
- You can persuade another delegation to revise its proposal, to make it more accommodating of your wishes
- You can merge your proposal with the proposal of another delegation
- You can persuade the conference to amend a proposal put forward by another delegation, again to bring it more into line with your wishes
- Often you will find that another delegation has done one of the above, in which case you can support them or just let them do the work.

Negotiated & Constructed Fix

There are essentially three possible strategies that can be applied singly, successively or in combinations to achieve consensus:

1. 'divide' the difference (i. e. you let them have their preference on some aspects in exchange for their allowing you to have your way on other points)
2. 'give' to the other party (or parties) something else that they value, so that they will let you have your way on the contested point(s) and
3. find a creative solution, which either sidesteps the difference or somehow allows both (or all) parties to meet their respective objectives.

Any of these three solutions can be produced in one of two ways:

- the 'negotiated fix', in which the solution is worked out by those holding differing views working together (either in full committee or in a small group meeting privately which later reports to the full committee). Delegations exchange proposals and suggest amendments to each other's proposals until acceptable solutions are found or
- the 'constructed fix', which can be produced by the Chairman or an individual delegate or sometimes a small group of delegates working together. The proponents

of different views do not participate directly in the drafting; but the 'constructed fix' has no chance of being accepted if their views are not well understood and catered for to the maximum extent possible by the author(s). These have to consult widely and, on that basis, develop proposals that will be acceptable to all, or at least most, delegations.



Inauguration of newly renovated Security

Council Consultations Room

Either way, the solution can only emerge if delegations have a concrete sense of what the other delegations want. Therefore, part of the way you achieve what you want is by letting other delegations know your intent and concerns. Both transparency and active dissemination of information about your own objectives are important steps towards achieving those objectives.

Eliminating competing texts

In a situation in which two or more competing texts are put to the conference there are a number of strategies that can be used to get proponents of the competing text to withdraw it:

- you may be able to persuade them that their proposal does not really advance their objectives, that it is unnecessary because your proposal advances their objectives equally effectively or that it will not be accepted by the conference (or a combination of these)
- you may be able to persuade other delegations to press them to withdraw it
- if necessary, you may be able to successfully move a formal amendment which so changes the meaning of their proposal that they withdraw it or
- you may be able to negotiate a merger of the two proposals into one that you can both support.



GMUN Officials meet all delegations

There are many reasons why it is normally in your interest to have only one proposal before the conference. Perhaps the most obvious of these is that all support for the competing proposal is automatically denied to your proposal. There may also be delegates who support a competing proposal, not on its merits but because of who is behind it. Conversely, if your proposal has the support of many other delegations, it will attract yet more supporters who follow the majority. For both reasons your position is stronger if there is no competition. Even if you think you will win, division is very rarely to your advantage. Your counterparts (like you) are likely to benefit from consensus and therefore to be ready to accommodate you to the fullest extent they can.

Pause

When conflicts or competing views become apparent during the course of a formal meeting, the Chairman or one of the delegations can request that the meeting be suspended for a brief period. A pause in proceedings will:

- draw the attention of all delegations to the problem
- provide time for you and all other delegations to analyze the situation and consider their future course of action
- provide time for consultations to discuss possible response strategies and
- provide time to gather more information and/or more support.

A pause may encourage the delegation(s) with different views on the issue decide to adopt a more constructive attitude. There is always a risk that these delegations will instead use the time to reinforce their position and/or that the delay will leave too little time to resolve the problem.

Two common mistakes

Two mistakes that often cause negotiations to fail are:

- rejecting a deal that has benefits for your side because it is less than you had hoped to gain or

- rejecting a deal that has benefits for your side because you think the other side gains more.

Both these errors arise from a mistaken application of the principle of fairness.

Mediation

Sometimes negotiators use the assistance of mediators.

The essential characteristics of mediators are that:

- they are not the parties to the negotiation and
- they are accepted as mediator by the parties and
- their role as mediator is accepted by the parties.

This role can include a range of actions, such as:

- Carrying messages between the parties
- Giving each of them an outsider's view of their position and/or its prospects
- Suggesting possible solutions to whatever issues divide the negotiators
- Urging the mediator's own solutions to whatever issues divide the negotiators

In all these cases, the parties themselves remain the final decision-makers. They remain sovereign and accountable: they have no excuse if the outcome is unacceptable to those whom they represent.



General Assembly considers role of mediation in conflict prevention and resolution

Anyone may serve as mediator, if the parties agree. The Chairman of the conference is often well equipped for this role, enjoying both an unrivalled understanding of the issues and the positions of the parties and the prestige of his/her office. Often, however, the Chairman has insufficient time to act as mediator or may not want to take the risks involved. In such cases he/she may appoint a facilitator or **friend of the chair** to try to find a solution. Delegations often offer themselves as mediators. On occasion, someone who is not a delegate may agree to serve as mediator.

Mediation may seem an attractive option in a number of situations. For instance a delegation may wish to use a mediator if it:

- finds itself lacking the empathy, knowledge, time or interest that would be necessary for it to resolve an issue by negotiating directly with the other party/ies
- has a high regard for the skills of a particular mediator and is confident that mediator will take due account of the concerns of different delegations and of the conference mandate
- is willing to make certain concessions but thinks this will be more readily accepted by domestic constituencies if recommended by a mediator
- represents a culture in which there is a high degree of respect for authority and/or
- feels –or feels compelled to demonstrate– a strong antipathy towards (an)other delegation(s) by not dealing with them directly.

The mediator as shaper

In the search for a solution to the problem posed by several delegations having different and possibly opposed views or objectives, the most powerful countries or groups of countries often find it difficult to be the ones who devise a solution. Their responsibilities are heavy and their systems of decision-making slow and complex. The delegations of some smaller countries can be more agile. They can explore possibilities more freely and without exposing the negotiating stance of the greater power or major group. They are better placed to come up with the solution acceptable to the great powers or major groups. They are therefore often in a position to shape the outcome of conferences and thereby to advance their own interests.

This is another reason why the choice of mediator is so sensitive. A mediator is unlikely to be successful –and therefore useful as a mediator- if he/she has objectives opposed to those of any of the parties to a negotiation he/she is called upon to mediate.

Negotiating in groups

Far more common than mediation is the practice of negotiating between groups. In complex negotiations involving large numbers of delegations, the most important negotiations take place between representatives of groups. Sometimes, especially in the final phase of a conference, the representatives meet alone; but it is not unusual for the whole group to be present alongside its designated spokesperson, although that person is the only one to speak. [A list of Member State groups can be found here.](#)

If delegates of members of the group are present during negotiation between spokespersons, their spokesperson can informally consult them, but the main benefits are:

- Members of the group can see that their spokesperson is appropriately and skillfully representing the views of the group. In the unlikely event that they are dissatisfied, they will know the full details of what transpired.

- They can witness everything that is said and done in the negotiations and thereby develop an understanding such as would be difficult for them to acquire from reports.
- Monitoring in this way the final negotiations, they get a sense of ownership of the outcome and are consequently more comfortable when the time comes for them to participate individually in a collective decision by the conference.



Votes being counted at GMUN

Negotiating in this way has many obvious advantages. One is that especially in a large conference it is much simpler and much quicker than a negotiation in which all participate. Indeed many conferences could not reach an outcome in the available time if each delegation participated in the final negotiations. Moreover, since each group is likely to select the most able negotiator available to them, each delegation knows that their interests are represented probably even more effectively than they could themselves.

But developing common negotiating aims, positions and strategies requires a high level of consultation and often negotiation within the group. It is common for groups to hold protracted and sometimes heated meetings in which differences are resolved. When the group is large, it often asks a smaller drafting committee to do the detailed work and submit proposals to it.

Unfortunately, from the perspective of those (especially smaller or poorer countries) who have high expectations of international cooperation, group positions tend to be more rigid than those of individual delegations would put forward. This comes from two factors.

One of these is intrinsic to decision-making by committees. In many committees each participant finds it easy to insist on what it will not accept and the committee has little choice but to accept that limitation. Conversely, if a participant wishes to advance a proposal, he/she faces an uphill task in getting the other members of the group to agree on the proposal. Often there has to be negotiation within the group and the outcomes reached represent compromises that greatly reduce the negotiating freedom of those who carry them into the next stage of negotiation: that with representatives of other groups.

Negotiating in this system can relieve small delegations from some of the burdens that would otherwise fall on them; but it does not relieve them of other responsibilities. Their

challenge is to strike an appropriate balance between their individual or national objectives on specific matters and their governments' wish to show solidarity with the group.

The other difficulty is that a negotiator for a group is accountable to individual members of that group. He/she may be criticized or otherwise impeded by members of the group for being too adventurous or not quick enough to take up opportunities etc.

The system places heavy responsibilities on the group spokesperson. Not only do the interests of the whole group rest on his/her shoulders so that the spokesperson is negotiating for very high stakes, but also they have to make sure that they are correctly representing the views of the group. One of their challenges is to have a sense of how far they can go and still **carry** their **constituency** (the group they represent).

The spokesperson for a group also has to have a system for communicating rapidly with members of the group as developments unfold. Some use a team of '**runners**' to spread out among the delegates.

Sometimes groups operate in two tiers, when constituent groups (e.g. the Arab Group within the G77 or the Nordic Group within the EU) develop positions and sometimes appoint representatives who can negotiate on behalf of the constituent group within a larger group. Constituent groups can also have a role in disseminating information from the overall group spokesperson.

In Model UN simulations, group negotiations are rarely if ever explored. Most delegate are so focused on preparing their own country position on a particular topic that there is often little time to explore the position that a political group might take on the same topic. If the number of topics that are covered over the short span of conference were reduced, more time could be spent on the negotiation process and exploring the nature of group negotiations

Groups of Member States

The Member States are organized in formal and informal groups with a variety of different purposes and memberships. The list below is not comprehensive and focuses on the types of groups relevant to and active in the GA.

Regional Groups

The regional groups were formed to facilitate the equitable geographical distribution of seats among the Member States in different UN bodies. To date the groups are as follows:

- Group of African States (53 Member States)

- Group of Asian States (53 Member States)
- Group of Eastern European States (23 Member States)
- Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, GRULAC (33 Member States)
- Western European and Other States Group, WEOG (28 Member States + USA)

The USA is not an official member of any group. They participate as an observer in WEOG meetings and are considered a member of WEOG for electoral purposes. Turkey is a member of both the Asian Group and the WEOG, and for electoral purposes is considered a member of WEOG only. The Holy See participates in WEOG meetings as an observer.

While the regional groups formally exist for electoral and ceremonial purposes, some also choose to coordinate on substantive issues and/or use the group structure to share information.

The Chairs of the regional groups rotate on a monthly basis. Their names can be found in the *Journal of the UN*. The Chairs are invited to speak on behalf of the group on ceremonial occasions (such as commemorative meetings).

Main political groups

The list below includes only groups that regularly make joint statements in formal GA meetings. Not all members of these groups are UN Member States. The information provided is based on the websites of the groups. Groups who convene around one specific item only are not listed. After G-77, NAM, JCC and the EU, the groups are listed in alphabetical order.



Secretary-General and G77 hold an interactive session

Group of 77 and China (G-77)

G-77 is an organization of developing countries designed to promote its members' collective economic interests and create an enhanced joint negotiating capacity in the United Nations. It currently has 131 members. The Chair rotates every year starting on 1 January. In the GA the G-77 coordinates on all Second and Fifth Committee issues as well as some Third Committee and Plenary items relating to economic issues and development. The G-77 maintains an office at UN Headquarters.

www.g77.org

Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is a group of States who do not consider themselves aligned formally with or against any major power bloc. The NAM currently has 118 members and 18 observers. A NAM summit takes place every three years. The host country of the summit is automatically the Chair until the next summit. The "NAM Troika" consists of the current, previous and incoming Chair. In the GA the group co-ordinates on peace and security issues as well as on First, Fourth, Sixth and some Third Committee issues. The Permanent Mission of the NAM Chair is the focal point for all communication with the group.

www.nam.gov.za/

Joint Coordination Committee (JCC)

The JCC is a coordination and harmonization mechanism for NAM and G-77, reinforcing cooperation and coordination in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of work between the two. Joint NAM and G-77 statements can be made in the name of JCC.

European Union (EU)

The EU is an economic and political partnership between 27 European countries. The EU has its own diplomatic service and a permanent office, the Delegation of the European Union, in New York. The EU has an enhanced observer status in the GA and coordinates on the entire range of UN activities. The EU presidency rotates every six months.

www.europa.eu



Secretary-General addresses the

African Union Summit in 2013

African Union (AU)

The African Union has 53 members. The African Union has observer status and maintains a permanent office in New York. The AU and the Group of African States work closely together on GA issues. The AU Delegation in New York provides conference facilities for the Group of African States. It is usually the Group of African States that speaks in the GA and not the African Union.

www.au.int

Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)

AOSIS is an alliance of 42 small island states and low-lying coastal countries. Its Chair rotates every three years.

www.aosis.org

ASEAN

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has ten members. The Chair rotates annually.

www.aseansec.org

CAN Z

On certain issues Canada, Australia and New Zealand coordinate their positions and may authorize one among them to speak or negotiate on behalf of all three.



The Secretary-General meets the

CARICOM Group in 2012

CARICOM

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is an organization of 15 Caribbean nations and dependencies. Its Chair rotates on a quarterly basis among its members. CARICOM has observer status and maintains a permanent office in NY.

www.caricom.org

Least Developed Countries (LDCs)

The LDCs are a group of countries whose membership is based on a set of criteria defined by the GA. There are currently 48 LDCs. The Chair of the group rotates every three years.

Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)

There are 22 LLDCs. The special situation of LLDCs is recognized by the GA. The Chair rotates every two years.

www.unohrls.org

League of Arab States

The League of Arab States (sometimes called “the Arab League”) is a regional organization. It has 22 members and four observers. Its Chair rotates on a monthly basis. The League of Arab States coordinates on Fourth Committee and Middle East issues.

The League of Arab States has observer status and maintains a permanent office in NY.

www.arableagueonline.org

Nordic Countries

The Nordic co-operation involves Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden as well as the three autonomous areas. Its presidency rotates annually.

www.norden.org

Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)

The OIC is an organization with 57 Member States. The host country of the Islamic Summit Conference assumes the chair of the organization for three years. The OIC has observer status and maintains a permanent office in NY.

www.oic-oci.org

Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)

The Pacific Islands Forum is a political grouping of 16 independent and self-governing states. The host country of the annual Forum is also the chair for the year following the Forum.

www.forumsec.org.fj

Rio Group

The Rio Group is an organization of 23 Latin American and Caribbean states. The Member State who hosts the summit of the Rio Group is also the Chair for the two years until the next summit.

A note on JUSCANZ: JUSCANZ is an informal group of Member States that originally consisted of Japan, United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (hence the name). The group has expanded and now includes other countries that do not belong to the G-77, NAM or the EU. JUSCANZ coordinates mainly on Second and Third Committee issues. Its membership and the scope of coordination are different for the two committees.

A note on “Major Groups”: This term is used in the context of Sustainable

Development (Agenda 21) when referring to civil society organizations. There are nine major group sectors: Business and industry, Children and youth, Farmers, Indigenous peoples, Local authorities, NGOs, Scientific and technological community, Women, and Workers and Trade Unions.

www.un.org/esa/dsd/

Speaking at a Conference

An international conference is primarily an exercise in communication between people of many different nationalities. It is very hard to communicate effectively across deep divides of language, culture, personality, professional and social background, experience and so forth.

Those who appreciate the true magnitude of the challenge understand that they need to pay attention to every component of oral (and written) communication and recognise the value of striving to continually improve their performance in every facet of that complex skill.



GMUN Secretary-General addressing delegates

Forms of Address

Naturally, it is important to address the Chair by his/her correct title, as set out in the conference documents. [Read more about Forms of Address here.](#)

Engaging the Audience



GMUN delegate speaking

There can be something monotonous and unengaging about a text that is being read to an audience. In an international conference often you will be speaking from a prepared text. The challenge is to disguise that fact and avoid dull or disengaged delivery. [Read more about Engaging the Audience here.](#)

Preparation, Purpose and Structure

Everything you say should be premeditated and often have been discussed with other delegations before you take the floor. [Read more about Preparation, Purpose and Structure here.](#)

Changing Audience and Cultural Sensitivity

In the General Debate (and at the closing session) of a large conference, you will be addressing several audiences at once. It is there prudent to give thought beforehand to what your General Debate statement will say to each of these audiences. [Read more about Changing Audience and Cultural Sensitivity here.](#)

Changing Audience and Cultural Sensitivity

Changing audience



Media inside the General Assembly Hall during the opening of the 67th General Debate

During the General Debate (and at the closing session) of the General Assembly, the eyes of the world are on the Heads of State or other leading representatives of a Member State. The world media is present (and the Department of Public Information streams the proceedings on the Internet). In addition, there may be an extensive presence of observers from non-governmental organizations, who will also report via their own channels. A hard copy version of the General Debate statement is also distributed. Speakers are therefore addressing several audiences at once, who may receive their message through a number of channels both direct and indirect.

Speakers during the General Debate must consider what their statement will convey to each of these audiences. It is partly because of the delicacy of this balancing act that General Debate statements are often carefully drafted. Prominent international meetings like the General Debate at the General Assembly are important platforms used by governments to communicate to their own populations that they are respected by other governments, engaged in noble causes, supportive of national interests and principles and constrained by external factors beyond their control from delivering to their people everything the people might wish.

The inevitable consequence is that some of the time will be devoted to addressing a speaker's domestic audience and other audiences of special interest to his or her government, but of less interest to the meeting.



USG for Economic and Social Affairs, Wu Hongbo, addresses the Second Committee at the opening of the Committee's General Debate

As the GA session moves beyond the General Debate, the intensity of media coverage declines sharply. When it moves to committee stage, the public and observers are often excluded or at least their numbers are much reduced. When discussion and negotiation move to the corridors and back rooms, there is no public record and the only 'ears' are those of the participants in that particular encounter. Through this progression, the audience delegates are effectively addressing narrows considerably.

Yet, even when the public and other external audiences are no longer prominent, delegates are still not drafting their remarks for a uniform audience. For example, in the course of a negotiation, whatever one delegations says will be heard simultaneously by those delegations that share their views, by those that hold opposite views and by the undecided. As a consequence, delegations need to consider the effect of their comments on the following three questions:

- Will it encourage those whose views are supportive of their views to maintain their support and confidence?
- Will it help win over the undecided?
- Will it deter, discourage or win over those who are promoting different views?

MUN delegates must also take into consideration the audiences they are addressing and the impact their statements will have on negotiations with other delegates.

Cultural sensitivities

Delegates representing their countries at UN meetings must never forget that they come from very different cultures. Many things which are part of normal exchanges in their national culture may be out of place at an international conference, invite misunderstanding and give unintended offence.

At MUN simulations delegates are representing countries that they may be unfamiliar with. One of the benefits of participating in a MUN simulation is the exposure it

provides to other cultures and the opportunity it provides to meet and become friends with students from other countries. This experience will hopefully lead to a greater awareness of cultural sensitivities.

Engaging the Audience

Engaging the audience When listening to the radio, we can often tell when a text is being read to us. There can be something monotonous and unengaging about a text that is being read to an audience. In an international conference delegates often speak from a prepared text. The challenge is to disguise that fact and avoid a dull or disengaged delivery.



Secretary-General delivering a speech

Part of the answer is to make eye contact with your audience or at least, if you cannot look fellow delegates in the eye, to look the Chairman in the eye. This should be deliberate, meaningful looks, synchronized with meaningful pauses in your delivery or points of emphasis. Think also about which words to stress, again both to aid your listeners' understanding of what you are saying and to emphasize important words.

Some delegates become highly proficient at memorising their statements and delivering them with apparent spontaneity; others become skilled at reading without giving any sign of doing so, either in their voice or their movements.

Speed

Inexperienced public speakers have a tendency to speak too fast. This is particularly undesirable at international conferences. Your interventions should be much slower and with longer pauses than in normal conversation.

You want to retain the attention of your listeners and too fast a delivery will cause

many to 'tune out'. Some listeners may be listening to you in a language of which they are not native speakers. They will have a better chance of understanding if you do not speak too fast.

Adequate pauses are also important for the same reasons. They are important for helping comprehension, especially by non-native speakers of the language you are using and also for helping everyone understand you if the language you are speaking is not your native tongue.

It is far preferable for you to shorten your statement even if this involves cutting important elements, than to speak so quickly that what you say is not understood by the audience.

In informal meetings you can speak slightly faster, but do not forget that being understood requires pauses and rhythm in your speech.

Emotion

To engage your audience it is important to show that you are engaged by your remarks. The sentiment that will most effectively transmit your message and make it resonate is sincerity. If you can find ways to communicate your sincerity, this will help your message leap over cultural divides and political divisions.

Another emotion is even easier to transmit across cultural divides, but is highly inimical to achieving a constructive outcome: anger. If you convey an impression of being angry or even merely irritated, you will immediately lose dignity and respect. People will also think you have lost control and consequently that you are unreliable. In addition, they will see your state of mind and temperament as inimical to the prospects for agreement and therefore to their own objectives for the conference.

Somewhere in between highly desirable sincerity and seriously self-damaging anger lies passion. In extreme cases, well-controlled passion for a cause (that others can identify with) can be an important asset in conference interventions. But if it is manifested too often, for causes that do not warrant it and if it is not restrained by a sense of realism and a willingness to take account of the concerns of others, it rapidly becomes a negative, hindering your ability to sway the conference.

And it is the other delegates who will judge, by their own sympathies and values, whether you have crossed these lines. The conclusion is that passion may inspire your actions, but if so, in most situations it is best to disguise that fact.

Formality

As previously noted, the essential requirements are dignity (because you are representing an entire nation) and conformity to the customs and rules of the particular conference in which you find yourself (because that is the general expectation of your audience and what they are best equipped to cope with; it is also a mark of respect for your audience). The level of formality in a conference will vary as the conference unfolds: opening and closing ceremonies and the General Debate tend to be the most formal, while the committee stage tends to be less formal than Plenary and small group meetings are even less formal. This applies to the style of speech as well as to all other aspects. One constant however is old-fashioned politeness. This consists of at all times showing respect for other delegations as individuals and for the governments, states, nations and causes they represent.

Forms of Address

naturally, it is important to address the Chairman by his/her correct title, as set out in the conference documents. In committees of large formal conferences, it is 'Chairman'. It would be incorrect to address someone whose title is 'Chairman' as 'Chairperson'. Adding 'Mr' (or 'Madam') before 'Chairman' is to increase the formality by one step. The one variant on '(Mr or Madam) Chairman' that is correct (but not widely used) is 'Mr (or Madam) Chair'.

As the Chairman has 'given' you the floor, the first words most delegates utter are 'Thank you (Mr or Madam) Chairman (for giving me the floor).' Thereafter, in English, it is customary to start your first sentence with the appellation of the person you are addressing –in this case '(Mr or Madam) Chairman,...' Thereafter, the word(s) '(Mr or Madam) Chairman' can be sprinkled throughout a statement, to signify paragraphs or to emphasize particular points (e.g. 'My delegation will never, Mr Chairman, abandon...')

Addressing other interlocutors

As the Chairman is the personification of the Committee, it is normal and widely understood that the real interlocutor when you address the Chairman is usually the Committee as a whole.

But sometimes you wish to direct your remarks to another delegation or a limited number of delegations or conceivably some other party such as the secretariat. The convention that all your remarks should be addressed to the Chairman means that you can only do this indirectly.

In other words, in formal debate you speak of others only in the third person. However, they understand that you are speaking to them. This usage has a parallel in the tradition in many European languages of using the third person as the most formal and polite way of speaking to people (e.g. the Spanish 'Usted' and in English 'your Majesty'). In the most formal conferences (e.g. the General Assembly or the Conference on Disarmament), the tradition is to refer to others exclusively as 'the Distinguished Representative of [name of country]'. To omit the word 'Distinguished' would be a significant faux pas, and possibly a deliberate slight.

Your use of the 'correct' forms of address is the most elementary way to show respect for the conference and the other delegates.

Preparation, Purpose and Structure

Preparation

Everything you say should be premeditated and discussed with other delegations as much as possible before you take the floor.



GMUN delegate delivering a speech in his committee

If another delegate says something to which you feel you must respond, you do not have to put your nameplate up immediately. Take your time to prepare that response, consulting, if it is useful, with other delegations before asking for the floor. Every delegation has a right of reply but remember that if you choose to exercise this right you must wait until the end of the Speakers' list to respond.

The need for careful premeditation also means that you should, wherever possible, write down the exact words you intend to use or at least the headings and key phrases. You may also decide, if warranted, to give a copy to selected delegations so as to increase the chances that they will understand you well.

Purpose



GMUN delegate addressing the Fourth

Committee

Every intervention will either advance or retard the general debate, push it in one direction or divert it into another and in other ways determine the outcome of the conference. You therefore need to carefully consider what you will achieve by speaking at any given moment. A decision not to speak is often the most effective way of advancing your objectives.

If you do speak, you need to be clear as to the purpose and likely effect of your intervention. You should ask yourself:

- What am I trying to achieve by making this statement?
- What am I trying to avoid?
- Can my words be misunderstood, give offence, or be misrepresented so as to harm my objectives?

The transition between debate and negotiation is seamless. Debate is discussion; negotiation is a joint effort to develop a text that can be agreed and that incorporates your objectives as far as possible.

Debate therefore can:

- have the same objectives as negotiation
- prepare the way for negotiation or
- shade into negotiation.

Negotiation:

- can take place in formal or informal settings
- is subject to the same rules as apply to debate and
- the target audience is the same as in debate.

The distinction between the two is therefore only a matter of form -- but, as such, is important.

Structure

Interventions are easier to understand and more persuasive if they are structured. Structure in an intervention means attention to such factors as how the beginning, middle and end of what you say relate to each other; how your ideas or arguments are developed; the sequencing of points; the balance between different points and other such factors.

A time-tested way of developing an argument is to:

- proceed step by step
- introduce new ideas one at a time
- start from familiar and widely accepted ideas
- relate new ideas to that benchmark (i.e. show that they are consistent with it or a necessary departure)
- frame proposals as contributions to a common goal
- refer to principles only when these are universally accepted
- be as specific and limited as possible and
- close off unwanted extensions of your proposal.

POSITION PAPERS²

A MUN Position Paper, also known as Policy Paper, is a strategic document that gives an overview of a delegates country position.

A good MUN Position Paper has three parts:

- 1) Country's Position on the Topic
- 2) Country's Relation to the Topic
- 3) Proposals of Policies to Pass in a Resolution

The following guide will show you how to write an excellent Position Paper, make the right impression to your chair and fellow delegates while achieving your overt, and covert, goals.

The Purpose of a Position Paper

1. Show chairs you've researched and successfully turned facts into a strong, country-specific case
2. Make a first impression with the other delegates, to present yourself in the manner you want to be viewed
3. For you to sort your thoughts and research
4. Have a fact and example sheet that you know, available to use in speeches

² <http://www.munofmalmo.org/mun#:~:text=Overview,a%20range%20of%20relevant%20issues.>

5. Read what other delegates wrote to best strategize what course of action will get the best majority to pass your resolutions

Goals of a Position Paper

1. Show **your country's unique understanding of the issue being discussed.**
2. Show **your country's previous relationship with the topic** (preferably with relevant examples).
3. Show **policies and ideas that your country would like to see in the resolution.**

As most position papers are limited to one page, a minimum of one paragraph should be devoted to each of the aforementioned goals, and there should be clear transitions from paragraph to paragraph.

The following position paper outline is universal, with options to expand in specific sections if you see it is needed.

The Sections of a Good Position Paper

A position paper is the result of proper preparation and [research for your Model UN conference](#). Once you finish researching, follow the position paper guidelines (the conference should provide you with these). With the formatting instructions in mind, follow the instructions below to produce a high-quality position paper.

Model UN Position Paper Structure

- 1) How you / your country sees the situation/problem in general
- 2) Your country's relation to the topic
- 3) What you want to pass in your MUN resolution

1) Your Position on the Topic Being Discussed

- To answer the question "how to start a Position Paper", keep in mind that you are not only sharing your position, but also introducing the reader to see the topic being discussed from your eyes.
- To establish your position, start with a brief history of the situation / problem the committee will be discussing (How you see the situation / your position on the topic).
Define what you see as the challenge to the global community (or at least what some of them face). Keep in mind that your goal is to meet this challenge by the end of the paper.
- Frame the issue to be discussed as something that does not only pertain to your country but, ideally, also the other countries you would want to support your policy.

- It helps to keep in mind that you will not get support for your clauses, or pass a resolution, alone. It is only if other countries see the topic the same way you do, that they will want to join you to implement your solution.

Example of Position

Country: Angola

Committee: The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Topic: Improving Access to Clean Water

The Republic of Angola believes consistent access to clean water is a basic human right. Some countries have an abundance of water, such as: Canada, Scotland and Switzerland. Others have next to no water, such as: Yemen, Libya and Djibouti, or low rainfall like Namibia and Sudan which creates water scarcity and desertification. The solution to all of these problems is the weather control that comes from cloud-seeding, with richer countries already reaping the benefits. The National Center of Meteorology and Seismology (NCMS) witnessed an increase in rainfall of 10%–15% in polluted air and 30%–35% in clean air. China uses cloud seeding over several increasingly arid regions including Beijing, the capital. In 2017, the United Arab Emirates launched 235 cloud-seeding operations by five cloud-seeding planes based in Al Ain. The use and success proves the technology works, but it is only accessible to those who can afford setting up the mechanisms to cloud seed, or pay for the chemicals from companies like Bayer and DowDuPont Inc, who control the patents and sales rights.

2) Your Country's Relation To The Topic

- Presentation of the policies your country has used to deal with the issue in the past. You should also describe the successes or failures of those policies (Your country's previous relation to the topic and the precedents it set).

Note: This is also the place to write previous actions your committee has with the topic **ONLY IF** it is relevant to how your country introduces itself. Otherwise, you are repeating factual information that is not related to you introducing your position. ***Writing facts that do not forward your case is a trap many fall into.***

In the cases where your country has a strong link to the issue, the examples in the 2nd paragraph should be about your country's connection to the specific issue. If your country has no direct relation, see if similar countries to yours, or countries with similar positions, have a relation to the topic. You can also conduct research to find out if your country has a relation to a similar topic, from where you can draw inspiration and a direction to justify your policies. (More on this in our article about ['How to effectively represent your country'](#))

Example of Relation

Country: Angola

Committee: The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Topic: Improving Access to Clean Water

Angola's history is scarred with conflicts arising from the abuse and mismanagement of natural resources, such as iron ore, petroleum, uranium, and diamonds. Angola is oil-rich while our people are dirt-poor. We stand at 149 out of 186 on the 2016 Human Development Index poverty scale. In rural areas, which contain 11.4 million people (38.5% of our total population), only 6% of households having access to electricity and 38% do not have access to safe water sources. Approximately 15 out of every 100 children do not survive beyond the age of five, leaving us with a child mortality rate is around 17%. These challenges are especially difficult for our president Joao Lourenco, who entered the office in September 2017. President Lourenco biggest challenge is reforming 38 years of cronyism and corruption under former President José Eduardo dos Santos. During his 38 years in power, infrastructure has not been developed while tens of billions of petrodollars disappeared. The 2014 oil slump made our situation worse reaffirming that we are unable to pull ourselves up on our own. Additionally, we do not get enough rain. We only get 32 days of rain with more than 0.1mm of rainfall meaning only 2.7 days of quality rain, sleet, and snow per month. Not enough to maintain adequate crop yields.

3) Extra Supporting Material

Sometimes, a Position Paper will need a 4th paragraph of extra supporting material covering additional angles that don't fit into the main three. This can be a case study, some topic-specific information about your (or another) country. It can be hard data needed to support paragraph 2 or justify paragraph 3; this 4th paragraph still comes before the final section where you describe your desired policies.

The key is that the 4th paragraph needs to display a clear contribution to the Position Paper, show clear thinking and, in the end, be supporting of the Call to Action/policy that is being advocated for. Collectively, all of the sections of the Position Paper should show how the delegates unique, country-specific research and analysis furthers the understanding of what was originally read in the committee study guide.

Example of Extra

Country: Angola

Committee: The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Topic: Improving Access to Clean Water

The global system that depends on technologies provided by companies like Corteva is strongly entrenched in the Sub Saharan agriculture sector, as well as all over the world. The four biggest companies, Bayer-Monsanto, ChemChina, Corteva and Syngenta have 59 percent of the world's patented seeds, 64 percent of all pesticides and held near-monopolies over other agrichemicals. The use of these crops and chemicals has become fundamental to grow corn in Tanzania, potatoes in Kenya and other crops in sub-Saharan Africa throughout their diverse range of crops and terrains. This position of power persists because the sub-Saharan farmers are similar in their lack of access to best practices, techniques, technologies, finances and

markets. This lack of skills is combined with limited resources results in the agriculture sector that is as under-development in agriculture as it is dependent on companies like ChemChina.

4) Proposal – What You Want to Pass in a Resolution

Give an outline of possible / likely solutions that your country proposes and would advocate to see implemented during the Model UN simulation.

Do this within the limits of what your particular committee can do (What you would want to pass a resolution about).

If you want to do additional actions beyond the mandate of your committee, you can outsource them to other committees. If this is an integral part of your strategy they should also go here.

In the Proposal section, you can either commit to one strong Call to Action, a few different policies or two extreme red lines, which you say you intend to work between. Remember, while you do not need to fully commit yourself to what you write in your Position Papers, it is important that you show the margins within which you will be operating at the conference. Doing this shows there is thought behind your actions and gives you more credit with the chairs for diplomatic progress. It is thus strongly advisable that you not write something that you will directly contradict through your actions in committee sessions.

What is a Policy?

A policy is a course of action proposed, or adopted, by a government, party, business, or individual. Your policies are a Call to Action telling the UN officials, who get the resolution, what to do.

You want your MUN policy to be clear, concise, and **SMART**.

The SMART MUN Policy

SMART is an acronym to describe the criteria needed to set policy goals.

Specific – Target a specific area for improvement in your policy.

Measurable – Suggest an indicator of progress once the policy is in place.

Actionable– Specify what action this policy will do.

Realistic – Given available resources and committee mandate, ensure your proposed policy can realistically be attained.

Timely – Specify when the result(s) from your proposed policy can be achieved, or when to revisit.

Example of Proposal

Country: Angola

Committee: The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Topic: Improving Access to Clean Water

Angola advocates for a UN-sanctioned policy that gives permission to dry developing countries to make generic replicas of their patented chemicals at a fraction of the cost to achieve water independence. An example of these technologies belongs to German rainfall enhancement leader WeatherTec Services GmbH. WeatherTecs cutting edge technologies to improve water access are cheaper than many of their competitors but the operating costs start at 11 – 15 million Euros a year. Angola does not believe the United Nations should subsidize the cost of the chemicals, as the subsidy is a temporary solution and it would take funds from other important programs while leaving the corporations with the same level of control. Today, aside from South Africa, none of us can afford cloud seeding. We can cloud seed on our own if freed from the shackles of patent laws that benefit the rich. Dupont made net sales of \$62.5B in 2017, by charging prices which the poorer dry countries could never afford. The UN should allow the relevant member states to locally produce WeatherTecs technologies so we can join the ranks of self-sufficient nations who can provide for themselves the basic water needs to survive.

The PReP Formula for Successful Position Papers

PReP stands for **Position, Relation, extra & Proposal**, which are the essential parts of every position paper. **PReP** will help you remember the formula.

Position – Your view / interpretation of the issue being discussed. (Paragraph 1)

Relation – Your connection to the topic being discussed. (Paragraph 2)

extra – The optional 4th paragraph which can contain extra information you feel is critical to your case, but doesn't naturally fit into one of the other three paragraphs. This paragraph still comes before the one containing your policies.

Proposal – The practical policies you would want to see in the resolution. (Paragraph 3)

The PReP Strategy

Tool tip

With the **Proposal (paragraph 3)**, you solve the issue shown in your **Position (paragraph 1)** with the tools and relevance you set up in your **Relation (paragraph 2)**. (The examples used in paragraph 2 should, preferably, also show the policy margins of your country).

The policy outlined in the final section of the Position Paper should show ideas that address the issues outlined in your **position** associated with the committee topic (as should have been specified in the first paragraph). This position should be justified by the country's **relation** (or guesstimate **relation**) to the topic (the second paragraph). These should be used to justify the policy proposals you outline in the third paragraph. Each of these paragraphs should try to have as much unique information as possible that can't be found in the committee study guide (because everyone in the committee should

theoretically know that information). Obviously, your paper should have some connection to the main issues of the topic, but if you feel the paper should go in a different direction, that is completely your right.

Topic: Finding the cure for the Zika virus

Country: Greece

While this topic is one that is important, the delegate of Greece can decide that he doesn't want his country to fund viruses they don't have and only exists half a world away. In such a case, we would see:

Position (First paragraph): How the global community spends collective money on local issues.

Relation (Second paragraph): How Greece doesn't have the money to spend and how it has local diseases and problems at home.

Extra (Fourth Optional Paragraph): Optional paragraph could include data on regional diseases that broke out in neighboring countries and remain a viable threat for Greece.

Proposal (Third paragraph): Passing laws that would have localized diseases with body counts that don't cross the tens of thousands, to be funded by local unions. There can also be a second idea that the World Health Organization divert extra funds instead of countries collectively forking out money.

Pro Tip

There is no set amount of space each section needs to have. Some Position papers need a longer first section while others need double the space for the policy. What is certain is that no paper can miss any of the sections (except the extra part) and each one should be developed to at least 25% of the paper.

Practicum: The four-step plan to implement PReP

Writing a Position Paper should come after you finish your [MUN research](#). Once you have completed that (and especially if you haven't), follow this three-step plan and don't over complicate things.

1. **Read & Reference Your Study Guide**

The guides provided by the conference are a blueprint for you AND for the Chairs. They will be looking to see if you properly read and interpreted them. They didn't spend a bunch of time writing them for no reason; they are usually quality documents (when you have a bad study guide, check out our article [What to do With a Vague Study Guide](#)). They expect you to use them in some form in your papers, or, if you deviate from them, to see a very good alternative topic interpretation. Reading the guide does not absolve you of your own independent research. YOU NEED TO DO BOTH. The key is to make sure you have a good understanding of everything written in the guide before you begin writing.

–

2. **Find Your Position**

Once you read the guide and understand the issues, figure out how your country relates to the topic (see in our —[How to Represent Your Country](#) guide. This will eventually turn

into your second 'relation' paragraph. You can also search for past resolutions in the UN as well as other sources.

-

3. Choose What is Most Important

-You will find a lot of data when researching your country and the topic. Filtering through it and choosing what is important and relevant is part of the challenge of writing a good Position Paper. To show your most important ideas in the limited space you have, you should aim to show the facts that are the strongest and most relevant to your case. For this reason, try to avoid writing the obvious in your Position Paper and [avoid being off clash](#).

- The right mix of research, and strategic writing, should give the reader the feeling that your Position Paper had much more relevant content than you were able to fit into the paper. You want to show that, while the most relevant of your research is there, it is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to your knowledge.

-

4. Create Solutions

The third paragraph, where you write your policy, is the section where you can get creative. Yes, make sure any solution you come up with is viable and based on research, but don't be afraid to be bold. You are not married to the policies you write in the Position Paper and a chair will understand if you need to deviate for the sake of compromise in the committee. In the Position Paper, the policy paragraph needs to be clear and consistent with the previous two paragraphs.

Types of Position Papers

- Position Papers chairs read
- Position Papers delegates read
- Position Papers everyone will read
- Position Papers no one will read

"Everyone has a story to tell or a product to sell. Know your audience before you open your mouth." - *April Sims*

While not all Model United Nations conferences require Position Papers, many of them do. Whether it be your Chairs, other delegates, a mix or none of the above, knowing who will be your audience will help you craft the right paper and achieve your desired goal.



Position Papers Only The Chair Will Read

When the chair is required to send feedback, this usually means they will have read your Position Paper. This is an excellent opportunity to go all out, regarding the reasons for why your country has the position that it is taking and why you chose the policies that you did. (See our article on 'Properly Represent Your Country?') This is also the place to describe your Call to Action / the policies you want to implement in detail. The reason for such open and clear (but not too clear) writing is because no one but the Chair will read it, meaning

you don't need as much nuance as you would in a public Position Paper or opening speech. This is the place to give your ideas in a clear, unfiltered manner so that the Chair can understand it later when you give a more layered speech during the formal sessions. 'For Chair eyes only' Position Papers are also an excellent opportunity to bring facts and ideas that you want known to the chair, but don't have time to fit into your first speech or two. While not bluntly giving away your country's real motivation, you have a lot more liberty to flag things you're afraid might be missed once the committee session starts.



Position Papers Only Delegates will Read (but not Chairs)

These are Position Papers where all the delegates are able to read each other's work, research and position on the topic at hand. An example of where this can happen, is a large conference (e.g. 200 delegates), where the Position Paper deadline is the day before the conference.

For these papers, you still want to use the Position Paper platform to show why the discussion should focus on where you want it to go. For this reason, the Position Paper should be written more to frame the issue than give concrete detailed policies. Delegates who did not research to the same extent, or have no clear position, can be introduced to your interpretation of the topic. Some may completely adopt it, or at least be familiar with it when they hear it in a speech. (See our article on ['Writing the Killer Speech'](#))



Position Papers Everyone Will Read (Chairs and Delegates)

The Chair + Delegate Position Papers are the most complex to write. In these cases, the ideal situation is for the chair to see what you would want them to see, as if it was written just for them, while at the same time, the other delegates would see a Position Paper customized for them. This is a hard balance to find, but if erring to one side, it is better to build a paper for the delegates and hope the chair has the experience to read between the lines.

One more variable to take into consideration is when Position Papers are written for a gigantic committee (100 or more delegates).

In gigantic rooms, the Position Paper should have at least the basics of the policy, because one might not speak in the first few hours and this might be the only way to get you onto the floor.



Position Papers No One Will Read

Yes, this actually exists in MUN. Some Position Papers will not be read by the Chairs or anyone else at all. However, the conference requires submission to qualify for a diplomacy award. A few conferences will admit that no one will read the Position Papers, but most will not.

Here are a few things to look out for to know your Position Papers likely won't be read:

-When Chairs are not required to send you feedback on the Position Paper

- The deadline is the day before the conference.

In these cases, the main benefit of writing a Position Paper is to organize your thoughts.

However, in practice, a poor document can be just as easily submitted to qualify.



Pitfalls to Avoid

Potential issues you may run into:



Conflicting information

- You may run into a situation where your country does not have a clear policy towards a topic, or they have recently changed policy. For example, with the election in the US and the change from one ideology to another, their rhetoric towards the Iran Nuclear issue changed almost overnight. It would be tempting to follow the words of the leaders in a case like this, but pay attention to actual actions. Nothing has changed.
- When faced with conflicting positions from your country, choose one and stick with it. Use the position that you can find the most research on.



Lack of information

- Sometimes you will be stuck with a topic or committee that your country has little to no interest in. This will cause a lack of information to work with. For example, if you are in UNESCO and the topic is oil drilling in Ecuador's rainforest, you may find that Malawi has not put out any statement on the issue. Don't despair.
- In a situation like this, when your country has no position on a topic, you have to get creative. Find similar issues that affect your country and extrapolate that to the current topic. For the Ecuador example, Malawi can use their position of environmental issues in their own country and throughout the continent as a guide as to how they would respond.
- If you find yourself on a topic with indigenous people's rights, but your country does not have a strong position, find out if there are indigenous groups in that country. Do they treat them well or poorly? Both will give you a direction to take with your Position Paper.



Loose Ends

- There shouldn't be a single sentence that has no purpose. Each fact or statement should support the identity you are constructing.
- If you feel a fact or statement that doesn't seem to have a place, must be in the PP, think about why. If it is so vital that it fits into the first, second, or sometimes the third paragraph. If it does not, perhaps it can be replaced with one which does.

- The information can be used later – this fact or statement can be important and be saved for a later speech. However, the position paper needs to be a self-supporting document and just because it is important doesn't mean it has to go here.

🚫 Strong Words ≠ Strong Conclusion

- You want to end every Position Paper on a strong note, but you do not want to have a conclusion that is overwhelming or concrete. Remember, you will not have many pages, usually, one to get your country's position across. The Chair is not judging your Position Paper on how well you close, they are judging it based on your understanding of the issues and the solutions you bring to the table.
- That being said, it helps to close the paper well. There is an old saying about writing an essay that can apply to a Position Paper as well:
- "Your introduction tells them they will be intrigued. The body is the meat of the argument. The conclusion reminds them that they were impressed."
- How do we apply this to a Position Paper? In the beginning, you frame the problem, not wasting your time giving a detailed research paper. The bulk of the paper is letting the Chair know that you understand your country's relationship to the topic and your proposed solutions. Your conclusion is going to close briefly with a strong, concluding remark. BRIEFLY is the key word here.

Position Paper Format

The format of each Positions Paper, or Position Paper template, varies from conference to conference. However, even if you have no format instructions you do not want to have a messy position paper.

An unorganized paper can:

- Make you look less serious (to chairs and delegates)
- Make your text harder to follow
- Give your reader less incentive to pay attention

Examples of Position Paper Instructions

Position Paper Instructions Example #1:

Write the Position Paper for Example MUN 2026 using the standards below:

- Length must not exceed two pages.
- Margins must be 2.54 cm or 1 inch for the entire paper.
- Font must be Times New Roman, size 12.
- Justify the paragraphs. The left and right margins must both have straight edges.
- Country name / institution committee name must be clearly labeled on the top of the 1st page.
- Agenda topics must be clearly labeled as the title.
- National symbols, such as flags, logos, etc. are deemed inappropriate for ExampleMUN Position Papers.

- Send your document in PDF format.

Position Paper Instructions Example #2:

We ask delegates of ExampleMUN to each produce a position paper before the conference. It must outline their country's position, main objectives and issues they are seeking to address during the conference. Your Chairs will return the Position Papers to you with feedback a fortnight before the conference. This will give you time to ascertain which countries would be considered natural allies for you and for you to read which issues the other delegates may deem important.

A Position Paper the length of one side of A4 should be sufficient to state your position.

Example of Formatted Position Paper

Angola feels that in this day and age, hunger should be a thing of the past. However, in 2018, over 795 million people do not have enough food to lead a healthy, active life. This does not include the half of the world's population, more than 3 billion people, who live on less than \$2.50 a day. For better or worse, the road to more accessible and cheaper food is strongly related to water supply. Some countries have an abundance of water, such as: Canada, Scotland and Switzerland. Others have next to no water, such as: Yemen, Libya and Djibouti, or low rainfall like Namibia and Sudan which creates water scarcity and desertification. The solution to all of these problems is the weather control that comes from cloud-seeding, with richer countries already reaping the benefits. The National Center of Meteorology and Seismology (NCMS) witnessed an increase in rainfall of 10–15% in polluted air and 30–35% in clean air. China uses cloud seeding over several increasingly arid regions including Beijing, the capital. In 2017, the United Arab Emirates launched 235 cloud-seeding operations by five cloud-seeding planes based in Al Ain. The use and success proves the technology works, but it is only accessible to those who can afford setting up the mechanisms to cloud seed, or pay for the chemicals from companies like Bayer, Dupont and Dow Chemical Company, who control the patents and sales rights.

How to Win a Best Position Paper Award

The difference between a *good* and a *great* Position Paper

Good Chairs will give credit to delegates who properly predict the room and are able to guide their policies from the Position Paper to the final resolution. This is because it means that the delegates accurately predicted which direction the discussion would go in, or better still, were able to direct the room in that direction.

This does not mean that the best delegate must have an excellent Position Paper, or perfectly stick to it. Aside from the 'Best Position Paper' award, the actions that take place in the committee are almost completely what Chairs will consider for awards. However, it is

not uncommon that a Position Paper is used as a tiebreaker between two extremely close delegates.

In all these cases, you need to have an opinion. To win the 'Best Position Paper' award, your Position Paper needs to be full of new solutions, it must follow proper format and it has to be concise and 'fluff-free'. Neutrality on an issue, or saying your country has no opinion, is admitting that you will let other delegates take the lead on the issue. It is better to find a policy of a country similar to yours, or your own policy on a similar issue, than saying nothing. More on how to deal with this can be found in our '[Research](#)' and '[How to Represent Your Country](#)' articles.



Top Position Paper Strategies

✓ The R and S strategy

For the entire Position Paper, keep the R and S strategy in mind. This is the RESEARCH and SOLUTION strategy. Try to ensure that every sentence is either research-based or solution-based. This helps cut down on unnecessary sentences.

✓ Facts and Name Dropping

Nothing shows research like using numbers, names and dates. This is especially impressive when it's information that was not in the study guide. Paragraph 1 and Paragraph 2 should be full of these. Remember that it is not enough to simply throw facts onto the page, they need to be connected to the point you are trying to make. Good use of facts, with numbers and names properly capitalized, makes an impressive first impression. Effective use in the paper can be the difference between runner-up and the Best Position Paper award.

✓ New Solutions and Interpretations

- The Chair of your committee will be reading so many Position Papers about the same exact topic that they will be bored to death of seeing the same solutions over and over again. To stand out, come up with a viable, new strategy that other countries may not have thought of. We say viable because it cannot be so outlandish as to be impossible, but it should be something that makes the Chair stop and focus on your paper.
- You can get a little off-the-wall with solutions, as long as they have a basis in reality.
- *Alexander Hamilton employed a similar strategy during the Constitutional Convention in the US. When debating an overhaul of the US government, there were two main plans (the Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan). The New Jersey plan was closer to what was already in place, while the Virginia Plan was a change almost too much for people to handle (though most knew this was the only way to save the nation). In order to discredit the New Jersey Plan, Hamilton boldly proposed a plan so radical, that the Virginia Plan became moderate in comparison.*
- *Hamilton's plan opened the discussion and changed the conversation. It caught the attention of everyone present and moved them towards a solution.*
- *You can do this with a position paper. Even if you do not ultimately get what you want, you have caught the Chair's attention and have become a player in the game.*

✔ **Follow proper format**

While this seems self-explanatory, you would be surprised how many people disregard the format rules given by the conference. Do not ignore this. As Chairs are reading the papers, they will come to expect certain formatting and anything not following the rules will stand out, and not in a good way. Do not get on the Chair's bad side before the conference even begins. You can be sure that they will take points off for improper formatting and keep your name written down for conference time.

✔ **Concise and fluff-free**

Don't waste a single sentence with fluff. Due to the short length, everything you write in a Position Paper should be concise and free of fluff. We know that as students, you have mastered the ability to fluff your way through a paper, but that won't work here. Not if you want to win Best Position Paper.

When you think about how to start a Position Paper, don't go for an intense sound-bite. Flare is not good without substance. Try to be as clear as you comfortably can and reach your important points as quickly as possible.

What Chairs Look For

Similarly to how Position Paper format instructions are given to delegates, Chairs are also given instructions by the Model UN Conference Secretariat on how to evaluate Position Papers. Chairing, from when you [write the study guide](#) until the closure of debate, is a sacred responsibility.

Sometimes, the instructions given by the secretariat on how to evaluate Position Papers are clear and uniform. However, often, a [Chair](#) needs to fill in some gaps between the secretariat's instructions and doing the job in real-time. To better understand the considerations regarding Position Papers, read the following instructions, given by an Under-secretary General of Chairing to their staff.

Dear Chairs,

As of this weekend, all the registered delegates should receive their study guides. While a few delegates will still be getting allocations over the next week, most of them will have received guidelines for how and when to send Position Papers. The delegates are required to send the Position Papers to the committee email from the 20th – 26th of February. Any Position Paper received by the 26th before midnight should receive feedback from one of the Chairs. You are not obligated to give feedback to papers received from the 27th onwards. Hopefully, you should get most or all of the papers before the deadline. Papers received after the 28th are not eligible for the best position paper award, as you may not have time to check them. Position

Papers that are received after March 1st, or not at all, will make the delegate ineligible for an award.

In the Position Papers, we want to see that delegates show they understand (a) the topic (b) their countries positions and history and (c) the policies they propose to solve it / perpetuate it (if they are evil).

The Position Papers which arrive on time should get feedback. This does not need to be more than a few lines per topic. However, we do require you to tell the delegates if they did a good job or if they are lacking in one of the three sections mentioned above. You should also tell them what you want them to improve. In the feedback, where possible, please use examples from their text. To do this most effectively, divide the position papers amongst yourselves and return them when you can. You are not required to send feedback if the delegate sends you an improved position paper. Our main goal is for you to have prepared delegates in your committee, and a rewritten position paper generally indicates better preparation.

If anyone would like more information on how to give feedback, or have any other questions relating to Position Papers, please let me know in a reply to this email.

If your delegates write you asking how to write a policy paper, or any other questions, we expect you to be helpful, courteous and available.

Good Luck

USG Chairing

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Not every MUN conference secretariat will have this level of instruction for their Chairs. Some have more; a few give online workshops about Position Papers, while others give no instruction at all. However, in most cases, the final feedback is left to a Chair's discretion. If your secretariat left you alone, giving feedback on the basics according to the guidelines at the beginning of this article is a good start. You can also give topic-specific feedback, which uses examples of where more research or analyses can be used, based on what you wrote in your [study guide](#).

11 Questions Chairs Ask When Reading Your Position Paper

Question Chairs Ask About A Quality Position Paper

1. Did the delegate reframe the topic to make the problem-specific and relevant to them?
2. Did they show their country's relation to the topic?
3. Did they offer policies that can gain a majority in the committee?
4. Do these policies represent their countries stated interests?
5. Did the delegate use examples?
6. Do the examples go beyond the information in the study guide?
7. Did the writer bring something new, unique and interesting?

Questions You Hope Your Chair Never Asks

1. Was this position paper copied and pasted from Wikipedia or some other online source?
2. If I change the country name on this super vague paper will it be just as "valid"?
3. How inebriated was the delegate when they wrote this?

4. Has the writer even heard of Model UN?

Using these questions to measure the quality of your paper will let you review your work with a Chair's eyes. If the answers to these questions aren't good enough, then you now know what to work on. A few appropriate modifications can result in a complete makeover of a Position Paper, and possibly a much-improved delegate as well.

Closing thoughts on Position Papers

Position Papers are important. Knowing if the Position Paper will be read only by the Chair or by the delegates should be taken into account when choosing what to write and focus on. Position Paper format should also be taken into account, but not at the expense of quality.

A Position Paper should accomplish three goals:

1. Show a country's position on the topic being discussed.
2. Show a country's previous relationship to the topic (preferably with relevant examples).
3. Show policies and ideas that (1) represent the interests of your country and (2) you would ideally like to see in the resolution.

When you're the Chair, give instructive feedback with specific examples. Your comments could be the difference between a lost delegate or an effective one, or between a good conference and a great one.

Lastly, don't forget the PReP strategy:

In Policy (paragraph 3) you solve the issue in Position (paragraph 1) with the tools and relevance you set up in Relation (paragraph 2).

SAMPLE POSITION PAPER

Delegation from Russian Federation

Position Paper for the Human Rights Council

The topics under discussion before the Human Rights Council are: Ending forced child marriage and its impact on gender equality; Fighting intimate partner violence with special regards on marital rape; Ameliorating the Human Rights situation in Saudi Arabia; Finding measures to protect people with disabilities, especially in conflict settings. Completely open to discussion and peaceful negotiations, the Russian Federation wishes to keep in mind the goals that the UN was created for being cooperation, compromise and teamwork in order to achieve reasonable and suitable solutions.

I. Ending forced child marriage and its impact on gender equality

The Russian Federation notices with disappointment that child marriage puts an end to a girl's childhood, takes away the possibility to continue her education and her ability to have the fulfilling life she deserves and exposes her to domestic violence. In order to grant these rights to young women the Russian Federation set the minimum legal marriage age to eighteen years old, as expressed under Section 13 of the Russian Family Code. As a matter

of fact, the Russian society strongly believed in marriage to happen as early as possible for women. However, nowadays, the majority of young men and women are given the chance to pursue their goals, receive an education and settle down before making the decision of getting married. The previously mentioned law and the newly implemented practice have received rather positive support amongst the Russian people. We believe that the challenge given to the questionable tradition of marriage equality is a great step towards the empowerment of women as well as gender equality. However, the delegate of the Russian Federation is fully aware that the practice of forced child marriage is pursued due to a number of cultural specific reasons such as economical, social and political factors as well as traditional views being enforced on the child by the family themselves.

The first step that has to be taken in order to tackle this issue regards the empowerment of women, to be achieved by giving them the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge in order to understand and most importantly exercise their rights. Secondly, a process of implementation of laws and policies that prevent the practice of child marriage should occur. In order to promote gender equality the minimum legal marriage age should be the same for both men and women; this should include a mandatory registration of all marriages, in order to safeguard that such policies and laws are being respected. Previously mentioned programs and actions should strongly respect the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and promote stronger and more effective cooperation between Member States and organizations such as UNICEF; Human Rights Watch and NGOs such as “Girls Not Brides”.

II. Fighting intimate partner violence with special regards on marital rape

Intimate Partner Violence and Marital rape are very current and relevant issues which are unluckily rather underestimated. They are also very hard to control as they happen between the walls of one’s private home. Nevertheless, the opinions of the Russian citizens regarding these issues are becoming stronger and stronger. There are several campaigns in order to finally define Intimate Partner Violence as a crime which will make it easier for it to be punished properly. However, these issues still represent a challenge for the Russian Government. As a matter of fact, the Russian Federation finds it rather hard to implement recommendations such as the ones described in the Special Rapporteur’s 2006 report U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Model United Nations of Malmö 2017 Sample Position Paper Women (CEDAW Committee). The main reason behind this struggles is the fact that such policies interfere with personal affairs regarding a family and they contradict the importance that the Russian population attributes to family in a traditionalistic manner and the actual federal regulations of the Russian Federation. It is problematic for the Russian Federation to cooperate with the United Nations to tackle the issue of Intimate Partner Violence due to a significant lack in funding and any sort of financial support to be dedicated entirely to this cause.

The delegate of the Russian Federation therefore encourages the first step towards tackling the issue of Intimate Partner Violence to involve an increase in the funding for individual

Member States; secondly, inadequate legislation should be aided in order to identify this cause as a crime and the attitude of governments and local authorities must be improved to give this cause the respect and attention it deserves.

III. Ameliorating the Human Rights situation in Saudi Arabia

The Russian Federation would like to acknowledge the Human Rights situation in Saudi Arabia as critical. As a matter of fact, to this day they lack any sort of freedom of expression, association, assembly and religion; they further have significant discrimination against minority ethnic groups and against women. Despite these facts, Saudi Arabia was elected in September 2015 as chair of a key UN Human Rights Council panel, and therefore given the ability to shape international Human Rights Standards and report any violations. The delegate of the Russian Federation would like to express her great disappointment towards such decision seeing as it does not reflect nor respect in any way the principles that the United Nations was founded on. With the worst record in the world in regards to freedom of speech and women's right, Saudi Arabia obtained this important position anyway. The delegate of Russia strongly believes in ameliorating the situation of Human Rights in Saudi Arabia before such mistakes are repeated in the future. The Russian Federation encourages a better and more effective use of the already existent tools and organizations such as the Human Rights Watch and therefore promotes better cooperation with such.

IV. Finding measures to protect people with disabilities, especially in conflict settings

The Russian Federation is proud to announce that a big step towards the protection of the rights of disabled people has been taken in 2012, when we ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). The main aims of the UNCRPD are providing people with disabilities with basic rights such as equality, fair access to education, freedom from violence, abuse and discrimination, and general improvement of the quality of their life. Since 2012 the Russian Federation has been changing the legislation to correspond to the standards set by the UNCRPD. Following the success of the Russian Paralympics team in the 2014 Winter Paralympics Games, the attitude of the Russian Citizens towards this issue also changed and the government is doing more every day to promote the implementation of people with disabilities in everyday society. Despite the efforts already taken, the delegate of the Russian Federation recognizes the existence of room of improvement; we therefore wish to cooperate with other Member States to finalize the achievement of respect of the Human Rights of people with disabilities. We encourage the implementation of specific laws recognizing the rights as well as providing suggestions on possible action-based plans to implement in the Member States themselves; in conclusion, we suggest the use of

Further information³

This section provides links to other sources of information of use in preparing for a MUN conference.

You can also find links to video resources here.

UN at a glance

The United Nations Charter: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter>

History of the UN

Charter: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/history-of-the-un/preparatory-years>

The Founding of the United Nations: A photographic exhibition to commemorate 60 years of the UN Charter: <http://www.un.org/av/photo/un60/index.html>

Milestones in United Nations History, Selected

Chronology: <http://www.un.org/en/sections/history/milestones-1941-1950/index.html>

Text of Declaration of St. James Palace: <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/imtjames.asp>

Text of the Atlantic Charter: <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/atlantic.asp>

Text of Declaration by the United Nations (1 January 1942): http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/decade03.asp

Text of the Moscow Conference, October 1943: <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/moscow.asp>

Text of the Teheran Conference, December 1943: <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/tehran.asp>

Text of Dumbarton Oaks Conference, October 1944: <http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/policy/1944/441007a.html>

Text of Yalta Conference, February 1945: <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/yalta.asp>

United Nations Photo: <http://www.un.org/av/photo/unhistory/index.html>

³ <https://www.un.org/en/mun/model-un-guide>

UN General Assembly

Current session of the General Assembly

General Assembly resolutions

General Assembly Rules of Procedure

The PGA Handbook: A practical guide to the United Nations General Assembly

Dag Hammarskjöld Library Research Guide

Different Phases in Implementing Main Committee Workplans: A presentation for MUN New York Workshop 2013

UN Security Council

Overview of the Security Council

Security Council resolutions

Provisional Rules of Procedure

Security Council Working Methods Handbook

Introduction to the Work of the Security Council: A presentation for MUN New York Workshop 2013

UN Documents

Overview of UN Documents: <http://research.un.org/en/docs>

How to find UN Documents: <http://research.un.org/en/docs/find>

UN Document

Symbols: <http://research.un.org/content.php?pid=320836&sid=2626142>

Tools and Resources for Accessing UN documents: A presentation for MUN New York Workshop 2013

Other Online Resources

UN Bibliographic Information System (UNBISNET): <http://unbisnet.un.org/>

Official Document System (ODS): <http://documents.un.org/> (complex search screen) or <http://www.un.org/en/documents/ods/> (Google search)

UN Member States on the Record: <http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/unms><

Press Releases: <https://www.un.org/press/en>

Daily Journal: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/journal.asp>

UN Terminology database (UNTERM): <http://unterm.un.org/>

UN-I-Que database: <http://lib-unique.un.org/DPI/DHL/unique.nsf>

Additional Resources

The UN Yearbook: <http://unyearbook.un.org/>

Human Resources_Part 1: A presentation for MUN New York Workshop 2013

Human Resources_Part 2: A presentation for MUN New York Workshop 2013

UN Apps

Complete list at <http://www.unric.org/en/apps-directory>

Language app: UNEPApp