



# MODEL UNITED NATIONS

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# PHILOSOPHY OF MODEL UN

## PURPOSE

The Minnesota YMCA Model United Nations (MUN) is a simulation of the United Nations assembly. For logistical and educational reasons, the YMCA Model United Nations only simulates parts of the real United Nations. Model U.N., MUN for short, emphasizes collaboration and youth development. In addition to crucial YMCA core values like caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility, role-playing at MUN highly encourages empathy. Understanding that the U.N. is one of the largest and most complex administrative structures in the world, the conference highlights over 20 current issues a year to have a robust discussion, led by youth, about the state of their world.

The result of the student's hard work is incredible. Over a single weekend, resolutions are passed, a budget is created, and legal opinions are drafted. The fast-developing crises of safety and security in the world are even tackled in special sessions.

## THE UNITED NATIONS' ROLE

When debating issues and drafting resolutions at MUN, it is important that delegates also learn the role of the United Nations in the world. The United Nations is not a world government. It is an international forum, where a group of sovereign nations meet to discuss international issues. The United Nations can offer solutions to international problems, but it is not able to force its member countries to accept any decisions. The reason the United Nations exists is to foster greater communication between countries. For the United Nations to propose solutions to problems, there must be a great deal of negotiation. This is one of the skills which will be key to success at this Model United Nations.

International diplomacy has been most successful when nations have found the room to compromise between their national policy and national interests. National policy is a country's original stance on an issue. National interests are a country's response to current events. International diplomacy is the search for common ground between national policy and national interests.

The products international diplomacy at the U.N. are resolutions, which have the support of the key nations involved in each issue. A passed resolution which is strongly contested by a key nation is not likely to solve the international issue. Only one resolution per topic area passes from each committee. This is because international diplomacy is a series of near-consensus compromises by nations with competing views. Therefore, to be effective, a good resolution must be approved by all major players. Resolutions among nations are possible, but they require compromise.

# PROGRAM AREAS AT MODEL UN

## GENERAL ASSEMBLIES

In the United Nations, the General Assembly (GA) is the primary policymaking organ. MUN has two tiers of General Assembly, Mondale (grades 9-12) and Anderson (grades 7-8). The General Assembly has universal, equal representation. Every country in the United Nations has a voice in the GA. At the real United Nations, the GA appoints the Secretary General and oversees the budget on top of their normal discussion on global issues.

At MUN the GA's address most of the topics at the conference in their committees. Each committee has a larger theme such as economics, legal issues, or security. The main way the GA's act is through a resolution, which is a document sponsored by one or more of its members and approved by two thirds of the assembly in a vote.

## SECURITY COUNCIL

The Security Council (SC) has the strongest mandate to maintain global peace. The Council has permanent members and rotating members. MUN is faithful to the number and composition of the states on the actual Security Council. Other organs at Model UN recommend and advise. The Security Council can act or compel action from states. The Security Council at MUN investigates issues which could lead to war, and resolves crises of safety and security. The Security Council is also unique in its voting process. Each of the permanent five members has a veto power over resolutions. This means that action in the Security Council requires consensus and careful negotiation.

## ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCILS

The work of the Economic and Social Councils (ECOSOC) at MUN is crucial. Like the General Assembly, MUN has two tiers of ECOSOC divided by grade level. The topics addressed in ECOSOC often include the environment, water access, and sustainable development. These issues are critical to keeping economies in the world growing strong which in turn maintain global peace. At MUN, the senior ECOSOC organ works with the Conference Resource Center to prepare the budget.

## HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

The Human Rights Council (HRC) is the organ is primarily responsible for promoting and protecting human rights around the world. The HRC looks for vulnerable social groups and addresses abuses toward them both in the past and present. The HRC focuses on setting human rights obligations and provides guidance for states to reach those obligations.

# **INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE**

Located at The Hague in the Netherlands, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the primary judicial body in the UN. When two states or bodies have a legal dispute, they appeal to the ICJ for guidance. Those appeals are called memorials. A case on the ICJ's docket is a response to those memorials. The judges on the court hear arguments and issue an advisory opinion to the greater United Nations. At Model UN the ICJ justices resolve disputes between member states, debate how to interpret treaties, and make important decisions on the basis of international law.

## **MEDIA**

Members of MUN's media team are appointed before the conference. At the conference, the media team informs the delegates of what is happening in different program areas through the newspaper. The media team conducts interviews, films important events at MUN, and reports the election results. Journalists are essential to the function of keeping peace. The media at MUN is crucial to the conference and is the perfect program area for creative students who are looking to author original pieces.

## **CONFERENCE RESOURCE CENTER:**

The Conference Resource Center (CRC) consists of a small group of students appointed to assist the conference in a number of logistical roles. Each student represents an agency working within the UN. The students advocate for their agencies representation in solving various topics in each organ. The agencies also make their case for how much funding is required from various resolutions and actions taken by other organs. The CRC director and their staff also administer the elections at MUN.

# EXPECTATIONS

## WHAT TO EXPECT DAY TO DAY

Here's an approximate schedule for a full day representing your country.

**7AM** – Wake up and breakfast. You cannot bring any food or drink into your meetings, so make sure you leave enough time to drink your tea & coffee!

**8:30AM** – World Briefing. You'll catch up on what's happening around MUN and hear announcements. Business dress code is required.

9am – Program Area sessions. The conference splits into the different program areas you read above. You will negotiate the topics/cases assigned to your organ or committee. Check the green schedule page in your session book for room locations.

**NOON** – Lunch

**1:30PM** – Program Area sessions reconvene. Check the schedule to make sure you know when and where the next meeting is.

**6PM** – Dinner

**8PM** – Evening Activities! Casual dress time.

**11:30PM** – Curfew. It's hard to debate on no sleep. Try not to stay up too late because the schedule is the same tomorrow!

## WHAT'S EXPECTED OF YOU?

Minnesota YMCA Model UN is not competitive. The basic expectation is that you show up on time to each meeting and be ready to have a robust conversation on each topic based on your prep work. The topics you discuss are some of the most unique and challenging issues in the real world. Balance learning and fun with your mission of representing your country and keeping global peace. There is also a balance between your roleplaying of the country and the safety of the conference. Check the "Preparation: Roleplaying" part of the toolkit for advice.

Business attire is part of the experience at MUN. Check the Code of Conduct for rough guidelines on how to dress appropriately. Ask an adult in your delegation if you need guidance.

Other rules and personal expectations can be found in the Code of Conduct.

# NEXT YEAR

Before you pack up the resolution templates and your placards, you should think about next year and what you might want to do.

## **APPLY**

Fill out an appointed official form or start your campaign to be an officer next year. The conference relies on passionate leaders, ask an advisor or your Delegation Director how to become one!

## **BRANCH OUT**

There are many paths to success at MUN. Do you like the idea of being a judge or arguing cases? Join the International Court of Justice. Are you interested in the high stakes challenges of keeping peace? The Security Council might be perfect for you. Ask the Secretariat or an advisor about the different program areas you can join next year.

## **BRING SOME FRIENDS**

MUN needs countries large and small. However, the more friends you have in a country group, the more countries you can choose from. Find one or two more friends and help them sign up!

## **LEARN MORE**

Visit [www.mnyiq.org](http://www.mnyiq.org) to explore the history and background of all the program areas represented at MUN. Consider submitting the resolutions you worked so hard on so others can learn from your example!

## **KEEP IN TOUCH**

Prepared students and parents alike need to know when the deadlines for the next conference are approaching. Make sure you keep the State Office updated with your current email and phone number for information.

## **MORE CONFERENCES, MORE FUN**

YMCA Youth in Government has more conferences, more retreats, and more fun to share all year round! Check out information in your session book or the YIG website on Model Assembly, the National Judicial Competition and the Youth Conference on National Affairs (CONA) for fun all year round.

## **GRADUATING? NO PROBLEM**

YIG Alumni are everywhere. We love to keep up with your successes. There are many opportunities to volunteer including in the Secretariat Program at Model UN. Be the mentor who helps make the YMCA Youth in Government experience for new generations.

## **SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS**

Have you heard about the survey? Check your emails following the conference and submit as detailed responses as you can. Students are the core of what happens at the conference. You can create change just by responding.