

## *Delegate Preparation Guide*

### **Get to Know Your Country**

Learn the basics about your country, including:

- geography and culture (climate, terrain, religious and ethnic groups, official language/s, etc)
- type of political system, current leadership, and recent political issues (elections, ethnic conflict, civil wars, human rights record, environmental issues, etc)
- economic and social conditions (major industries, standard of living, national debt, size of population, infant mortality, literacy, etc)
- foreign affairs (alliances, membership in international organizations, military capabilities, amount and type of international trade, recipient or donor of international aid, etc)

Excellent sources include:

- the website of your country's foreign ministry
- the website of your country's permanent mission at the United Nations in New York; to find this go to <http://www.un.org/en/members/>.
- the CIA World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>.
- US Department of State Background Notes, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/>.
- Library of Congress Country Studies, <http://www.memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/cshome.html>.
- books on your country and its region
- current periodicals (see list below)
- other resources listed on the Mansfield Library's "United Nations Guide," <http://libguides.lib.umt.edu/un>.

It can also be helpful to write to the permanent mission at the United Nations of the country you are representing. Let them know you are participating in a Model UN conference, and ask them for information about the country and its position on the topics before your committee. Some embassies are well-staffed and very cooperative. In case they are not, we recommend writing as soon as you know your country assignment.

### **Get to Know the United Nations and Your Committee**

Learn the basics of the UN and your committee, including their history, structure, and current events.

Excellent sources include:

- the UN website, <http://www.un.org/>, and the UN Charter, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/> Be sure to read the parts of the charter that pertain to your committee
- your committee's website
- the MMUN background guide for your committee, which will be posted on the MMUN website
- the UN Documentation Center, <http://www.un.org/documents/>, and your committee's website, both of which should provide access to past resolutions
- UN News Centre, <http://www.un.org/News/>, which is the official press agency of the UN and posts up-to-date information about UN activities and world problems

- current periodicals (see list below)

### **Research the Topics on Your Committee's Agenda**

It is very important to research your country's position on the topics you will be discussing in your committee. This will enable you to write an accurate position paper and draft resolutions that your country would actually support. Excellent sources include:

- the website of your country's foreign ministry
- the website of your country's permanent mission at the United Nations in New York
- the MMUN background guide for your committee, which will be posted on the MMUN website
- "Voting Practices in the United Nations," a US State Department website with detailed information on country's voting records, <http://www.state.gov/p/io/rls/rpt/>
- current periodicals (see list below)

If your country's position is unclear, or you are unable to find information on its stance on a particular subject, try to deduce your country's position from what you know about the topic and what you know about your country. Knowing your country's position is an essential part of representing your country in formal speeches, when forming alliances, and in sponsoring and voting on resolutions.

Having a firm grasp of your country's position on a topic will also aid you in debating other delegates' resolutions. An important part of the conference is to not only seek negotiation and compromise on one's own resolutions, but to discuss other delegates' resolutions by offering contributions, pointing to clauses that your country disagrees with and drawing attention to these amongst allies who may want to create an amendment, or seeking to negotiate a change from the resolution's sponsors. Debating these issues and promoting your own resolutions is also important for the voting process. Doing so will assist you in getting support against resolutions that you think your country would find unfavorable and garnering support for the documents you and your cosponsors have created. To accomplish this, you must have a strong understanding of your country and its general or topical disposition.

### **Network**

During your research and preparation, it is important for the delegates representing each country to meet regularly to share and discuss the materials they have gathered. During these discussions, you should establish a consensus on the positions and issues, as they tend to overlap across committees. Sharing position papers can be useful to this end.

### **Know Your Allies**

At the UN and in Model UN, it is vital to know your allies. This allows you to form groups to co-sponsor resolutions, negotiate as a team, and vote as a bloc. Often countries from the same region vote as a bloc. Other times, voting is more issue-specific. So, as you research your country, the UN, and the topics before your committee, think about which countries are like yours (culturally, economically, politically, and otherwise), and make a note of any alliances and other forms of cooperation you discover. For information on some UN blocs, go to <http://cyberschoolbus.un.org/infonation3/glossary.html>

### **Developing Skills and Preparing to Enhance Formal and Informal Debate**

*Formal Debate - Public Speaking*

Montana Model United Nations  
High School Conference

Presenting your country's views on a particular issue represents a fundamental component to the process of negotiating and finding consensus with fellow delegates. As a result, becoming more comfortable with public speaking and knowing what to include in a speech for both setting the agenda and for an introductory speech on a topic plays a quintessential role in succeeding at MMUN.

Becoming more comfortable with public speaking requires continual practice. Try speaking out loud to yourself in a mirror or even in front of family and friends to gain comfort in speaking in front of others. For opening speeches or speeches on the agenda, one can even prepare by writing these speeches ahead of time and practicing them prior to the conference. These kinds of speeches offer an opportunity to express one's country's position on the topics and find other delegates with similar positions. Through practice, one can reduce the number fillers (e.g. "um") in one's speech, make one's points more clear, increase one's skill in techniques like eye contact and using gestures and pauses for emphasis, become accustomed to diplomatic language, and get used to using the name of one's country, rather than the preposition I, as expected in MMUN. These will maximize the use and effectiveness of one's time and speeches, providing for a more fulfilling experience at MMUN and facilitating the processes of collaboration, negotiating, and finding co-sponsors.

Although MMUN encourages writing introductory and agenda speeches ahead of time, later speeches will likely depend on the nature of the committee's discourse, working papers, and the debate on resolutions and amendments. Thus, as noted above, becoming aware of the topics and your country's general position are vital to making effective speeches with less time to plan or write as the committee progresses. It will also help one to critically examine other delegates' resolutions, which provides more content for speeches during the process of debating draft resolutions.

*Informal Caucusing and Writing and Debating Resolutions*

Once the committee has transitioned into its first unmoderated or moderated caucuses on a topic, delegates will begin by developing, negotiating, and compromising on working papers. Understanding the topics, your committee, and your country's position will not only help in formulating ideas, but ensure a lively debate with one's fellow delegates and help you determine which clauses of working papers you think are the most important and which ideas you are willing to negotiate. During this time, you should also seek additional sponsors, or at least signatories, who support your document. The more people who have had a chance to contribute to a document, the greater the chance it has of passing during the voting process. The best method for seeking partners on a draft resolution is to have prepared well for the conference, such as knowing your country's typical allies and knowing the general position of other countries either from a reference in the background guide/your personal research, or from their international status (e.g. developing versus developed countries).

After working papers have been accepted and officially become draft resolutions, your next aim should be to promote your own resolutions; debate and seek opinions from others on friendly amendments that might make the resolution more likely to pass; provide constructive criticism, feedback, and suggestions for improvement on others' draft resolutions; develop unfriendly amendments if you cannot find agreement with the sponsors of a resolution; and determine whether you will vote for or against a resolution. To accomplish this, you must come prepared to critically, though respectfully, evaluate the resolutions of other delegates, which entails knowing your country well enough to determine when it would disagree with a statement and whether the offered solution seems appropriate for the issue (e.g. that it will not cause problems for the country you are representing).

Remember to remain in character and uphold the positions of your country, but do not let small disagreements over wording and content obstruct the ultimate goal of finding compromise. Also remember that even a critical analysis of others' resolutions should remain diplomatic and respectful.

### **Current Periodicals and Other Information Sources**

Remember that it's always best to consult several sources. Reliable US newspapers include the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*. The journals *Foreign Affairs* and *Foreign Policy* are also excellent.

International sources include the *Economist*, the *Guardian* (London), *Le Monde*, (Paris), and ITAR-TASS (a Russian news source). Wordpress.org is another excellent source; it digests international news from media sources around the world.

Radio sources include National Public Radio programs such as "Morning Edition," BBC World Service," and "All Things Considered." TV sources include PBS and news shows such as "The News Hour," "BBC World," "Charlie Rose," "NOW," and "Frontline." We especially like "Foreign Exchange" because the guests are international policy makers, journalists, and scholars. The ABC, CBS, and NBC evening news, as well as ABC's "Nightline," can also be helpful.