



# Model United Nations University Resources

**UNA-UK's guide to running and participating  
in a Model United Nations**

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## Introduction to the Booklet

Every year more than 400,000 students from primary schools and universities participate worldwide in Model UN conferences. These events are simply a role-play of UN meetings and are usually based on the Security Council or General Assembly committees. Participants assume the role of national ambassadors or representatives to debate and seek to solve global issues.

Events can last from a few hours to a week and can involve people of all ages. Universities may hold events within a student society or with all students studying a particular subject. Model UN events can cover a whole city or region and many national and international events are held throughout the world.

It's great fun, giving you the opportunity to meet new people, while also helping you to develop and demonstrate key skills such as public speaking, teamwork and negotiation.

We've created this booklet to assist all those organising and taking part in Model UN events. The first half is primarily targeted at those wishing to put on a Model UN event themselves. The second half gives broader advice on how to participate in an MUN event. While both sections should be fairly comprehensive, here are some **further resources** giving more information on Model UN:

- Answers to your top five questions about Model UN – [una.org.uk/globe](http://una.org.uk/globe)
- UNA-USA's Model UN resources - [unausa.org/global-classrooms-model-un](http://unausa.org/global-classrooms-model-un)  
What is Model United Nations? - [bestdelegate.com/what-is-model-united-nations/](http://bestdelegate.com/what-is-model-united-nations/)

If you would like to attend a Model UN event but don't know where to start looking, here are two websites which can direct you to **local and worldwide events targeted at university students**. A key organisation to note is the London International Model United Nations, one of the largest organisations offering Model UN.

- London International Model United Nations – [limun.org.uk](http://limun.org.uk)
- University Conference Database - [bestdelegate.com/university-conference-database/](http://bestdelegate.com/university-conference-database/)

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# Introduction to the United Nations

## What is the UN?

The UN is an international organisation of sovereign states, containing nearly every country in the world. Only independent states may become members of the UN. It was created in the wake of World War II – in 1945, 51 states (including the UK) signed the UN Charter, and became the founding members of the UN. Because of the end of colonialism and the break-up of countries such as the USSR and Yugoslavia, the number of independent countries grew. Currently, the UN has 193 member states.

The UN provides an opportunity for the independent states of the world to discuss global issues which affect them both individually and collectively. The UN aims to seek solutions to issues, conflicts and crises in a peaceful manner. The UN Charter is a set of guidelines which explains the rights and responsibilities of member states.

**The UN has four purposes, which are contained in Article 1 of the UN Charter:**

1. **To maintain international peace and security**, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace;
2. **To develop friendly relations among nations** based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace;
3. **To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems** of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion; and
4. **To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations** in the attainment of these common ends.



The purposes are upheld by certain principles, contained in Article 2 of the UN Charter, which apply to the UN as an organisation and to the individual member states:

1. The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members.
2. All Members, in order to ensure to all of them the rights and benefits resulting from membership, shall fulfil in good faith the obligations assumed by them in accordance with the present Charter.
3. All Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered.
4. All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.
5. All Members shall give the United Nations every assistance in any action it takes in accordance with the present Charter, and shall refrain from giving assistance to any state against which the United Nations is taking preventive or enforcement action.
6. The Organization shall ensure that states which are not Members of the United Nations act in accordance with these Principles so far as may be necessary for the maintenance of international peace and security.
7. Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state or shall require the Members to submit such matters to settlement under the present Charter; but this principle shall not prejudice the application of enforcement measures under Chapter VII.



The UN Charter provides for the suspension or expulsion of a member state which does not adhere to the Charter principles.

## Main UN bodies

### General Assembly

The General Assembly is the main deliberative organ of the United Nations. It is composed of representatives of all member states, each of which has one vote. Decisions on important questions, such as those on peace and security, admission of new members and budgetary matters, require a two-thirds majority. Decisions on other questions are by simple majority.

There are various [subsidiary organs](#) within the General Assembly. These include the [Disarmament Commission](#), the [Peacebuilding Commission](#) and the [Human Rights Council](#).



### The Secretariat

This is an international staff working in duty stations around the world that carry out the diverse day-to-day work of the Organization. It services the other principal organs of the United Nations and administers the programmes and policies laid down by them.

The duties carried out by the Secretariat are as varied as the problems dealt with by the United Nations. These range from administering peacekeeping operations to mediating international disputes, from surveying economic and social trends and problems to preparing studies on human rights and sustainable development.

Secretariat staff also inform the world's communications media about the work of the United Nations, organise international conferences on issues of worldwide concern; and interpret speeches and translate documents into the Organisation's official languages.

## Security Council

The Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is so organised as to be able to function continuously, and a representative of each of its members must be present at all times at United Nations Headquarters. The Presidency of the Council rotates monthly, according to the English alphabetical listing of its member States.



There are five permanent members of the Security Council – China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States. There are ten non-permanent members who serve two-year terms and are elected by the General Assembly in regional groups, to ensure that each region is represented.

The Security Council's functions and powers are:

1. To maintain international peace and security in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations;
2. To investigate any dispute or situation which might lead to international friction;
3. To recommend methods of adjusting such disputes or the terms of settlement;
4. To formulate plans for the establishment of a system to regulate armaments;
5. To determine the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression and to recommend what action should be taken;
6. To call on Members to apply economic sanctions and other measures not involving the use of force to prevent or stop aggression;
7. To take military action against an aggressor;
8. To recommend the admission of new Members;
9. To exercise the trusteeship functions of the United Nations in "strategic areas"; and
10. To recommend to the General Assembly the appointment of the Secretary-General and, together with the Assembly, to elect the Judges of the International Court of Justice.

## **Economic and Social Council ('ECOSOC')**

The principal body coordinating the economic and social work of the United Nations and its operational arms. It is serviced by the Department for Economic and Social Affairs. The entire family of United Nations organizations works for economic, social and sustainable development.

The Council's 54 member Governments are elected by the General Assembly for overlapping three-year terms. Seats on the Council are allotted based on geographical representation with fourteen allocated to African States, eleven to Asian States, six to Eastern European States, ten to Latin American and Caribbean States, and thirteen to Western European and other States.

The work of ECOSOC is carried out through Functional and Regional Commissions. Functional Commissions address specific topics, whereas Regional Commissions address issues specific to certain geographic areas. Commissions have working groups and other sections to research, discuss and investigate problems. These are made up of member countries' representatives, but draw on independent experts for information and advice.

## **International Court of Justice ('ICJ')**

The ICJ is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. It was established in June 1945 by the Charter of the United Nations and began work in April 1946. The seat of the Court is at the Peace Palace in The Hague, Netherlands. Of the six principal organs of the United Nations, it is the only one not located in New York.

The Court's role is to settle, in accordance with international law, legal disputes submitted to it by States and to give advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by authorised United Nations organs and specialised agencies.

The Court is composed of 15 judges, who are elected for terms of office of nine years by the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council. It is assisted by a Registry, its administrative organ.

The ICJ is not the same as the International Criminal Court ('ICC'). The ICC is not a UN court and it hears cases against individuals accused of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The ICJ hears only disputes between states.

# For Organisers

## Initial Planning

- Choose a date and time to hold your Model UN and decide how long it will last. Events can range from a half-day informal session to a three day international conference.



- Choose a date and time to hold your Model UN and decide how long it will last. Events can range from a half-day session involving one class in a school to a three day international conference.
- Choose the committee(s) that you will be simulating and a topic to discuss.
- Make sure that a computer will be available for writing and typing resolutions and amendments and that there will be printing and photocopying facilities nearby.
- Delegates should be divided into teams and assigned a country to represent. The section on '[Countries to be included in a Model UN](#)' provides further ideas on which countries to choose.
- For an event lasting a day or more, it is a good idea to ask a local VIP to open the first session. They could be somebody connected with the university – the Head of a Faculty for example. Other options include the local MP, a local councillor or a person who is involved (or has been involved) with the UN or with foreign affairs in general.

## **Roles**

Here are some suggestions on how to divide up the work for your conference (although you may not need some of these, depending on the size of your conference)

### **Secretary-General**

The principal organiser should take on this role. In the UN, the Secretary-General is in charge of the Secretariat. During a Model UN, the Secretary-General is in charge of all the people co-ordinating the sessions and taking messages. The Secretary-General assists and advises the Chairs and acts as an adviser on matters of procedure.

### **Chairs and Reporters**

The Chairs run each committee.

Reporters take notes and assist each Chair with amendments.



### **Advisers**

Advisers help delegations with drafting amendments and operative clauses. These are probably people who have taken part in previous Model UN events.

### **Secretariat**

Members of the Secretariat take notes, assist the President and Chairs with amendments, act as the go-between for delegations during the debate, distribute papers and generally assist with the smooth running of the negotiations.

### **Press**

Participants can act as the press corps, either for the event in general, or attached to certain delegations. The press corps could produce reports of the different delegations' positions in a newspaper or online format.

## Skills for Students to practice

### Research

The emphasis should be on delegates researching their countries and issues themselves. They should learn how to be efficient and to detect bias in information. For more detail, see the participants section on '[Researching your country and topic](#)'

### Public Speaking

Delegates should practise their public speaking skills – in particular, the need to speak slowly and to project their voices when speaking in a large room. Presenting general information about their countries can be a great way for students to practice. You should assign a maximum length for each speech and enforce the limits. Participants could practice answering questions from their peers, as well. For more detail, see the participants section on '[Public Speaking](#)'

### Resolution Writing

Practising resolution-writing should be part of the preparation process and it may even be useful for the delegates to pre-draft preambulatory clauses for use on the day. For more detail, see the participants section on '[Writing a resolution](#)'

### Position Papers

Delegates should be asked to write a position paper, which discusses and explains their country's views on the issue. For more detail, see the participants section on '[Writing a position paper](#)'

### Rules of Procedure

A short Model UN conference may use only very simplified rules of procedure – having an experienced Chair to direct the debate may be all that is necessary. However, for a more complicated conference, rules must be discussed and agreed in advance. Everything will go much more smoothly on the day if everyone is already familiar and comfortable with the way that committee sessions are run and understands their role. For more detail on the standard rules of procedure for Model UN, see the participants section on '[Model UN rules and procedure](#)'

## Organising a One Day Model UN Event

Model UN events can last for as long as you would like - just an hour, half a day, a whole day or three or four days. This is dependent on the amount of time and resources you have to organise the event, as well as the number of delegates who will be participating.

Here is an example of a timetable for a one day conference:

	Section	To do
9.30	Set- up	Organisers arrange flags, country signs and seating (hopefully with tables) in a horseshoe, with countries in alphabetical order and the officers (Chair, reporters and advisers) seated in the open end. Other individuals should be registering delegates and passing out nametags.
9.40	Welcome	Welcome and administrative arrangements from the Secretary General or the organiser
9.45	Introductions	Introductions and short addresses by guest speaker and Chair
10.15	Committee session	Each delegation makes a short speech about its country and concerns, with reference to issues to be debated. Organiser must decide on maximum length of each speech, and the Chair must strictly enforce these time limits.
	Caucus	Delegates should be encouraged to enter an unmoderated caucus at the end of these speeches in order to begin working with states that expressed similar positions and interests or to begin debate.
	Resolution writing	As the session continues, it should turn toward resolution writing. The preamble should be written by the organisers and duplicated in advance, while the committee drafts and debates the operative clauses that they wish to propose.
	Amendments	Once a complete draft resolution has been approved and distributed, delegations suggest amendments or other operative clauses. The Chair should help guide the debate, if they feel it necessary, and encourage the committee to debate substantive issues, rather than nitpicking at the resolution.
	Recap	At the end of the session, the Chair may want to 'recap' the debate and might suggest areas of the issues that have yet to be raised and where compromises will have to be negotiated. The delegates should do the work of finalising the draft resolution, though the Chair, reporters and advisers should be available to help.
12.45	Lunch break	The delegates should remain in character so that they can lobby and

		negotiate with each other. A working lunch, if possible, can be appropriate.
13.45	Committee session	Committees continue to work on completing their draft resolution and debating amendments. About 10 minutes before the end of the session, the Chair should announce that it is time to take a final vote on the resolution, as it has been amended. It may even be possible to have consensus and not need to take an actual vote.
16.00	Closing ceremony	Formal end of the Model UN; appropriate thanks given to all concerned. Chairs should talk briefly about the work done by their committee and may want to mention delegates who were especially outstanding.
16.30	Clean up	

### Rules of Procedure

For a MUN lasting up to one day, there may be no need to adopt especially formal rules of procedure. All that is needed is a Chair (or more than one if you have several committees) who is able to direct the discussions towards a consensus and use simple rules to decide on the resolutions and guide discussion.

The committees should aim to produce a draft resolution which can be agreed through consensus. If consensus is not possible, states must vote 'for', 'against' or 'abstain'.

Suggested voting rules are:

- to require a majority to be in favour of a draft resolution or any amendments for them to pass
- to require several sponsors of amendments and draft resolutions (choose an exact number)
- to allow 3 (or more) speakers for and against every amendment, then to vote on whether or not the amendment should be included in the resolution.

Useful discussion rules include:

- allowing delegates to request a period of caucusing or lobbying
- allowing delegates to indicate whether or not they will answer questions after delivering a speech
- having a speaker's list for delegations to determine who speaks next.

## Organising a Three Day Model UN Event

Bigger conferences are likely to include delegates from many universities, some of whom may travel a significant distance to attend. As a result, it is important to keep in touch with your delegates in advance of the conference, by e-mail or by posting information on a website. It is probably a good idea to have more than one topic on each committee's agenda. Some conferences have two and others have three, and topic guides should be arranged in advance to help the delegates prepare.

Conferences that last more than one day may also have to arrange or help delegates find accommodation and probably need to arrange a social event for the delegates. This may be a dinner, renting out a pub or club, a formal or informal dance, a boat party or some other kind of event where delegates can get to know each other outside of committee sessions.

The key to a good, large conference is to have high calibre Chairs for the committees, who can enforce the rules of procedure but allow enough flexibility to encourage the work of the committee. Depending on the size of your conference, and the availability of staff, you may even want to run more than one committee concurrently. Just ensure that your delegates know which committee they will be on and which topics they will be discussing in advance!

### Rules of Procedure

For longer Model UN conferences, and for events with experienced delegates, you may need to agree on rules of procedure in advance. At 70 pages, the UN General Assembly's rules of procedure may seem slightly daunting! However, you should be able to use a slimmed-down version. You will also need to agree on rules of parliamentary procedure, which govern speeches during the conference.



Here is an example of a timetable for a three day conference, based on the 2007 schedule for the London International Model United Nations conference:

DAY 1	Section	To do
12.30- 15.00	Registration	Delegates collect badges, conference handbooks, placards and any other materials.
14.30- 15.30	Opening Ceremony	Includes a welcome from the Secretary-General, a keynote speech by a distinguished guest, introductions, and announcements.
16.00- 16.45	Parliamentary Procedure Workshop	An experienced delegate leads a short training session for new delegates or those who wish to brush up their parliamentary procedure and resolution writing before committee sessions start.
17.00- 20.00	Committee session	Following the roll call, delegates debate and set the agenda. The first few speakers will spend time explaining their country's broad position on the issue and begin to frame the debate, by suggesting that the committee address certain aspects of a problem, its causes and solutions. The committee will probably also spend time in informal debate, either moderated or unmoderated caucusing.  Some conferences encourage delegates to draft resolutions and working papers beforehand and use these first committee sessions as time for delegates to 'lobby' one another to support their ideas. Others prefer resolutions to be the product of the whole committee and do not allow the use of resolutions that have been prepared in advance.
22.00	Social Event	

<b>DAY 2</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>To do</b>
<b>9.00-13.00</b>	Committee Session	By now, committees should be starting to address the heart of their topic and may be using periods of unmoderated caucus to begin writing working papers and/or resolutions. Once these are introduced, the committee can continue discussing the drafts and begin to craft and consider amendments.
<b>13.00-14.00</b>	Lunch Break	
<b>14.00-18.30</b>	Committee Session	The committee should probably be finishing work on the first topic during this session, if two topics are to be discussed. The process of amending the draft resolution should continue and a final vote may be taken.
<b>20.00</b>	Social Event	

<b>DAY 3</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>To do</b>
<b>9.00-12.30</b>	Committee Session	Committees will probably begin working on a second topic during this session. Everything will happen much faster, because of the time constraints and because delegates are more comfortable with each other and with the process.
<b>12.30-13.30</b>	Lunch Break	
<b>13.30-16.00</b>	Committee Session	This is usually the most intense and fast-paced session of the conference. Delegates are rushing to get their second resolution passed and tempers may flare. Delegates who oppose the second resolution may be using the rules of procedure to obstruct the process. This is also a good time to hand out and have delegates complete evaluation forms
<b>16.30-17.00</b>	Closing Ceremony	This is a time for the Secretary-General to thank everyone for attending and for helping with the conference. Chairs may want to speak briefly about the work that their committees accomplished (as well as sharing particularly amusing anecdotes). Some conferences will give out awards, show photos taken over the course of the three days or hold a General Assembly plenary session for abbreviated debate and passage of the resolutions that each committee has written.

## Countries to be included in Model UN

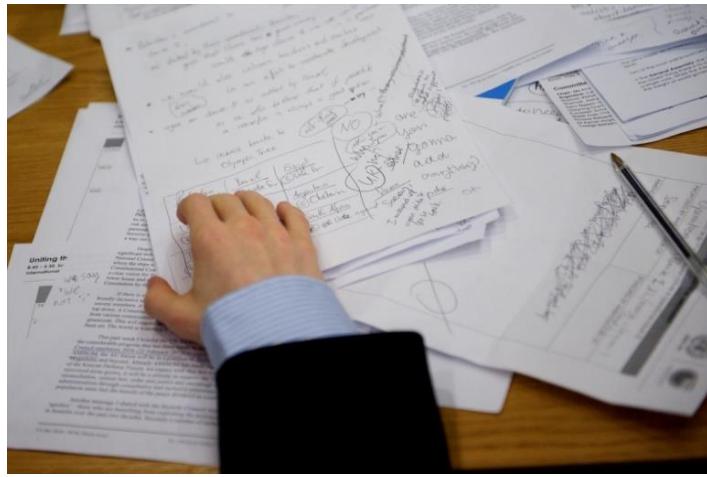
There are 193 Member States of the UN. When choosing the countries for your Model UN, there are various considerations:

- **The number of participants:** each Model UN delegation should ideally have two members.
- **The Model UN agenda:** you should choose countries that will be relevant to the issue(s) you have chosen for your event. For example, a resolution on access to water should include countries from sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, the Middle East, South Asia and Australasia, among others. The countries that you choose should have divergent interests, meaning that they will disagree about the issue under discussion.
- **Geographical spread:** you should aim for a geographically wide range of countries, including at least one country from each continent. The countries that you choose should come from different areas of the continent – for example, if you only choose two African states, do not choose two West African states.
- **Economic spread:** you should aim to include developed and developing countries.
- **Political spread:** you should aim to include countries representing contrasting political and economic systems, including both democracies and dictatorships, as well as pro- and anti-Western countries.
- **States in conflict:** where states have a major current, or historical, disagreement, you should not include only one of them. For example, if you decide to include India, you should also include Pakistan.
- **'Mediator' states:** although you should include states with divergent interests, you should also include some neutral states that can act as catalysts or mediators in order to achieve a consensus acceptable to all. States such as Canada, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway and Finland can play this role.
- **Permanent five:** you should include the Permanent Five members of the Security Council (although no country has a veto in the General Assembly) – China, France, the Russian Federation, the UK and USA.
- **EU Council Presidency:** you should include the country holding the EU Council Presidency, which can speak on behalf of the whole EU on most General Assembly issues.
- **Don't forget the 'little' states:** Model UNs have a tendency to stick to the 'big' states, like always using Nigeria, South Africa or Egypt to represent Africa. It can be more interesting and a bit more challenging to use smaller or simply less-well known states that fulfil the same geographic or other criteria

## Follow-up work

Follow-up work with the completed MUN resolution may be also be appropriate:

- Each delegation could send the resolution to the Embassy or High Commission of the country that they represented, with a covering letter explaining what position the delegation had taken and asking for comments.



- Participants could send the resolution to their local MP, with a request to discuss it with them.
- Participants could ask their MP to forward the resolution and letter to the relevant government department and to send back any reply received.
- Participants could ask their local newspaper to print the resolution, or a letter summarising it, and could monitor any responses. If the subject matter of the resolution is relevant to the local community, participants could ask their local councillor to raise the resolution and discuss it in a council meeting. Representatives of the delegations could attend the debate and be available for questions.
- Finally, particularly for larger conferences, it is always helpful to conduct a review to determine what went well and what didn't, so that the next time you run a Model UN you can make it even better.

# For Participants

## Preparing for a Model UN

Before a Model UN event, delegates must prepare by conducting research on their country and topic.

It is vital that you are able to summarise what you have learned, especially your country's most vital interests and goals. There are two good ways to do this. The first is to prepare a position paper, which should be no longer than two typed pages. You should also prepare a three-sentence version of your position on each topic. Despite the lack of detail, this will be the version of your research that you use most often at your Model UN event.

If you want to have lots of good information to hand, you can also fill out a country and topic fact sheet to help you structure and organise the information in a clear and accessible way. These contain only the most vital data, allowing you to refer to it quickly during a session.

Practise your public speaking by preparing an opening speech (which may closely resemble the long version of your position paper) and giving it in front of your class, family and/or mirror.

Before the event, the members of the delegation need to decide who is giving the speech, who is taking notes on other countries' positions and who is going to negotiate with other delegations. You should always have somebody following the debate as something important could be said at any time

You should also have thought about ways to approach the issues that you are discussing, as well as possible solutions. These ideas should reflect your country's interests and concerns and those of your closest allies. Some conferences will let you bring resolutions that have been written in advance. Even if you cannot use one of these, you should practise writing a resolution.

Read the rules of procedure. There's no better way to ensure that you will feel comfortable and confident when your Model UN event starts!

Finally, make sure that you have everything you need. Keep your research organised and take paper and pens. Also take notepaper. This could be as simple as A4 cut into quarters or you can design notepaper with your country's name/crest/flag/motto, etc. on it.

## Researching your country and topic

Developing and using good research skills are an essential part of any Model UN experience. The success of a Model UN largely depends on the preparation work that you have done, both in learning about the issues that will be discussed, and about the country that you are representing.

A Model UN event is an opportunity to see what cooperation between states could achieve, and also to see why the international community has not solved all the world's problems.

This is why you should be ready to reflect the real views of the country you represent, even if you disagree with them. Only then can you understand the complex reasons why the world is the way it is and what has to change to make it better.

### Notes on sources:

It is very important to learn to spot bias in the information you read, especially online. Always bear in mind the origin and purpose of your source. Check to see where they get their money, who makes up the advisory board or leadership of the organisation and their stated aims.



Some sources may give accurate information, but only about their narrow area of focus. For example, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) is an excellent source of information about environmental issues, but not useful if you are researching health problems.

## Researching for a model UN is a three step process:

### STEP 1: Learning the basics about your country

You should cover at least the following issues:

- Location
- Head of state and/or government
- Type of government
- Major allies and enemies, including membership of intergovernmental organisations
- Broad overview of religion and culture
- Internal and external conflicts
- Other special concerns related to your committee's topics and/or area of expertise



Places to visit:

- The US CIA World Factbook provides up-to-the minute facts about your country and is very useful for finding statistical information.
- The BBC website produces country profiles which are useful as a starting point.
- The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office ('FCO') produces more detailed country briefings.
- The UN Cyber School Bus site produces basic and advanced information on all the member states of the UN, enabling you to compare different countries. The site also provides information about individual countries.
- Get a feel for the type of country that you have been assigned by searching for programmes or books about ordinary life in that country. You may even wish to find blogs written by people who are living in the country or doing development work to get a personal perspective on life in your country, although you must remember that the information you find will only represent one person's experience.
- If you know someone from your country, talk to them!

## **STEP 2: Learning about your topic**

Always start with the delegate guide - this should give you a better idea about which aspects of the topic your organisers would like you to discuss. Read them thoroughly and use the links that are provided.

Other sources:

- Google (or your other favourite search engine). Always evaluate the online sources that you find but, in general, the internet is one of the best places to find up-to-date information for Model UN preparation.
- Online article databases. Search news magazines (e.g. Newsweek, Time, The Economist) or newspapers for well-written and up to date information.
- UN agencies. Most UN agencies (like the UN Development Programme or the UN Children's Fund) issue yearly reports on issues related to their area of expertise, which may include information on individual countries. Choose the agency which is most relevant to your committee's topic.
- NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations) are an invaluable source of information that is usually independent from governments (although not free from bias, generally). It is highly likely that there will be an NGO that does work and research on your issue

## **STEP 3: Combining what you know**

This is the hardest part of preparing for a Model UN conference, but also the most important. It consists of taking what you know about your country and what you know about the topics and using both sets of knowledge to understand the perspective that you will be representing.

You might get lucky and find that your country already has a clearly stated policy on the topics that you are discussing. Good sources for this are:

- See the website of **your country's Permanent Mission to the UN** in New York or Geneva.
- Look at the **website of your country's Embassy or High Commission** (if they are a member of the Commonwealth) in the UK. Also check your country's embassy in Washington D.C., in Brussels or in the capital of your former colonial power because these are often the largest and have the best websites. Your embassy in the USA will probably have an English website. If you cannot find the information you want, email

or write to one of the diplomats at the Embassy or High Commission and ask very specific questions about the country's position on the topic to be debated. You are more likely to get helpful responses if your questions reflect that you have already done some research. The FCO has a list of foreign missions in the UK, together with website and contact details.

- Search for the **website of your country's relevant central government ministry**. Be aware that ministries may have a different name to that which you expected. For example, the US equivalent of the FCO is the Department of State. Also, a single Model UN issue may straddle many ministries. For example, internal water issues in the UK may fall under the Home Office or the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; external water issues may fall under the FCO or the Department for International Development. A helpful starting point is this website, but also use search engines.
- **Newspapers** in your country
- **NGO groups** working in your country may discuss government positions on an issue

However, it is possible that you will not be able to find official information on your subject. This is when things get harder. You will have to think about the relationship between the subjects and your state policy, based on your best (and highly informed) guess.

The best method is to ask yourself questions:

- How is my country affected by this issue?
- What is my country's relationship with states that are especially affected by this topic?
- How has my country voted on similar issues in the past?
- Does my country have special religious/cultural concerns that may lead it to have a specific stance on an issue? (This can be especially useful on human rights topics).

Think about the connections between your country and your topic during this process. Be willing to listen to others who know more about either your topic or country. As long as you play your role with confidence and tact, other delegates should respect what you say.

## Writing a Position Paper

At some conferences it is a requirement that delegates submit a position paper to the committee chair at the start of the session. However, even if you don't have to, it's a good idea to do it anyway as part of your conference preparation. Position papers are a good way of sifting through and distilling all the information you discover through research into a simple format that serves as a valuable reference both for yourself, and at conferences where papers are collected and shared, for other delegates and directors.

### Format for position papers:

Position papers should be about one page long. The position paper is not an exercise in elaborate writing or a demonstration of breadth of knowledge on a topic; rather, it is an opportunity to get straight in your own mind:

- What is your country's position on the key issues?
- What kind of solutions will your country look for in a resolution?

At the top of your position paper you should list the following:

1. Committee Name
2. Topic Area
3. Country

You should then divide the bulk of your paper into two parts:

- I. General Position Statement
- II. Responses to Questions a Resolution Must Answer



Frame your nation's perspective in terms of solutions proposed in the past or the views of regional blocs and other countries that share your position. It is also important to examine prior UN resolutions, decisions, declarations or reports. Statistics and quotes from international documents often give compelling factual support for your arguments.

An excellent position paper will include:

- a) A brief statement on why your state feels the topic is important nationally and globally
- b) A clear and concise statement of your state's position on the topic
- c) An explanation of why your state takes this position
- d) Major UN actions on the topic that your state feels are significant
- e) Suggestions for addressing the topic

## Public Speaking

Giving good speeches is a key skill at a Model UN. Speeches are the most important way of convincing members of your committee to support your points of view and proposed solutions. Those who speak frequently and articulately are most likely to steer the course of discussions in their favour.

Feeling some nervousness before giving a speech is natural and healthy. It shows you care about doing well. But too much nervousness can work against you. The most important thing is to seek and grab opportunities for speaking. Remember that practice makes perfect, and this experience builds confidence, which is the key to effective speaking.

You must also be aware that at different times during a Model UN simulation you will be expected to make different types of speeches:

### Making an opening speech:

As the committee begins, you will normally be asked to make an opening speech. These speeches generally provide broad overviews of your country's views on the topic. You should cite national policy and highlight the facets of the problem you feel are most important.

This can be a great way to win over other delegates right at the outset of the conference. A simple, well prepared and well delivered speech will mark you out as a delegation of importance. You should represent your country accurately, but in a good light, seeking to earn the respect of other countries.

Other delegates will be outlining their national policy as well, so it is important to listen attentively and recognise countries that may agree or disagree with your position.

Open by using the full name of your country. If possible, use your assigned country's official language, e.g. La Republique Française (Republic of France) or Reino de España (Kingdom of Spain).



If the speech is to be delivered as part of an opening ceremony or General Assembly, you should keep it general, highlighting the most important problems that your country faces, particularly those being discussed during committees at the conference.

If your speech is to your committee on a specific topic chosen for discussion, you should spend most of your time talking about how your country is affected by the topic, what your country sees as its biggest concerns with the issue area and suggesting some solutions to the problem (only suggest solutions which would benefit your country, of course!).

The following speech frame will help you to write your speech.

➤ **Describe your country**

Location, poor or rich, special concerns or circumstances (e.g. ongoing civil war, drought, member of the EU)

➤ **Something unique about your country**

Include one or two interesting facts about your country, things that make it unique

➤ **What problems are faced by your people?**

Hunger, clean water, disease, global warming, refugees, aggressive neighbours, conflicts, terrorism

➤ **What help, if any, do you need from the rest of the world?**

Aid, trade, support, expertise, advice, removal of debt

➤ **Why is this topic important to your country?**

Destabilises region, is a cause of poverty, kills lots of people in your country, violates principles that your country thinks are important

➤ **What do you think should be the first step to solving the problem presented by the topic?**

Choose something that addresses the reasons why this topic is important to your country

➤ **What solutions can you propose?**

Be creative!

### **Making a substantive speech:**

After the first hour or two, you should begin to make more substantive speeches, focussing on specific ways in which to handle a problem. Remarks at this time should also be geared toward formulating working papers, or informal documents that suggest solutions to the problem.

The following pattern is a good guideline for making a brief but persuasive speech.

1. **If possible start your speech from a point of agreement.** Try to find an angle with which everybody in the room will agree. ‘We all believe that the sovereignty of states must be respected....’
2. **Then move towards the point of disagreement.** ‘However, if countries fail to protect their own populations then their sovereignty is void. Sovereignty brings with it responsibility, and if countries fail to live up to that responsibility, then the international community has the right to intervene....’
3. **To finish, request a clear-cut action.** ‘Let us pass a resolution that will allow such intervention and commit the international community to preventing massive human rights violations wherever and whenever they may occur.’

Once working papers have been approved and can be discussed, tailor your speech to discussing the merits of the various documents before the committee. Also, look to suggest revisions or wording for draft resolutions, writing a resolution which should be created at this time.

Once draft resolutions are approved and handed out, focus your formal remarks on individual resolutions, supporting those you feel are appropriate and explaining why you may disagree with others. At this time, delegates may be creating amendments to draft resolutions, so your speeches should also cover any specific clauses you feel should be inserted into the draft resolutions on the floor. As the committee moves closer to voting procedure, use your speaking time to explain why you are supporting one or more draft resolutions and why the committee should vote with you.

Finally, remember that when you are in formal debate (using the speakers list) if you finish before your time is up, you can yield the remainder of your time to another delegate or to points of information (questions from other delegates on what you have just said). Opening yourself to questions is a very effective way of dealing with other delegates’ concerns, but can be tricky as you have to think on the spot.

### **Handling points of information:**

Many Model UN conferences permit other delegates to raise points of information, or pose questions to a speaker, if time permits. This is often used when speakers are discussing working papers and resolutions. Normally this will be to clarify a specific area of your stated policy so you can anticipate some question topics, but it is unlikely that you can ever be prepared for every question.

First of all, you can avoid being asked many difficult questions by identifying issues that may bring about confusion among your fellow delegates early in the committee session. More than likely, if other delegates do not understand some aspect of debate, it will come up later as a question.

When you are asked a question, just as in your speeches, try to keep your answers clear and concise. A straight answer is always best, although you may need to be more diplomatic in your tone on more sensitive issues.

If you can't immediately answer a question, instead of saying 'I don't know', which will impress no-one, it is always appropriate to state that whilst you cannot answer right now ('I am afraid that I do not have the full facts to hand'), you will do your best find out and follow up with an answer during caucus. If the question is something of significance to the entire body, you may want to announce that answer (if you have found it) during your next speech.

Finally, remember to remain courteous, no matter how heated the exchange. Points of information usually start with: 'Does the honourable delegate not agree...?'. You could in turn begin by answering 'Argentina thanks the honourable delegate from Switzerland for their question, and we wholeheartedly agree/ but we fundamentally disagree...'. This also buys you a few extra seconds to consider your answer.

### **How to deliver a speech:**

Above all, speeches should be clear and concise. You should know exactly what key points you want to make as, if you're not familiar with those points, your nervousness will increase.

You must decide what style of speech will help you most in remembering these key points. Speeches can be written, improvised or delivered from memory. As speeches at a Model UN are never very long (even opening speeches are normally limited to two minutes), improvised speeches are normally best, as these can be delivered in a more natural and engaging style. But if you are not that confident, write out the entire speech – although this will normally sound more manufactured and contrived, it is better to make your points coherently than to stumble and fail to make them at all.

## **Styles of delivery:**

### **Written speeches**

Written speeches often result in clear, concise statements and offer security for speakers worried about forgetting key points or stumbling through their delivery. On the other hand, written remarks can easily seem rigid or sound scripted to an audience. Relying on written speeches throughout a committee session also means that valuable debate time may be lost as a delegate spends their time writing their next set of remarks.

A written speech should be typed (or neatly printed, if written during a committee session) in a large font and double-spaced. This will help the speaker read the statement without getting lost. Delegates may also wish to mark (by bolding or underlining) certain words to help remind them to emphasise key points, or even pause, take a breath and slow down.

Of course, speaking time can vary during a Model UN committee session and it is often difficult to write prepared speeches to fit these changing lengths of time. If you are using written speeches, it is often useful to prepare remarks for two minutes and then highlight statements that are essential for your argument. If the speaking time turns out to be less than two minutes, you can cut back your speech by focusing only on the points you have highlighted.

One tendency of speakers using written remarks is to place the piece of paper with their notes directly in front of their face, inhibiting eye contact and decreasing their speaking volume. All written items should be printed on either a half-sheet of paper or note cards and held at either the waist or elbow level.

### **Improvised speeches**

Improvised speeches sound more natural than written remarks and often keep the audience's attention better – listeners feel that they are being spoken with instead of being read to. However, when improvising remarks, speakers may ramble or miss important points that should have been said. Practice can prepare a speaker to avoid these mistakes.

When making improvised speeches, it is often helpful to use bullet points to organise your thoughts. These talking points can be written on an index card along with several facts that could be integrated into the speech to provide emphasis or justification for an argument. In addition, it is useful to memorise 'sound bites', or include them on another index card for easy reference.

## **Memorised speeches**

Of the various speaking techniques, memorisation is the most difficult and the most likely to fail in stressful situations. Although delegates are encouraged to memorise a few facts, figures and key statements, memorising an entire speech is not recommended. Speakers who have committed a two-minute statement to memory may not be able to recover if the dais interrupts them or if a delegate in the audience attempts to ask a question. Generally, it is better for students to spend their time researching a topic rather than memorising a speech.

When it comes to the speech itself, here are some tips for making effective, memorable speeches.

### **Before the speech:**

Know the audience. Before the session even begins, get to know as many of the delegates in your committee as possible. It's easier to speak to a group of friends than to a group of total strangers.

Visualise yourself giving your speech. Imagine yourself speaking, your voice loud, clear, and assured. When you visualise yourself as successful, you will be successful.

Realise that people want you to succeed. Audiences want you to be interesting, stimulating, informative, and entertaining. They don't want you to fail.

If you must go to a dais or podium to speak, rise slowly when your name is called out and walk normally (not casually or lazily) up to the dais. Confidently climb up, look at the people all around, smile, and take your stance.

### **During the speech:**

#### **What (not) to say**

Don't apologise. If you mention your nervousness or apologise for any problems you think you have with your speech, you may be calling the audience's attention to something they hadn't noticed.

Concentrate on the message, not the medium. Focus on your message and your audience. If you don't worry about your delivery you will be less nervous and will speak more naturally.

Use appropriate language. Use language that is comfortable for you and the audience. Use words which are natural to you, and phrases which are understood by all. Avoid bookish language, or technical jargon.

## **How to say it**

Always stand when speaking. It helps to project your voice and makes you more visible to the whole committee.

Use hand gestures. Gestures add effect to your speech and help to emphasise certain points. But be careful not to overdo this – if you are waving your arms around like a windmill it will distract from what you are saying.

Look up and make eye contact. Even if you have a prepared speech, make sure that you don't just stare down at your speech without ever looking up – you will not effectively engage your audience, and people will struggle to hear you. Look up and around the room as you deliver sentences, and look into the eyes of people. Move your eyes in slow smooth cycles to cover the entire audience, especially corners. It catches attention and creates rapport – if you can make every member of an audience feel like you're talking directly to them, they will listen and you will get your message across in a powerful way.

Modulate your voice. Bring variations by changing loudness and tone as per the mood of your words and theme of your speech.

Speak articulately, enunciate clearly and have enough volume to fill a room. Many speakers talk too quietly and too fast. Speak up and slow down so that your points can be remembered.

Use humour for an extra flourish. Judicious use of humour can make a good speech great. In your opening speech jokes can be prepared well in advance, but humour in session is far more spontaneous and many brilliant speakers have trouble with using humour. Quite simply, some people have a gift for it and some people do not.

It is not a fundamental part of speech giving, and first and foremost you should always concentrate on getting your key points across. But if you are quick witted and can deliver a joke well, humour can be a sparkling extra touch.

In most Model UNs, you are discussing very serious world issues, so you must be very careful about how and when you use humour. You should also beware of becoming type-cast. If you only give humorous speeches you may be classed as a committee clown and other delegates may have trouble taking you seriously.

However, humour can make a speech unforgettable. Amid the endless speeches at a Model UN, humorous ones often stand out. The challenge is to use humour in such a way that, if your audience remembers your humour, they will also remember your message. An

excellent example of this is Prime Minister's Questions in the UK parliament. The jokes are often satirical, lampooning the opposing viewpoint in a humorous way, whilst making a serious point.

'Asking an international bureaucracy to slim down its staff is like asking an alcoholic to blow up a distillery.'

'To accuse that NGO of purposefully derailing this process would be to confuse strategy for lethargy.'

We must always be careful when using statistics as the way they are presented can sometimes twist the truth. In the 1980s Leonid Brezhnev lost a race to Ronald Reagan. Soviet media reported that "Comrade Brezhnev came second, while President Reagan finished second to last."

#### **Model UN quirks:**

Be courteous at all times. Treat all staff and delegates with respect. Begin and end your speeches courteously, with phrases like: Mr/Madam President; distinguished delegates; Honourable Chair; fellow delegates.

Speak in the third person. Never use 'I', 'you', 'he' or 'she'. In Model UNs, you are not individuals but the representative of a country. Refer to yourself by your country name and others as 'honourable' or 'distinguished' delegates. So instead of saying 'I completely disagree with her opinion' you should say 'Cameroon completely disagrees with the opinion of the honourable delegate from the United Kingdom.'

Create consensus by using 'we'. In a Model UN session, your goal is to come to a compromise as a group, so try to use 'we' to forge common agreement and bring people on board with your arguments. Use phrases such as: 'We know', 'We are', 'We should', 'We wish' etc.



Be constructive. It is very easy to be critical and destructive of others' ideas and proposals, but you must also be constructive, offering alternative arguments and ways forward.

One human story can be more powerful than hundreds of arguments, facts and figures.

## Writing a Resolution

The finished product of a Model UN event is a UN resolution. Actions of the United Nations are expressed in resolutions submitted in draft form under the sponsorship of one or more delegations. Resolutions may simply register an opinion, or may recommend action to be taken by a UN organ or related agency. Only the Security Council may take "decisions" which bind Member States to a certain course of action.

When drafting and sponsoring a draft resolution, delegates should keep in mind that the wording will influence its appeal (or lack thereof). The draft resolution should be clear, concise and specific. The substance should be well researched, and reflect the character and interests of the sponsoring nations.

UN General Assembly resolutions follow a common format. Each resolution has three parts: the heading, the preamble and the operative clauses. It is one long sentence with commas and semicolons throughout the resolution and with a full stop at the very end. The first word in each clause should be underlined, and each clause in the preamble should end with a comma. All operative clauses end with a semicolon except the final clause, which ends with a full stop. Draft resolutions are subject to amendments, of which there are two types.

It is a good idea to practise resolution writing skills before the conference, and to get used to the kind of phrases you can and cannot use in the preamble and operative clauses.

### The Heading:

A resolution starts with details of the responsible organ of the United Nations, e.g. 'Resolution adopted by the General Assembly'. It then contains details of the topic of the resolution. The heading is completed by a list of sponsors and signatories.

Sponsors of a resolution are those countries that have been the principal authors of the document and agree with its substance. Signatories are countries that may or may not agree with the substance of the resolution, but would like to see it debated on the floor.

A draft resolution is sponsored by several countries working together. The sponsors write the first draft of the resolution and circulate it to the other delegations. As such, the first draft is written from the point of view of the sponsors – the operative paragraphs of the first draft will ask for what the sponsoring countries want. This means that they are not necessarily balanced, neutral or even very constructive! The facts in the preambular paragraphs will be correct, but may be heavily interpreted.

The aim of the Model UN is to turn the draft into a balanced, realistic and constructive resolution which can reasonably be acted upon. This is done by a process of compromise through open discussion and private negotiation.

### **The Preamble:**

The purpose of the preamble is to show that there is a problem that needs to be solved. The preamble begins with the name of one of the major organs of the UN and the preambulatory clauses (separated by commas). These clauses:

- provide background information on the problem to be addressed (including its significance and effects) and discuss actions, reports and resolutions that have already been taken, made and passed
- recognise the work or efforts of regional organisations in addressing the issue
- set out the international legal authority under which the matter is raised (e.g. the UN Charter, previous UN resolutions or treaties or statements by the Secretary-General or a relevant UN body) – by referring back to previous decisions made by the UN, authority is supplied for the subject to be considered further
- acknowledge what has already been done, explain what the situation is and set out the particular aspects of the situation which are to be addressed

Essentially, the preamble sets out the background to the issue but does not propose any action or make any substantive statement on the topic.

### **Operative Clauses:**

Operative clauses set out what is to be done about a situation described in the preambular clauses, and by whom (for example, governments, UN bodies or NGOs). Each operative clause begins with a number, ends with a semicolon and the final clause ends with a full stop. Operative clauses should be organised in a logical progression, and each clause should contain a single idea or policy proposal. Keep in mind that only Security Council resolutions are binding so this affects the language you can use (no committee apart from the Security Council can ‘Demand’, ‘Instruct’ or ‘Authorise’).

You must also be aware of what powers the General Assembly does and does not possess. If an operative clause calls for action (such as the establishment of a new body) which will have financial implications, the states calling for this action must be prepared to say how the

money could be organised (such as through contributions from member states or from commercial companies) and the likely reaction to that.

### **Sample Resolution:**

Committee: GA Third Committee

Subject: Strengthening UN Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance

Sponsors: United States, Austria, Italy

Signatories: Greece, Japan, Canada, Mali, the Netherlands, Costa Rica, Belgium, United Kingdom, India and Gabon

The General Assembly

*Reminding* all nations of the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which recognizes the inherent dignity, equality, and inalienable rights of all global citizens,

*Reaffirming* resolution 33/1996 of 25 July 1996, which encourages governments to work with established UN bodies aimed at improving the coordination and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance,

*Noting* with satisfaction the past efforts of various relevant UN bodies and Non-Governmental Organizations,

1. *Encourages* all relevant agencies of the United Nations to collaborate more closely with countries at the grassroots level to enhance the carryout of relief efforts;
2. *Urges* member states to comply with the goals of the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs to streamline efforts of humanitarian aid;
3. *Requests* that all nations develop rapid deployment forces to better enhance the coordination of relief efforts of humanitarian assistance in complex emergencies;
4. *Calls for* the development of a United Nations Trust Fund that encourages voluntary donation from the private transnational sector to aid in the funding of rapid deployment forces.

## Amendments:



During the course of negotiation and cooperation, draft resolutions will alter through changes known as amendments. The guidelines for these amendments are less strict than those for the writing of resolutions, as many amendments arise during the course of negotiations. However, the style, wording and intent of the

amendment should complement the original draft resolution. Amendments follow the pattern already stated in the document and present new viewpoints or suggestions for action on the same topic. Most conferences have two forms of amendments:

- **Friendly amendment:** a friendly amendment is a change to the resolution that all the sponsors feel is appropriate.
- **Unfriendly amendment:** an unfriendly amendment is an amendment that the sponsors of the resolution do not support.

## Sample of an amendment:

In this example a new clause will be inserted between 11 and 12, and will become clause 12, with all the subsequent clauses being renumbered accordingly. This is very different from an amendment to replace Clause 12.

Committee: GA Third Committee

Subject: Strengthening UN Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance

Sponsors: France, Romania, and Poland

Signatories: Togo, Australia, Fiji, Brazil, St. Lucia, Viet Nam, New Zealand, Pakistan, Kuwait and Argentina

Add the following clause between clause 11 and 12

*Requests the expansion of preventive actions and assurance of post conflict assistance through reconstruction and development;*

## Designing Notepaper

Note-passing is a key part of Model UN. It allows you to communicate in private with your actual and potential allies, to find out voting intentions, to lobby other nations, to talk to the Chair, to submit amendments and even to swap gossip. As such, many delegates bring their own notepaper with them, which can make an impression by looking professional as well as conveying information about the delegation and the country they are representing.



Coloured notepaper is not a necessity. Each delegate will send and receive a different number of notes, depending on how active they are. Therefore anywhere between 10 and 30 sheets per person per day is 'appropriate'. You should bring only A5-sized notepaper as you will rarely need anything larger.

As for the design, if you have time, let your imagination run wild!

## Model UN rules and procedure

Model UN rules of procedure are a simplified version of the rules that the actual General Assembly and Security Council use. Although they may seem awkward at times, they are designed to facilitate orderly debate and are quite easy to use.

Most Model UN conferences have their own rules of procedure which differ, depending on the goals and specific needs of the conference. A very detailed 'script' for a sample MUN conference can be found at the National Model United Nations website, near the end of the delegate preparation guide.

The basic principle of parliamentary procedure is that only one person speaks at a time. It is why a delegation can speak only after being recognised by the presiding officer and why it is important for delegates to yield at the end of their speeches.



There are three major components in parliamentary procedure:

- **Points** allow delegates to suggest that rules have been misused, to ask questions about the rules or the work that the committee is doing, and to ask questions of other delegates who are giving formal speeches (and who have indicated that they will answer questions).
- **Motions** guide the work of the committee. They allow the group to make substantive (subject-matter) decisions on which agenda item to discuss, to introduce draft resolutions and amendments and to decide when to hold a final vote, among others. Motions also structure the procedural work of the committee, setting speaking times, opening speaker's lists and moving into moderated and unmoderated caucuses, for example.
- **Yields** relate directly to who speaks. It allows delegates to indicate who gets to speak next at the end of their speeches.

Your rules of procedure can be as simple or as complicated as you would like. Here are some of the basic points and motions that most conferences use. They are listed in the order of precedence, or the order in which the motions or points must be heard and acted upon

RULE	DEBATALE?	VOTE REQUIRED?	INTERRUPT SPEAKER?	DESCRIPTION
<b>POINTS</b>				
<b>Point of Order</b>	No	No	Yes	Used to point out misuse of rules
<b>Point of Information</b>	No	No	No	To ask a question of the speaker, at the end of their speech
<b>Point of Parliamentary Inquiry</b>	No	No	No	To ask for rules or non-rules related clarification from the presiding officer
<b>MOTIONS</b>				
<b>Suspension of the Meeting</b>	No	Majority	No	Suspends the formal rules of procedure to allow either moderated or unmoderated caucusing. Also used to suspend debate for breaks in the schedule (i.e. for lunch).
<b>Adjournment of the Meeting</b>	No	Majority	No	Ends the meeting
<b>Postpone Debate</b>	1 For 1 Against	2/3 Majority	No	Removes an issue, amendment or draft resolution from consideration without voting on the content. Also known as 'tabling'.
<b>Closure of Debate</b>	1 Against	Majority	No	Finishes the debate and brings the resolution or amendment under consideration to an immediate vote.

RULE	DEBATABLE ?	VOTE REQUIRED?	INTERRUPT SPEAKER?	DESCRIPTION
<b>Reopen Debate</b>	1 Against	Majority	No	Allows the committee to reconsider matters upon which debate was previously postponed
<b>Division of the Question</b>	1 For 1 Against	Majority	No	Divides a draft resolution into two or more parts, to be voted upon separately, after closure of debate. Only one division is allowed per resolution. Useful for allowing states to object to and delete specific provisions, without failing resolutions as a whole.
<b>Introduce a Draft Resolution</b>	No	Majority	No	Brings a draft resolution to the floor for discussion.
<b>Introduce an Amendment</b>	No	Majority	No	Brings an unfriendly amendment to the floor for discussion. Opens a new speaker's list of those wishing to speak for and against the amendment, alternating between the two.
<b>Set the Agenda</b>	1 For 1 Against	Majority	No	Chooses which agenda item will be discussed first (only relevant when there is more than one item on the agenda)
<b>Request for a Roll Call Vote</b>	No	No	No	Only available when voting on a resolution or amendments. If granted by the presiding officer, member states will be called on in alphabetical order to announce their vote

RULE	DEBATABLE?	VOTE REQUIRED?	INTERRUPT SPEAKER?	DESCRIPTION
<b>YIELDS – How a speaker finishes their speech</b>				
<b>Yield to the Chair</b>	No	No	-	The Chair retakes control of the committee.
<b>Yield to another Delegate</b>	No	No	-	Another delegate is allowed to speak until the end of the speaking time (if there are time limits).
<b>Yield to Points of Information</b>	No	No	-	Allows members of the committee to ask questions of the speaker, until speaking time has expired.

When motions are debatable, it means that a certain number of delegations will speak for and against the motion. This is done after the motion is made and seconded, but before the vote. The presiding officer chooses the speakers.

Draft Resolutions require the permission of the presiding officer for distribution and sponsors that number at least 20% of the committee members. More than one draft resolution can be on the floor at any one time.



Only one amendment may be on the floor at any one time. There are two types:

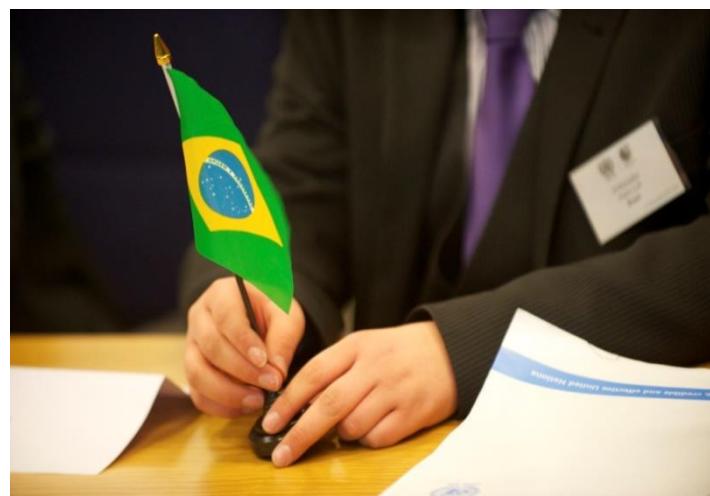
**Friendly amendments** become part of the resolution without debate or voting - once approved and announced to the committee by the chair - as long as all of the sponsors of the draft resolution being amended are also sponsors of the amendment. Additional sponsors are welcomed.

**Unfriendly amendments** require the permission of the presiding officer, and sponsors that number at least 12.5% of the committee members. Once distributed, debate can begin following a successful motion for introduction. Only one amendment can be on the floor at any one time and will remain on the floor until it has been tabled or voted on by the committee. A motion for closure of debate is in order after there have been at least two speakers for and two speakers against the amendment and happens automatically when there are no more states on the speaker's list.

On closure of debate - Once debate has been closed on a draft resolution, only four points or motions are appropriate:

- Point of Order
- Point of Parliamentary Inquiry
- Motion for a Division of the Question
- Request for a Roll Call Vote

The committee may also decide that it would be more efficient if it suspended the formal rules for period. This may take the form of unmoderated caucusing (where there are no rules and everyone is free to get up and move around - a 'time out' from normal procedures) or moderated caucusing (where the presiding officer calls on delegations to speak when they raise their placards).



# Model UN Glossary

Model UN can be confusing to a beginner, not only because of the complexity of the issues and the pace of debate, but because of the strangeness of the language. To save you some confusion, below is a Model UN jargon buster. Note that several of the terms below, including Secretariat and Secretary General, have different meanings in Model UN and in the real UN so you should familiarise yourself with both meanings.

**NOTE:** Rules of procedure vary greatly from Model UN conference to Model UN conference. The most common definitions of the terms are given below, but do not be surprised if you see them used in a slightly different manner at some of the conferences you go to.

**Abstain** - During a vote on a substantive matter, delegates may abstain rather than vote yes or no. This generally signals that a state does not support the resolution being voted on, but does not oppose it enough to vote no.

**Adjourn** - All UN or Model UN sessions end with a vote to adjourn. This means that the debate is suspended until the next meeting. This can be a short time (e.g. overnight) or a long time (until next year's conference).

**Agenda** - The order in which the issues before a committee will be discussed. The first duty of a committee following the roll call is usually to set the agenda.

**Amendment** - A change to a draft resolution on the floor. It can be of two types: a "friendly amendment" is supported by the original draft resolution's sponsors, and is passed automatically, while an "unfriendly amendment" is not supported by the original sponsors and must be voted on by the committee as a whole.

**Arab League** - A body independent of the UN, comprised of Arab states in Africa and the Middle East. Some of its procedural rules differ from those of the UN (e.g. in the Arab League, a resolution is not binding on states which vote against it).

**Background guide** - A guide to a topic being discussed in a Model UN committee usually written by conference organisers and distributed to delegates before the conference. This is the starting point for any research before a Model UN conference and is also known as a topic guide.

**BATNA (Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement)** - If your preferred solution cannot be accomplished or agreed upon by the committee, you should have a BATNA on each issue that will be debated in order to promote compromise and co-operation.

**Binding** - Having legal force in UN member states. Security Council resolutions are binding, as are decisions of the International Court of Justice; resolutions of the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council are not.

**Bloc** - A group of countries that form a logical combination because of geographical, economic, or cultural similarities (e.g. G8, African bloc, Arab League).

**Caucus** - A break in formal debate in which countries can more easily and informally discuss a topic. There are two types: moderated caucus and unmoderated caucus. Usually some of a committee's most productive work is accomplished during caucuses.

**Chair** – Also known as a moderator, this is a member of the dais that moderates debate, keeps time, rules on points and motions and enforces the rules of procedure.

**Dais** - The group of people in charge of a Model UN committee, which generally consists of a Chair, a Director and a Rapporteur.

**Decorum** - The order and respect for others that all delegates at a Model UN conference must exhibit. The Chair will call for decorum when he or she feels that the committee is not being respectful of a speaker, of the dais, or of their roles as ambassadors.

**Delegate** - A participant acting as a representative of a member state or observer in a Model UN committee.

**Delegation** - The entire group of people representing a member state or observer in all committees at a particular Model UN conference.

**Director** - A member of the dais that oversees the creation of working papers and draft resolutions, acts as an expert on the topic, makes sure delegates accurately reflect the policy of their countries and ensures that decorum is maintained during caucuses.

**Division of the question** - During voting bloc, delegates may motion to vote on certain clauses of a resolution separately, so that only the clauses that are passed become part of the final resolution (e.g. vote on Clauses 1, 3 and 4 together, but the rest individually). This is useful if you agree with one part of a resolution but not the whole thing.

**Draft resolution** - A Working Paper which has been signed by sponsor countries and approved for debate by the chair. A draft resolution seeks to fix the problems addressed by a Model UN committee and must be submitted in the correct format. If passed by the committee, the draft resolution will become a resolution.

**EU (European Union)** - An economic and political union created under the Maastricht Treaty in 1993, it comprises most of Western and Central Europe as well as much of Eastern Europe.

**Flow of debate** - The order in which events proceed during a Model UN conference.

**Foreign aid** - Money given by one country to another for humanitarian or developmental purposes. It plays a key role in shaping foreign policy.

**Foreign policy** - The attitudes and interests of a state towards external issues. Foreign policy can be influenced by a variety of factors such as military strength, trading partners, history and domestic government.

**Formal debate** - The "standard" type of debate at a Model UN conference, in which delegates speak for a certain time in an order based on a speakers' list. They must also formally yield the floor to questions, the chair, or another delegate.

**G8 (Group of Eight)** - A body comprised of eight of the world's most powerful nations: Canada, the U.S., U.K., France, Italy, Japan, Germany, and Russia.

**Gavel** - The tool, shaped like a small wooden hammer, which the chair uses to keep order within a Model UN committee.

**ICJ (International Court of Justice)** - The ICJ is a body designed to resolve legal and territorial disputes between states.

**Head Delegate** - The leader of a Model UN club or team.

**Lowest common denominator** - The most basic, least sophisticated point that the majority can agree upon.

**Lobbying** - Informal caucusing between a small group of delegates, usually outside the committee room while debate is still in progress. One may wish to lobby another delegate for support on a resolution or policy option, but must be used with caution.

**Member State** - A country that has ratified the Charter of the United Nations and whose application to join has been accepted by the General Assembly and Security Council. Currently, there are 193 member states.

**Moderated caucus** - A type of caucus in which delegates remain seated and the Chair calls on them one at a time to speak for a short period of time, enabling a freer exchange of opinion than would be possible in formal debate.

**Moderator** - See Chair.

**Motion** - A request made by a delegate that the committee as a whole does something.

Some motions might be to go into a caucus, to adjourn, to introduce a draft resolution, to enact a right of reply, or to move into voting bloc.

**NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)** - Security organisation created in 1949 by Western powers to provide a collective force against the Soviet Union. In the post-Cold War era it has taken on new responsibilities in peacekeeping and enforcement of international law in places such as Kosovo and Afghanistan.

**NGOs (Non-governmental Organisations)** - Organisations or associations that are not associated with a specific country or international political organisation. Their aims can be broad (World Vision International, Amnesty International, Greenpeace) or quite specific (Doctors Without Borders). The United Nations has a history of working closely with NGOs on various issues, especially relating to humanitarian projects.

**Non-member / observer** - A state, national organisation, regional organisation, or non-governmental organisation that is not a member of the UN but participates in its debates. Observers can vote on procedural matters but not substantive matters. Examples are the Holy See, Palestinian Authority or Red Cross.

**OAS (Organization of American States)** - An international political organisation comprised of North and South American states.

**On the floor** - At a Model UN conference, when a working paper or draft resolution is first written, it may not be discussed in debate. After it is approved by the Director and introduced by the committee, it is put "on the floor" and may be discussed.

**Operative clause** - The part of a resolution following the Preamble which describes how the UN will address a problem. These numbered clauses set out actual solutions and initiatives for the committee to undertake, and always begin with a verb (such as: decides, establishes, recommends).

**Page** - A delegate in a Model UN committee that has volunteered to pass notes from one delegate to another, or from a delegate to the dais, for a short period of time.

**Placard** - A piece of card with a country's name on it that a delegate raises in the air to signal to the Chair that he or she wishes to speak.

**Point** - A request raised by a delegate for information or for an action relating to that delegate. Examples include a point of order, a point of inquiry, and a point of personal privilege.

**Position paper** - An informal paper written by a delegate before a Model UN conference summarising their country's position on a topic, including its track record on the issue, policy targets and proposed solutions.

**Preambulatory clause** - The clauses at the beginning of a resolution that introduce the issue by describing previous actions taken on the topic and reasons why the resolution is necessary. Each begins with a participle or adjective (noting, concerned, regretting, aware of, recalling, etc.). They are not numbered.

**Procedural** - Having to do with the way a committee is run, as opposed to the topic being discussed. All delegates present must vote on procedural matters and may not abstain.

**Quorum** - The minimum number of delegates needed to be present for a committee to meet. In the General Assembly, a quorum consists of one third of the members to begin debate, and a majority of members to pass a resolution. In the Security Council, no quorum exists for the body to debate, but nine members must be present to pass a resolution.

**Rapporteur** - A member of the dais whose duties include keeping the speakers' list and taking the roll call.

**Resolution** - A document that has been passed by a UN body aiming to address a particular problem or issue. The UN equivalent of a law.

**Right of Reply** - A right to speak in reply to a previous speaker's comment, invoked when a delegate feels that their personal or national integrity has been insulted or slandered by another's speech. It is easily the most over-attempted and misused motion in Model UN debating – delegates often fail to understand that asking for a 'Right of Reply' is making a very serious accusation and must not be abused. The Director decides whether to grant the Right of Reply and their decision is not open to appeal. If granted the Chair will normally ask the offending party if they wish to apologise.

**Roll call** - The first order of business in a Model UN committee, during which the Rapporteur reads aloud the names of each member state in the committee. When a delegate's country's name is called, he or she may respond "present" or "present and voting." A delegate responding "present and voting" may not abstain on a substantive vote.

**Rules of Procedure** - The rules by which a Model UN committee is run.

**Second** - To agree with a motion being proposed. Many motions must be seconded before they can be brought to a vote.

**Secretariat** - The most senior staff of a Model UN conference.

**Secretary General** - The leader of a Model UN conference.

**Security Council** - The most powerful body within the UN, it is comprised of fifteen members, five of which are permanent and have the power of veto (see veto). It is responsible for the UN's peace and security policy, dealing with conflict through peacekeeping, sanctions and other measures.

**Signatory** - A country that wishes a draft resolution to be put on the floor and signs the draft resolution to accomplish this. A signatory need not support a resolution; it only wants it to be discussed. Usually, Model UN conferences require some minimum number of sponsors and signatories for a draft resolution to be approved.

**Simple majority** – 50 per cent plus one of the number of delegates in a committee. The amount needed to pass most votes.

**Speakers' list** - A list that determines the order in which delegates will speak. Whenever a new topic is opened for discussion, the Chair will create a speakers' list by asking all delegates wishing to speak to raise their placards and calling on them one at a time. During debate, a delegate may indicate that he or she wishes to be added to the speakers' list by sending a note to the dais. Your country's name cannot be on the speakers' list more than once at a time.

**Sponsor/Co-sponsor** - Working papers and resolutions require sponsors (the main authors) and in some cases co-sponsors. Being a co-sponsor does not necessarily mean being in support of the ideas presented, - you may just want to see them debated in front of the rest of the committee. A friendly amendment can only be created if all sponsors agree.

**Substantive** - Having to do with the topic being discussed. A substantive vote is a vote on a draft resolution or amendment already on the floor during voting bloc. Only member states (not observer states or non-governmental organisations) may vote on substantive issues.

**Unmoderated caucus** - A type of caucus in which delegates leave their seats to mingle and speak freely. Enables the free sharing of ideas to an extent not possible in formal debate or

even a moderated caucus. Frequently used to sort countries into blocs and to write working papers and draft resolutions.

**UN (United Nations)** - The international organisation created in 1945 from the legacy of World War II to promote and protect international peace and security, co-operation, and human rights worldwide. Its legitimacy comes from the UN Charter, with its major bodies including the Security Council, the General Assembly, and the various committees that comprise the Economic and Social Council.

**Veto** - The ability, held by China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States, to prevent any draft resolution in the Security Council from passing by voting against it.

**Vote** - A time at which delegates indicate whether they do or do not support a proposed action for the committee. There are two types: procedural and substantive.

**Voting bloc/Voting procedure** - The period at the end of a committee session during which delegates vote on proposed amendments and draft resolutions. Nobody may enter or leave the room during voting bloc.

**Working paper** - Sometimes informally called an 'idea paper', these are documents in which the ideas of some delegates on how to resolve an issue are proposed. A working paper is drawn up in the form of a resolution, but its status as a "working paper" allows for amendments to be made which do not require the support of the entire committee, only the sponsors themselves. Working papers are one step below a draft resolution, and many are often combined into one. Their overall purpose is to set out specific solutions or policy stances on an issue that can be debated within the committee.

**Yield** - In formal debate the delegate must yield his/her time at the beginning of their speech in one of three ways:

- to the chair: once the speech is over the chair takes the floor and moves on with the speaker's list
- to questions: delegates can ask questions to the speaker for his/her remaining time
- to another delegate: another speaker uses up the remaining time to give a speech, but cannot yield themselves.