PREPARATION FOR A MODEL UN

How to get prepared for a model UN?

In a Model UN you represent a country or an organization. You are their ambassador to the UN and your goal is to incorporate as much of their policy into a resolution as possible. To achieve this you need to become an expert, not only on the foreign policy of your country, but also on the topics. Your input is invaluable to the functioning and the outcome of the committee.

What to do step-by-step?

Your first task is to write a position paper. This paper contains some short general information on your country and their foreign policy. The larger part of the paper is the specific policy of your country on the topics on the agenda of your committee. Besides this it is also good to research in-depth the topics and other countries' positions. This will give you an advantage in the debates during the conference.

It is during these debates that a resolution will take shape, so an active attitude in debating and good lobbying is essential. You wouldn't want a resolution to contain anything that conflicts with your country's policy.

What information do I need?

As becomes clear from the above you need two types of information: that on your country's position regarding the topics, and specific information on the matters themselves. The country's position can vary in specificity from "we (don't) want military intervention in country x" to "we can agree with military intervention in country x on specific terms like a and b, and with a limited mandate, containing at least c, d and e." As you can see the country's policy and the topical information can overlap, depending on your country's involvement in the matter.

From where to gather information?

For these two types of information you can use a variety of sources. For information on a country's policy the start of your search will usually be the website of their Ministry of Foreign Affairs or of their Permanent Mission to the UN. Another source is the website of the UN itself, where you can find other resolutions your country supported or voted against and speeches that have previously been held on the topic.

The substantive information on the topics can be found anywhere on the internet. Reports from NGO's or other bodies, academic sources, journalistic sources and topical websites are always good sources, but you are only limited by your creativity.

What is a position paper and how to write it?

The position paper, as stated above, contains a short background on your country and their general foreign policy. This should be no more than 2 or 3 paragraphs. The specific policy should be at least half a page for each topic. This consists of recognizing the problem (or not!), noting what has been done in the past to resolve it, stating what it is your country wants to focus on and giving possible solutions your country will pursue in the debates. This should add up to a paper of about 2-3 pages, which is to be submitted to our chairpersons by email. In the download section on the right you will find an example of what a position paper should look like.

Why do I need an opening speech?

An opening speech in front of your committee is the start of the debates. This is the opportunity for you to tell your fellow delegates what your position is and what you will be focusing on during the conference. This way every delegate gets a quick but complete overview of all the positions in the committee. An opening speech is usually no longer than 2 minutes and will only consist of the major points of your policy. Details will be worked out during the debates and lobby sessions.

For more detailed information on preparation, speeches and resolutions will soon be available in the Rules of Procedure section, where we will post a complete delegate guide.