



# MODEL UNITED NATIONS

## Model UN Toolkit

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# PREPARING FOR MUN

## LEARN YOUR COUNTRY

Role-playing a country at Model U.N. is a big responsibility. You will step into the shoes of an ambassador that speaks for millions of people. The preparation does not have to be stressful however. Whether you're working as a solo delegate or in a country group, the following instructions will guide you through the process.

### STEP 1: FILL OUT THE STATUS REPORT

Available on the CYV website, the Status Report is one of two required documents you bring to Model UN. This is the first chance to get a feel for how you will represent the country. The report asks you to research your country and learn about its context. Learning the context of a country including its people, history, religion, economics etc. will determine whether you support resolutions at the conference or not. If you get stuck thinking about what your country's stance on a topic would be, chances are one of the Status Report questions can help you. Highlight information that seems particularly important or useful. For example, if your country is very reliant on one source of energy or on a single crop, you might need that information later.

Work as a team, either in your country group or in your delegation to track down as much information as you can. The research will come back to help you later!

**HINT:** If you are new to research style assignments, follow the links at the bottom of the Status Reports last page. The CIA World Factbook has one-page summaries of every country to get you started. Remember, a single source is never enough. The more sources you get information from the better the report.

### STEP 2: WRITING POSITION PAPERS

Each member of your country group will be assigned a committee or organ. Once you know your assignment, look up what topics are being discussed there that year. Position papers are short and concise, but crucial to your job at Model UN. As an ambassador your job is to get policy passed which will help your country.

The Status Report should contain basic information relating the topic back to your country. For example, if the topic was "Bees Dying Off," you would need to know how many bees live in your country or how much agriculture depends on bees. You should clearly state your country's stance and what the ideal policy in relation to your country is. You want to get as close to the government's actual position as possible. This can be hard because not every government explicitly shares their positions. Sometimes you will have to make educated guesses based on your research in the Status Report, and other articles. The Position Papers should be educational and not stressful. **YOU SHOULD ONLY WRITE AROUND A SINGLE PAGE IN ORDER TO PRIORITIZE THE MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION.**

## HINT

If you are nervous about speaking at MUN... that's OK! Your position paper can help you. If you start by simply reading your "thesis" or your country's basic stance to the group, you will find countries who agree with you and might help you write a resolution!

## RESOURCES

[ymcayouthvoice.org](http://ymcayouthvoice.org)

The YMCA Center for Youth Voice website is the home for the registration and preparation process. If you have any questions before or during the conference check out the page or use it to contact the State Office.

<https://bestdelegate.com/>

This page is the home of everything Model UN. They have tried to collect the best practices around simulating the UN from numerous conferences around the US. Use the site for help writing resolutions, public speaking, and researching countries.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

CIA World Factbook. Use this site to find the "one page summary" of your country prepared by the United States' Central Intelligence Agency. This should be one of many sources you use.

<https://news.un.org/en/>

The United Nations News. Check out this page and search for your country to find current issues affecting the people there.

<https://www.un.org/en/>

This is the general United Nations website. You should use this to look up past actions on the issue as you write your position papers. Check under the "document" tab to search for past resolutions. This is also a good place to find a real example of a well written resolution.

Did you know most UN Organs have their own website? Check under the actual Organ name or Committee name and find out how past topics have been resolved by your country.

Use the library at your school or in your neighborhood to find more information. Look up your country in recent news articles and use a variety of articles from different countries to prepare.

A note on Wikipedia: There is no doubt that Wikipedia will be the first hit on the search for your country most of the time. There is good information available on Wikipedia but also the chance for false information to spread. Here's how to figure out what's useable and what's not.

See this sentence from the wiki-page on Minnesota:

"While overall health indicators are strong, Minnesota does have significant health disparities in minority populations."<sup>[11]</sup>

This seems like good information, right? How do we know? The author of that portion of Wikipedia cited a Star Tribune article as evidence. You can find that Star Tribune article by following the small number that comes at the end of the sentence.

**BEFORE** you use information from Wikipedia you always need to follow the citation provided and verify the information. You should usually just use that source instead of Wikipedia anyway. No citation = do not use that information.

## **ROLEPLAYING YOUR COUNTRY**

While Model U.N. is not competitive, the debate does get intense. Countries stake out opposing viewpoints. Countries and caucuses are divided up by religious, ethnic, and economic identifiers. As you represent your country in the debate, keep these guidelines in the back of your head:

- Your debate should reflect the policy positions and attitudes of the government of your **COUNTRY** not yourself. Well researched prep work will help you make sure none of the gaps in your knowledge are being filled in with your own bias and experiences.
- Each piece of information, debate point, and policy suggestion should be grounded in facts, statistics, or verifiable sources on your country. You are empowered to make educated guesses and make inferences based on lack of information. Do not at any point resort to cultural stereotype in your debate.
- Before you share a countries controversial opinion or policy, ask yourself:
  - Is what I'm saying respectful? No attacking people or personal identity.
  - Am I ok being held personally accountable for my words?
  - Will what I'm saying make people feel unsafe? Threatening war, violence, intimidating, or bullying either in or out of Program Area is unacceptable.
  - Am I isolating or excluding important viewpoints from the discussion?
- Being rude, excluding other countries based on size or "importance," or generally crowding a conversation is always bad roleplaying. Get into the mindset of an ambassador. You always want to be respectful even in disagreement.
- Be part of the solution! Model U.N. is student run. If someone says something in their roleplay or otherwise that is out of line, speak up for yourself. Use your official standing as an ambassador to call out bad behavior or speak up as yourself outside of the roleplay. Speak to people directly, or use your officers, secretariat, and adult advisors as moderators for back up.
- This process is educational, and it should be fun. If you see behavior which is not contributing to either of those pursuits, you have the tools available at the conference to solve it right away.

## **MY COUNTRY IS BEING SUED; WHAT NOW?**

If a nation is sued in the International Court of Justice (ICJ), it will be required to submit a counter-memorial, due before the first day of the Model United Nations. Countries being sued will be notified by the CYV State Office through their delegation director and will be supplied with a copy of the memorial brought against them. If you have concerns or questions check in with your delegation director or the

State Office. At the Conference, you can go to the ICJ student officer or the ICJ Program Specialist with all your questions or to ask for help. Here are the deets:

- As a Respondent to an ICJ memorial, your counter-memorial will have the same structure.
- Confer with the other members of your country to create a strategy, and who you want to represent the country in front of the ICJ (usually the ambassador)
- Respond to the facts listed in the original memorial with your countries perspective or explain why the facts the original memorial chose are not valid.
- Check and make sure the original memorial authors did not leave out any relevant international law that supports your country.
- Respondents generally request a dismissal of the case or seek counter-relief against the Applicant(s). What is your country owed as part of the cases outcome?

## SAMPLE ICJ MEMORIAL

There is no “default” format for an ICJ Memorial or Counter-Memorial, but sometimes it is helpful to have a guide to follow. In this example, the Russian Federation is claiming that their sovereign rights to follow cultural norms have been impacted by an extension of staff benefits to same-sex partners of staff as passed by the UN GA Budget in 2013. Here are the specifics:

### THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

**Applicant:** The Russian Federation

**Respondent:** Secretary General Ban Ki-moon (Requests the Presence of The Human Rights Council President)

**Claim:**

That the Sept. 24, 2013, U.N. General Assembly budget committee passing of the extension of staff benefits to same sex couples is a violation of the sovereign rights for countries to follow their cultural norms;

That the act of extending staff benefits has procedurally forced the Applicant and other nations to go against their cultures through the current form of the pension process;

That nowhere in binding United Nations documents have there been sections directly pertaining to the right to same sex marriage; rather, previous ICJ cases have already established that the binding UN documents supports heterosexual marriage only;

That Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has overstepped his authority by implementing the policy change of recognizing same sex employees without consultation of Member States.

**Assert:**

Chapter 1, Article 2, Section 7 states that 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;

General Assembly Resolution A/HRC/29/23 states that States are not required under international law to recognize same-sex marriage;

The 1999 HRC case Joslin v. New Zealand recognizes marriage as “only the union between a man and a woman wishing to marry each other.”

**Prayers:**

That the ICJ would recommend a reconsideration of the issue within the UN General Assembly and that a compromise may be made between contending parties;

That current document ST/SGB/2004/13/Rev.1 be withdrawn until a compromise be made;

That the ICJ would recommend the General Assembly committee responsible to communicate with ECOSOC in order to formulate a better system to implement benefit payouts.

# WRITING RESOLUTIONS

Committees and organs act through formal documents called resolutions. The countries in a committee or organ will spend time debating how to best resolve the issues within a topic. Once a consensus is found among a group of countries they can “sponsor” a resolution by authoring it together. The resolution can recommend an action, allot funds, condemn a bad policy, or have numerous other outcomes. The important thing for you to keep track of is if the resolution is going to have a positive impact on your country!

Only one resolution can be passed on each topic in a program area. Resolutions must be written and structured to achieve maximum support, so they can pass with 2/3 of the committee in agreement.

Resolutions have a specific structure which will be explained below. They also use specific types of language which we call “preambulatory” and “operative” clauses. You will be provided examples below.

Here is a breakdown of the process through which a resolution comes together:

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Countries first share their thoughts on the topic. The committee talks about the various issues at play in the topic. This is where you can share the main idea of your position paper, and learn about the position papers of other countries.

## 2. WORKING PAPERS

Resolutions are negotiated in blocks through informal working papers. Working papers are documents which are discussed but not voted on. The best resolutions are clear, concise, and have consensus because they have a solid construction in working papers. Use the most agreed upon working papers to create a resolution to eventually vote on. This stage inevitably has the most negotiation through caucusing and moderated debate.

## 3. AMENDING

Once the committee has a viable resolution there may still be countries dissatisfied. There might also be language which is still unclear or information missing. This final writing stage allows for amendments to be written and debated while ironing out any final issues in caucus time. Carefully negotiate! You do not want to lose the whole resolution over minor issues at the end.

## 4. VOTING

Once all the debate and negotiation has ended, voting commences. If a majority votes affirmatively, the resolution will move onto the larger general assembly. In an organ, if the resolution passes it will move on to be approved by the Secretary General.

## MORE BEST PRACTICES AND HINTS FOR RESOLUTION WRITING

- Step two is the most important part of the resolution drafting process. Without working papers its likely you will fail multiple resolutions and waste time before coming upon a consensus

- Resolutions must address the fundamentals of an issue. A resolution that does not answer the basic “who” “what” “when” “where” and “why” will fail.
- Use caucus time wisely. You need to speak with both countries that agree with you and countries that disagree to make the resolution work for all parties.
- The resolution passes as written. Once passed, spelling mistakes, grammatical errors or punctuation mistakes cannot be changed except via amendment.
- Use the Secretariat in your room to make copies of resolutions and working papers.
- Once a resolution is passed fully fill out the resolution transmission form and keep original copies in the Conference Resource Center.

## RESOLUTION FORMAT

### HEADING

When presented to an organ or committee, all resolutions must be written on the proper forms as provided by the Secretariat. The heading must include all the information about where the resolution originated including the General Assembly name, the committee name, and the topic title.

### BODY

The resolution is written in the format of a long sentence. There are format rules for resolutions, just as there are grammatical rules for sentences:

1. The resolution begins with “The General Assembly” for all General Assembly committees and with the “Economic and Social Council” for all ECOSOC resolutions. The Specialized Agencies use their own names as the introductory line. The rest of the resolution consists of clauses with the initiating phrases of each clause underlined.
2. The next section, consisting of Preambulatory Clauses, describes the problem being addressed, recalls past actions taken, explains the purpose of the resolution and offers support for the operative clauses that follow. Each clause and the preamble begin with an underlined word and ends with a comma.
3. Operative Clauses are numbered and state the action to be taken by the body. These clauses all begin with present tense action verbs, which are generally stronger words than those used in the Preamble. Each operative clause is followed by a semi-colon except the last, which ends with a period.

### CONTEXT

A well-written resolution demonstrates:

- Familiarity with the problem. Relevant background information and previous United Nations actions are included.
- Recognition of the issues. Arguments on the topic are specified early.
- Conciseness. Every clause and phrase should have a purpose.
- Good form. An otherwise sound resolution will suffer from clumsy grammar and sloppy form.



## HINT

If you do not quite understand the rules on how a resolution should look yet, that's ok! Check out the sample resolution in this packet, then re-read the format guide. When you are at the conference just ask an older student or volunteer for help with writing your resolution.

## EFFECTIVE RESOLUTIONS

Even if you know how to write a resolution in the right format, how do you know what to include?

At MUN you might not "solve" a topic. In fact, most of the topics chosen are so big and important you are part of just the first few steps in solving them.

Here's a list of a few ideas you might want to use in a resolution to make it clearer and more effective:

- Does your resolution address the basic "who" "what" "where" "when" and "why" questions of the issue? A resolution should be built on clearly defined answers to all those questions. Your perambulatory clauses are a good place for those answers.
- Are the actions you put in your operative clauses solving the problem in a specific and targeted way? Setting aside an undecided amount of funding or creating another agency inside the already complex U.N. system are examples of generic and ineffective solutions.
- This might seem obvious... are there any typos or spelling mistakes in your resolution? Fix them!
- Do you understand all the "issues to be addressed" in the study guide on your topic? Look at them and make sure all of them are mentioned somewhere in your resolution.
- Does your resolution take aggressive action against another country? If it does you should heavily negotiate to make sure all other countries agree that this aggressive action makes sense.
- Should your resolution include references to any U.N. agencies who could help with the topic? Use the CRC and see if any delegates are representing those U.N. agencies like UNESCO, WHO, IMF, etc.

## WORKING PAPERS

Effective resolutions are built on working papers. Working papers are essentially drafts of language a country wants to include in the final resolution. In the Model U.N. Study Guide each topic has several "issues to be addressed." It is recommended that at least three working papers are created on each of these issues, so the committee can understand a variety of approaches to solving a problem.

More simplified: Write a working paper and move that paper to have an official discussion. If a many other countries agree with your working paper add it to a resolution. If not, it is easy to scrap a working paper and try another one. No language should be added to a resolution that is not basic background knowledge or already agreed upon in a working paper.

# LIST OF CLAUSES

## PREAMBULATORY CLAUSES

Acknowledging	Expressing...	Noting...
Affirming	- appreciation	- further
Anxious	- deep appreciation	- with approval
Appreciating	Expecting	- with deep concern
Aware	Fulfilling	- with regret
Bearing in mind	Fully...	- with satisfaction
Being convinced	- aware	Observing
Cognizant	- bearing in mind	Realizing
Concerned	Grieved	Recalling
Confident	Guided by	Recognizing
Conscious	Having	Referring
Considering	- adopted	Regretting
Contemplating	- approved	Reiterating
Convinced	- considered	Seeking
Declaring	- decided	Stressing
Deeply disturbed	- examined further	Taking...
Desiring	- received	- into account
Deploring	- regard for	- note
Determined	- reviewed	Welcoming
Emphasizing	Keeping in mind	Viewing with...
Encouraged	Mindful	- apprehension
Endorsing		

## **OPERATIVE CLAUSES**

Accepts

Adopts

Affirms

Appeals

Appreciates

Approves

Authorizes

Calls upon

Commends

Concurs

Condemns

Confirms

Congratulates

Considers

Decides

Declares

Deplores

Designates

Directs

Emphasizes

Encourages

Endorses

Expresses...

- its appreciation

- its conviction

- its regret

- its sympathy

- its thanks

- the belief

- the hope

Further...

- invites

- proclaims

- reminds

- recommends

- resolves

Instructs

Notes...

- with appreciation

- with approval

- with interest

- with satisfaction

Reaffirms

Recognizes

Recommends

Regrets

Reiterates

Renews its appeal

Repeats

Suggests

Supports

Takes note of

Transmits

Urges



# MINNESOTA YMCA YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT MODEL UNITED NATIONS

**ORGAN/COMMITTEE:**

**TOPIC:**

## *RESOLUTION*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.
- 16.
- 17.
- 18.
- 19.
- 20.



# MINNESOTA YMCA YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT MODEL UNITED NATIONS

**ORGAN/COMMITTEE:** Practice

**TOPIC:** Environmental Standards in Agriculture

## ***RESOLUTION***

The General Assembly,

Acknowledging the informal nature of international climate treaties,

Emphasizing the very serious threat of climate change and global warming to the planet,

Bearing in mind that Minnesota is just one part of a federally administered government foreign policy,

Guided by admiration for the beauty of our natural environment,

Conscious of humanities impact on the natural environment,

Recognizing the essential impact agriculture has on maintaining global peace, prosperity, and health of all society,

Conceding not all states in their development will be able to abide by uniform international policy,

Realizing this resolution is a small part of a conversation on climate which will span many UN organs, committees, and conferences

1. Encourages all other states in the United States, as well as all UN member states to increased environmental responsibility in agricultural practices;
2. Commends states who are at the forefront of research and practice in environmentally sustainable agriculture;
3. Calls upon all relevant General Assembly Organs, UN ECOSOC, and member state governments to convene meetings on the myriad of issues involving in maintaining food security in our current climate crisis;
4. Affirms support for states with large growing populations that will need transition periods to meet any global sustainable agriculture goals;
5. Urges the universal adoption of this symbolic resolution to show support for future generations.

# AT THE CONFERENCE

## HOW TO CAUCUS

At MUN, the word caucus can mean two things. First, your caucus is the group of countries in your geographic proximity. You will be grouped with those countries for an initial training. You can find all the caucus groups and meeting locations in the session book. When authoring a resolution, first work closely with your own caucus as they will be the most likely to have similar policy goals.

Caucus time in your program area sessions is where huge portion of negotiation happens on resolutions and working papers. Any member can make a motion for caucus time which may be approved by the chair then voted on by the body. Once accepted the room dispenses the regular speaking list and allows the room to split into smaller groups. Here are some basic guidelines around caucusing:

- Remember the time is solely meant to be used for committee business. If the time is used poorly the chair may stop allowing caucus time.
- Include as many delegates as possible. By talking to different caucus groups, you may find support or helpful additions to your resolution.
- Caucus time is not meant to be a bathroom break, however during long program area times it is okay to get up move around and stretch.
- Use caucus time to ask a Secretariat to help you with statistics, research, or to contact the CRC for agency testimony.
- Caucus time is perfect for quickly authoring working papers or amendments to a resolution.

## SPEAKING AT MUN

International politics at the U.N. uses special language. Similarly, the official bodies of the U.N. use a funny procedural language, Parliamentary Procedure (parli-pro). It might take a day to get used to all the weird things folks are saying, but it is easy to navigate once you know the rules. Check out the next page for a list of all the common procedures. If you have a question about how to do something in program area time, ask another delegate, secretariat or your officer.

# PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE: MODEL UN'S LANGUAGE

## ABBREVIATIONS AND WORDS THAT YOU ARE ALREADY USING:

MUN: Model United Nations

GA: General Assembly

HRC: Human Rights Council

ICJ: International Court of Justice

ECOSOC: Economic and Social Council

CRC: Conference Resource Center

ParliPro: Parliamentary Procedure

Organs: The different parts of the UN (GA, HRC, etc.)

State: In the U.N. "state" is a synonym for "country." Example: China is a member state in the U.N.

## WHAT SHOULD I CALL MYSELF?

Remember to use language which reflects your roleplaying of a country. Instead of personal pronouns like "I", or "me", instead refer to your country.

Instead of, *"I think we should take in more refugees." Or "We like refugees here."*

USE

*"The great State of Minnesota believes in the policy of accepting refugees, and will continue to do so"*

Use a similar method to interact with other countries. Refer to them by country and when in disagreement always indirectly. Try this phrase out, "In reference to a previous speaker..."

*"In reference to a previous speaker, the State of Wisconsin is more apprehensive of raising the number of refugee's resettled."*

## HOW DOES DEBATE FLOW?

Just by using the language above and below, you are already part of the debate process. At the core of MUN's debate is a speakers list, which organizes who speaks next. The chair of a committee or president of an organ will indicate countries with their placard (a long card with a country name on it) raised to be added to the speakers list. Have a good point you want to bring up? Wait until your Committee Chair (the person leading the group at the front) "opens the speakers list" and raise your placard high. Remember not to raise your placard while other delegates are speaking to show respect.

## WHAT IS A MOTION?

A motion is a request made by a delegate to do anything that affects the proceedings of debate. This includes voting on a resolution/amendment, caucusing time, recessing, tabling a resolution etc. If a motion is made and the chair recognizes it, there must be another delegation who seconds the motion. You will figure out how this works quickly just by watching and listening.

When you initiate a "motion", you are "moving" the motion forward. As the mover you have specific language to invoke. Examples will be shared below.

If there is a second, there will be a verbal vote of "aye/nay" on whether the motion will be carried out.

Hint: Never raise your voice during a verbal vote or you will be out of order. Always vote aye or nay firmly but in your regular speaking voice.

#### **A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE MOST IMPORTANT/COMMONLY USED PHRASES:**

When you finish speaking in front of committee/organ and wish to return to your seat:

*"I yield my time to the Chair."*

This will let the Chair know to move onto the next speaker

When you wish to ask another delegate a question:

*"Will the delegate from (insert country name) yield to a question?"*

To ask multiple questions just use "...yield to a series of questions?"

When you want time to caucus:

*"I move to caucus for \_\_\_ minutes"*

This is a common motion, but is always at the discretion of the Chair

When you want to vote on a resolution/amendment:

*"I move to end debate and vote on the resolution/amendment"*

When the current program area time has elapsed for lunch, dinner, etc.:

*"I move to recess/adjourn until \_\_\_"*

When you want to stop debating a particular topic or resolution:

*"I move to table resolution \_\_\_ or topic \_\_\_."*

When you want to discuss your working paper or resolution or amendment:

*"I move my working paper/resolution/amendment."*

You should have written out the document in advance to present to the body.