



CHAPTER FIVE

POSITION PAPERS

Well crafted position papers can serve as an excellent preparatory tool for Model UN conference participants. A position paper can be used either as a device for internal preparation among the members of a delegation, or as a “public” statement of your delegation’s positions on the issues being discussed at the Conference. AMUN requests that all delegations submit public position papers to the Conference, but also strongly suggests that each delegation prepare internal position papers which more clearly and completely define their nation’s perspective.

AMUN believes the most important information a delegation can furnish to other delegations prior to the Conference is its basic public policy on each issue to be discussed.

“Internal” Position Papers

This type of position paper is intended as a preparatory tool for the individuals on your delegation, and for the delegation as a whole. While these are not required, AMUN strongly recommends that groups preparing for the Conference utilize position papers as one step in their preparations. Internal position papers, which are often called “white papers” in the international community, are a broad-based statement of your country’s policies on a specific issue. This might include what you publicly tell other nations, your knowledge of any behind the scenes diplomacy (e.g. what deals have been made on the sidelines), information on allies and adversaries on each topic, your negotiating position on the topic, and what your nation hopes to accomplish on the topic. This might also include your “bottom line” negotiating position, the things you will press for in discussions, and what (if anything) your nation must see, or *not see*, in a resolution before it can provide support.

Internal position papers are very valuable tools for individual preparation, as they force students to think about the full complexity of the issues they are confronting from your delegation’s perspective. Also, by asking students to put their ideas in writing, an internal position paper can force each student to condense a large amount of research and ideas into a small, more comprehensible argument from your nation’s perspective.

These types of position papers do not need to be more than one or two pages in length, and may be written either in paragraph form or with bullet points for each unique idea/issue in the topic area. Also, the entire delegation can benefit from each individual’s work if these papers are copied and shared with each member of the group, thus providing a more well-rounded view of the represented country’s positions on all issues.

“Public” Position Papers

This type of position paper is intended as a public statement of your country’s positions on the topics being discussed at the AMUN Conference. It should include brief statements about where your country stands on the issue in question and on what the UN has done

to confront this issue. It should also include your country’s public position on the options for the UN in the future, noting proposals which your group has (or intends to have) sponsored, supported, or not supported and why. Public papers do not need to go into detail about your negotiating positions or other “behind the scenes” issues, but should rather be seen as something that a diplomat might say in a public speech on the topic.

Items to Include in “Public” Position Papers

While the position papers sent to the Conference can include any material that your delegation deems appropriate for public consumption, a number of items should be included in a well-written position paper. First, each section of the paper should specifically state the one or two key points that your country believes are the most important on each topic. While other important issues can be included, no more than two (or possibly as many as three) main points should be highlighted. The paper can then go into specific details on why these points are important and on what your country believes should be done by the UN or its Member States to improve the situation in question. Many papers will then sum up by recapping the most important points.

Also, there are a number of things which you may want to include in your position paper. These will vary by topic based on the issue and the information available. Important items to incorporate in each section of the position paper include:

- References to past UN resolutions and international treaties, providing the specific number or name of that document and the year it passed;
- References to the UN Charter, as appropriate for the topic;
- Past statements by the Secretary-General, a senior UN Secretariat member or by a representative of a UN agency on the topic;
- Reference to the work the UN has already done on the topic, whether by specialized agencies, regional bodies or working with non-governmental organizations;
- Past statements on the topic by representatives of your government, especially if these mention the significance of the specific issue to your country;
- Specific suggestions of action(s) that your country will support in solving the issue in question.

Finally, it is important to note that a well-written public position paper is **not** about your country, but rather about what your country would like to accomplish on the topics of discussion in each simulation. Thus your public position papers should not talk about the problems facing your country, but rather the problems facing the international community. Other countries do not care as much about your internal issues, but rather are interested in where your country stands on the external issues under discussion at the UN. If your country is a clear example of a successful UN program in action, or if your country is a member of an affected group, you may want

to include a brief reference to that in your paper; otherwise, there is usually no need to even mention specifics about your country in a position paper.

Submission of Position Papers

AMUN requests that each delegation submit a position paper to the Conference, covering each committee and council simulation on which it is seated, **no later than 25 October 2008**. These papers should include **no more than one-half page on each topic** that is covered under the committee or council. Thus all delegations should submit a paper covering the Concurrent GA Plenary and each of the four General Assembly Committees, including both topics for each committee. Delegations represented on ECOSOC should also include the three main topics of discussion for that Council. Delegations represented on the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice should also include the two topics of discussion for the Commission. Delegations represented on the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific should also include the two topics of discussion for the Commission. Delegations represented on the Security Council and Historical Security Council should choose the two or three topics which they think are the most important for their respective Councils to discuss, and include these in their position paper. If a delegation chooses to place a Representative on the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), a section for that agency should also be included.

Format of Papers: One comprehensive position paper should be submitted on-line for each *delegation*, combining all of the committees/councils on which that delegation is seated. A sample position paper, along with full submission instructions are available at AMUN's website (<http://www.amun.org/index.php?page=samplepapers>).

While these papers will not be "judged" in any way by the AMUN Secretariat, they will be made available to all delegations both on-line pre-conference and at the Conference as a statement of your country's starting positions and intentions. Position papers will be collected and

organized by the AMUN Secretariat, and then posted in the Home Government office and at each committee/council dais for public perusal during the Conference.

Submission Specifications: AMUN requests that all position papers be submitted in electronic format, utilizing AMUN's on-line web form. These will then be printed out and made available electronically at the Conference. Position papers should be submitted on-line at the AMUN website (www.amun.org). Additional submission information will be sent in the fall to all registered schools. AMUN reserves the right to reject any position paper that fails to address one of the topics as stated in the *Issues at AMUN* handbook or does not comport to basic standards of diplomatic courtesy.

Extension of Due Dates: AMUN realizes that some schools are on quarter or trimester systems, thus leading to later starting dates. Any school with a late Fall start date may request a one week extension to the official due dates listed above by emailing the AMUN Executive Office at mail@amun.org.

Position Paper Award Certificate

AMUN will provide a Position Paper Award Certificate for each country that submits a completed position paper, including sections for each topic in all assigned simulations, by Midnight Central Time on 25 October 2008. Note that this must include sections for the General Assembly Plenary, all GA Committees, and any other simulation on which your country is seated. Sections on the Special Committee and ECOSOC Commissions need only be included in your position paper if your country will place a representative on those simulations. If your school is representing multiple countries, each country will be considered separately for Position Paper Certificates. Please contact the AMUN Executive Office if you have any questions.

If you have any questions about writing or submitting position papers, please contact the AMUN Executive Office at mail@amun.org, or call 773-777-AMUN.