



CHAPTER TWO

ROLE PLAYING AND PREPARATION

The Representative

Representatives are fundamental to any Model UN conference. A delegate's job is to research the positions of a UN Member State, both on the specific topics that will be discussed at the Conference and as a general overview of that nation's policies.

Representatives should then be ready to discuss the issues with their counterparts and to prepare draft resolutions and reports, or other documents based on the specifics of each simulation, which codify solutions to problems. These draft resolutions and documents may be submitted for debate at the Conference. *See Chapter VI - Draft Resolutions, et al., for details.*

Finally, Representatives attend the Conference to *represent* their nation in discussing the various issues presented. **When Representatives reach the floor of the Model UN conference, they assume the role of the Distinguished Representative from their country, with all the rights and responsibilities which that entails.**

At the Conference, Representatives, in the role of their country's spokesperson, will debate the issues on the agenda to seek solutions to the problems facing the world community. They will also create and discuss draft resolutions and reports, caucus with Representatives who are role-playing other countries, and work to solve the problems facing the world. In the UN today, nations will usually debate an item in an attempt to reach a consensus that can be agreed to by all, or at least by most, nations. The draft resolutions and reports under discussion at AMUN can be accepted by consensus, adopted, amended, combined or even debated to the point that no final document can be produced on a given issue.

Special effort should be made to achieve consensus on issues, rather than requiring a formal vote, thus showing solidarity and strong support for UN decisions. Over seventy-five percent of the General Assembly's resolutions are now adopted by consensus. While not always achievable on every issue, passage of resolutions by consensus illustrates the importance of an issue to the international community. By striving for universal agreement on their resolutions, AMUN committee and council simulations strive to emulate this aspect of international diplomacy.

Role Playing

AMUN is a **simulation** of the UN. By its very nature, the quality and tone of debate will be dramatically different than in the "real" UN. At the UN, Representatives and their consular staffs spend months in preparation, "behind doors" caucusing, and interacting with other nations *before* an issue is brought to a vote. A UN Representative, or Head of State, will almost always make a prepared speech that will not be "news" to the other Representatives present.

At AMUN, Representatives will only have four days to assume the role of their nation's Representative and simulate the actions of the UN. This consolidation of time leads to many different circumstances

with which each delegation will have to contend. Among the considerations is the fact that Representatives will rarely have the opportunity to make a pre-written speech on a topic. Instead, they will often be forced to verbally react to circumstances as they arise, and they may be in a position where it is reasonable to reinterpret their nation's position in light of new facts. Representatives should not simply read from their country's established record on the issues presented; they should be prepared to compromise with the other nations represented and adapt their policies where needed to meet the current circumstances of the world as simulated at the Conference.

Note that this in no way gives delegations license to act "out of character." Representatives should research and generally follow the policies of their country, modifying these as new circumstances dictate. Successful role playing involves walking a careful line on policy; avoid the extremes of either reading verbatim a country's past statements or creating an ad hoc policy with no previous basis.

Research and Preparation

As a general rule, Representatives should become familiar with several items in their preparations for the Conference, from the UN system as a whole to the specifics of their country's position on the topics of discussion for their respective committees. Research and preparation can be broken into six areas:

1. The UN System as a Whole: It is vitally important for each Representative to understand the basics of the organization which they are simulating: the United Nations. Well-prepared students should not only know the basics of the UN's structure, but should have a good understanding of how the Committee they will be working on fits into the organization. In building this knowledge base, Representatives will better understand what their Committee/Council can or cannot do within the UN system, what they can make recommendations on, what they can reasonably "demand," and what issues are beyond the purview of the body they are simulating. The *Issues at AMUN* handbook includes a brief description under each Committee of what is within the purview for that body. This is provided to assist students in understanding the place of their work in the UN system, and it should be supplemented with additional research.

2. Current statistical information and a general background of the represented nation's history and policies: This is the first key to understanding what actions a nation may prefer on specific issues. Research should include, but certainly not be limited to, such areas as population, government type, natural resources, and trade data for the nation being represented. Traditional allies and adversaries should also be noted. Additionally, a country's history can be crucial to its contemporary actions, including the question of whether that country was previously colonized or was a colonial power, when the country gained statehood, and what means were used in gaining independence (civil war, violent struggle, peaceful movement, etc.).

3. Specific background of the nation's viewpoints on the issues to be discussed at the Conference: This is the central point of most Model UN preparation - focused research on the issues being discussed in each committee and on the Member State's position on those issues. Research can come from a variety of sources, beginning with UN documents (often found on the Internet or in paper form in a library or documents depository) and moving to articles, periodical sources, books, and Internet resources beyond the UN website. UN resolutions and reports on the issues under discussion are especially helpful because they provide a quick reference to what has already been accomplished by the UN, and to what still needs to be done in the future. These documents also frequently provide voting information, which allows Representatives to quickly determine their country's past positions on issues. A number of relevant sources are provided in the bibliography section of each topic brief in the *Issues at AMUN* handbook. Contacting the represented country's Permanent Mission to the UN can also be helpful, but the level of assistance provided varies with each country's policies and the resources they have available to help others.

For some countries, it will be very easy to find specific information to determine a position on most or all topics, and for others this information will be difficult to come by or simply not available. When clear-cut information is not available, it is incumbent on the students preparing to make the best possible interpolations of what the country's policy would be, given the facts available. This might include knowing the country's background, its traditional allies, the stance of a regional group with whom they tend to agree, or a variety of other factors. Regardless of the facts available, knowing *exactly* what a country would do in a given situation is typically not possible. Representatives should strive in their research to know as much as they can about the country and its stance on each topic, and to educate themselves enough to make reasonable policy assumptions on issues which are not totally clear.

4. The current world situation as it applies to the nation: This is a subset of the previous two areas of research, but is important enough to be mentioned in its own right. There is a significant difference between the policies of the only remaining superpower and a nation with very little military might. Even more significant at the UN is the difference between the policies of the relatively rich, industrialized nations and the relatively poor, developing (and especially least-developed) nations on many issues. Additionally, a nation which is currently involved in a civil war, or a nation which is under UN sanctions, may have unique responses on some issues which are very different from those of the remainder of the international community. Knowing where the nation a student represents fits in the current world geopolitical context, as a complement to his or her country specific research, can answer many questions which will come up during the simulation.

5. A specific background of the perspectives of nations with differing viewpoints on the issues: This is one of the more difficult areas in preparation. While it is reasonable to expect that a Representative will know who their general allies and adversaries on a given issue should be (regional partners, long-standing allies, etc.), it is very difficult to have

detailed information on what the policies of each country in the simulation will be on a given issue. Limitations in preparation time by definition require that students focus *primarily* on the policies of their own country, often learning about others through references in their own research. This is an area where complete knowledge will serve participants well, but it is much more likely that each Representative will be learning the formal policies of the other countries in the committee when they give speeches from the floor and confer behind the scenes in caucus sessions.

6. AMUN Rules of Procedure (provided in this handbook): While substantive discussions of the issues form the basis of any good simulation of the UN, the rules of procedure are used to facilitate the substantive debate which occurs. In general, these rules are intended to provide an even playing field, allowing each country to accomplish its individual goals in advocating their policies, while also maximizing opportunities for the group to reach agreement, or even consensus, on the issues. Several levels of preparation are possible on the rules. For new Model UN participants, it is recommended that each person have a working knowledge of the principal motions which can be made during the simulation, as encapsulated on the Rules Short Forms on pages 39-40 of this book. The chairperson of each committee will assist Representatives in using these rules on the first day of the Conference, and assist in bringing everyone onto an even playing field. For experienced Representatives, especially those who have not attended AMUN in the past, we suggest reading AMUN's rules in-depth, both as a refresher on these rules of procedure and to note differences from other conferences a school might attend. Most Model UN conferences use at least slightly different rules of procedure, and in some cases the contrasts are significant. In order to best facilitate everyone's experience, it is incumbent upon every participant to learn and use the rules as laid out for this Conference.

Preparing as a Group

Research on the areas described above is the essential element in preparing for AMUN. It is strongly recommended that Representatives use a combined effort whenever possible in doing research. Representatives can fully take advantage of all the people representing their country by assigning various topics to each individual to research and report on to the group; some areas will naturally lend themselves to group research and discussion, while others will be more individual based.

In particular, researching the UN system and the specific background on a nation can be more easily accomplished by a group effort. Each student can be assigned a specific area, such as historical background of the country, current statistics, etc. Individuals can then report back to the group on their findings, possibly including a written and/or oral report, and allow for greater burden-sharing among the delegation members.

By contrast, research on the topics discussed in each Committee will, by its nature, be more individualistic. This does not mean, however, that the other members of the delegation will not benefit from a briefing on each topic. Topic briefings can both give the entire delegation a broader picture of country policy, as well as give the individual Representatives valuable practice in consolidating the

information they discover and in making a public presentation to the group. These briefings may also assist the entire delegation in gaining a global perspective on its country's policies.

Strategy at the Conference

Toward the end of the preparation process, each delegation should determine its strategy and goals for the Conference. The delegation should be involved in working toward solutions to the problems placed before the United Nations. This requires a great deal of negotiation and compromise, often at the expense of certain positions which may be of concern to an individual delegation. Each delegation's Representatives must therefore decide which items are of greatest importance to their nation and set their strategies accordingly. Strategic areas to consider include

- What kind of role will the delegation play at the Conference (Examples: conciliatory, obstructive, aggressive, neutral or leading)?
- Will the delegation seek leadership positions in each Committee/Council and in the General Assembly Plenary?
- How can the delegation achieve the goals and interests identified in your research?
- With which other nations will the delegation attempt to work (this may vary by committee or by topic)?
- Which other delegations will be this delegation's main adversaries on each topic?

Remember, passing resolutions and reports is not the true measure of success at the Conference. While each delegation is encouraged to propose resolutions on the various issues, Representatives must stand ready to **compromise** to achieve any real solution to the problems being discussed.

The Permanent Representative

Each delegation must appoint one person to act as the primary Representative for that delegation, assuming the role of *Permanent Representative* when the delegation is on the floor for meetings. Schools with more than one delegation must appoint one Permanent Representative per delegation represented.

The Permanent Representative has a number of responsibilities, including

- Being responsible to the Secretariat for the delegation and its actions;
- Acting as the leader of the delegation for substantive matters;
- Coordinating the delegation across Committees and Councils, and during the move from General Assembly Committees into the Combined General Assembly Plenary and the ECOSOC Committees and Councils into the Combined ECOSOC Plenary sessions;
- Coordinating and monitoring the delegation's submission of draft resolutions, reports and other documents;
- Representing the delegation at general meetings of Permanent Representatives called by the Conference;
- Acting as liaison to the Secretariat for any administrative matters at the Conference.

The Permanent Representative may sit in any Committee/Council at AMUN on which that delegation is seated, in addition to the two regular Representatives allowed in any body. The Permanent Representative may be assigned to a specific Committee/Council, or may "float" throughout the various simulations at the Conference, helping where needed. If the Permanent Representative is not assigned to a specific Committee or Council, this person may be ideal to serve as an ICJ Advocate or to be available if your country is called into the Security Council or the Historical Security Council. Permanent Representatives will be asked to provide their hotel room numbers, cellular phone numbers (if available), and Committee/Council assignment to the Secretariat when they register at the Conference.

As leader of the delegation, the Permanent Representative should be the focal point for coordinating the delegation's efforts throughout the various Committees/Councils. This person should allow your nation to maintain a coherent policy on similar issues which may surface in the different simulations.

It is **essential** that the Permanent Representative maintain contact with all Committees/Councils to ensure that one Representative is not acting in a way which is inconsistent with the remainder of their delegation. While the "character" of the delegation's role-playing should be thoroughly discussed in advance of the Conference, it is the Permanent Representative's job to make sure that individuals remain within that "character" while at the Conference.

It is also very important for the Permanent Representative to monitor draft resolutions, reports and other documents sponsored by the delegation. A draft resolution or document is a written statement of a country's viewpoint on the issue in question. Each draft resolution should be considered carefully to ensure that it is within the country's policies and is of sufficient content to not prove embarrassing to the country if submitted for consideration on the floor.

The Faculty Advisor

If a school has a Faculty Advisor, AMUN suggests that his/her main role be in working with and preparing the school's delegation(s) before they attend the Conference. Regardless of whether the Faculty Advisor is a class professor or club sponsor, this person can assist the delegation in both logistical and content preparation for the Conference.

Logistically, the Faculty Advisor may be the main contact with both the Conference and the school administration. This role could include working with finances and group organization, registering the school for the Conference, making hotel reservations, preparing travel arrangements, and a host of other preparations. Alternately, these roles could be delegated and assumed by the delegation leaders or club officers at a school.

In helping delegations prepare for the content issues they will face at the Conference, Faculty Advisors could either run a full curriculum class or serve as a resource for a Model UN Club or other organization. They may use a well-established, proven curriculum or utilize this handbook as a guide to preparing the students who will attend. All registered schools will receive the *Model UN "in a Box"* Simulation Guide, which contains resources to assist Model UN leaders in training delegations to participate at AMUN. Also, the

Faculty Advisor can coordinate and run preparatory sessions to better prepare students for the Conference.

Grading the Model UN Experience

AMUN strongly recommends that Faculty Advisors **not** grade students based on quantitative measures of performance at the Conference. This very often leads to poor role-playing as the students involved are working for their grade, and not necessarily to accurately portray their country. Several areas where AMUN specifically **discourages** grading include

- Students getting “their” resolution or amendment to the floor or passed;
- Students speaking a certain number of times (stressing quantity over quality); or
- Students making a certain number of motions.

If grading is necessary, AMUN suggests the following as possible areas for appraisal:

- Pre-Conference preparation (possibly including testing or paper submission);
- Quality of position papers, either internal or those submitted to the Conference;
- Quality of resolutions drafted;
- The effectiveness of the student at the Conference in playing the delegation’s role (based on direct Faculty observations, not the quantitative items listed previously). This could include:
 - Clearly stating and basing all actions upon the country’s position;
 - Effectively working with other delegations, both on the floor and in caucusing; and
 - Effectively working toward a consensus of the body, when appropriate;
- Whether or not the student is present and on time for all assigned Committee/Council sessions; and
- A post-Conference paper based on what students learn and experience at the Conference.

The interactive nature of the Model UN experience provides incredible learning opportunities for the students who attend and become immersed in that experience. AMUN requests that Faculty Advisors not dilute the students’ experience by linking grades to quantitative performance at the Conference.

Delegations That Are “Out of Character”

Because students attending the Conference are not career diplomats representing their country and will not have lived or been raised in the country they are representing, questions do sometimes arise at Conference as to whether the actions of individuals are “out of character” in relation to their delegations’ policies in the real world. AMUN has several specific suggestions to address this issue.

First, and most importantly, **being “in character” is the responsibility of each delegation, and ultimately falls to the Permanent Representative and/or the Faculty Advisor.** There is no possible substitute for extensive preparation on your country and the issues to be discussed **before** attending the Conference. AMUN expects that the members of each delegation will enter the Conference

prepared and more knowledgeable about his/her individual country and their country’s stance on the issues than any other Representative present.

If you, or your delegation, feel that a Representative has not done sufficient research and is misinformed or acting “out of character” on a particular issue, AMUN recommends several steps which can be taken:

- First, please revisit the actions taken by the Representative in question. Is the Representative “out of character” given the particular resolution and situation on the floor? Have circumstances (either in the real world or at Conference) changed such that the Representative could *realistically* modify their country’s stance on a particular issue? Are you **certain** that you know the actual stance of the country in question on the issue? Many cases of a Representative appearing “out of character” are actually just misinterpretations of what was said or of a country’s previously stated policies.
- If you still feel that the Representative is “out of character,” AMUN asks that you talk to the Representative about the issue before bringing the problem to the Secretariat. This can be easily done in a **non-confrontational** manner by stating something like: “*I hadn’t realized that was your country’s position on the issue, where did you see that?*” -or- “*I thought I read something in (state your source) about your country having a different opinion on this issue; have you seen that information?*” Directly confronting a Representative to say “*You’re wrong on this*” will likely not succeed and could damage your diplomatic relations in the future.
- The Representative will likely respond in one of three ways to your question. The Representative may respond with information to justify their statements, with a statement like “*I did the research and this is my country’s view on the issue,*” or with interest in the new information you have provided. If this response answers your question, the issue is resolved. If a Representative is interested in more information, please send that person to the Home Government office, which has many files and resources to help with questions. If the Representative is non-responsive or chooses not to answer your question, you can bring the issue to the attention of the Dais Staff, who will assist Representatives in seeking further assistance from the Home Government Secretariat.
- **Please note that AMUN Chairs and Rapporteurs are specifically instructed to NOT provide advice to Representatives on the issues being discussed.** AMUN staff members have different roles. Chairs are specifically trained on the Rules of Procedure. Rapporteurs provide some basic content assistance to Representatives in the room, especially focusing on the drafting of resolutions and reports. The Home Government Secretariat is trained on assisting Representatives with content questions. Committee Chairs or Rapporteurs may arbitrate disagreements but will never render an opinion regarding an “out of character” situation.

If delegations or individual are finding it difficult to remain in character, AMUN’s goal is to provide them with the information needed to correctly represent their country on a given issue. The

delegation's Permanent Representative will always be sought out by the Secretariat if someone from their delegation may be "out of character" to inform them of the situation.

Because all participants at AMUN are learning about the United Nations as they participate, these situations may occur. AMUN expects that all delegations will take the time necessary to prepare and correctly portray their country on each issue under consideration. AMUN also asks that Representatives not jump to conclusions on other delegations' role playing without having a detailed background on the other country's position on the issue. Finally, AMUN asks that Representatives on all sides handle potential "out of character" situations with the utmost diplomatic courtesy for all parties involved. The AMUN Secretariat will be the final arbiter of any "out of character" disputes that arise at the Conference.

Rules of Procedure

Another recommended method of preparation for AMUN is to hold practice rules sessions for Representatives. First, review the rules as a group and work out any questions. Next, using the AMUN rules, develop several mock resolutions to discuss. Delegations can then hold a mock session, with each student representing a different nation and utilizing the rules in a "real" setting. This can also give students the opportunity to "trade roles" as practice for the Conference. Note that this method of preparation has also been successful where delegations have held an open conference, including any interested students at their school, not just the members of their class or club. AMUN also provides the AMUN *Model UN "in a Box"* Simulation Guide which can assist Faculty Advisors or club leaders in running practice simulations.

Please feel free to phone, e-mail or write the AMUN Secretariat at the address provided on the credits page of this book if you have any questions about the rules.

General Sources of Information

AMUN recommends the following general sources of information to use when researching your country and the issues of the Conference. Note that many of these sources are available on the Internet, either publicly or through subscriptions that are often held by your school library.

- *United Nations Today* (UN Department of Public Information)
- *The World Almanac* or *The Universal Almanac*
- Permanent Missions to the United Nations (Write for information on your nation and the specific issues under consideration)
- UN Department of Public Information (Write for a publications list)
- *The Europa World Yearbook* (Available in most library reference sections; contains detailed background on all countries and international organizations in the world)
- *United Nations Handbook* (Published annually by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade)
- Various periodicals, including the *UN Chronicle*, *New York Times*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *The Economist* (Weekly), and *Keesing's Record of World Events* (Monthly)

The address for the United Nations Department of Public Information is

UN Department of Public Information/Publications, Room DC2-0853, United Nations, New York, NY 10017, (212) 963-1234. Request a Model United Nations Kit and a UN DPI Catalog. The Model UN kit contains many of the most useful UN documents for your preparations at a low charge. Also, most UN publications are for sale, and many will be provided for free if your delegation offers to handle any shipping charges.

Participants can also contact the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) to request any specific document published by the United Nations at no charge, so long as the document number is known. These document numbers can usually be found through Internet searches. The UNIC in the United States can be contacted at 1775 K Street, N.W., Suite 400, Washington, DC 20006, (202) 331-8670.

Utilizing the Internet

AMUN Website: When using the Internet, a great starting point is AMUN International's website, which includes links to these and many other UN-related sites. This website is updated with UN links as they become available and includes a great deal of background information to assist in your preparations for a conference. AMUN's Website can be reached at www.amun.org.

News Sources: Most major newspapers and news organizations are available online. A few sites of particular interest include *The New York Times* at www.nyt.com, *The Washington Post* at www.washingtonpost.com, and CNN at www.cnn.com. Note that the *Washington Post* site also includes all *Associated Press* stories filed during the week. All of these pages (and many others) provide both daily news, as well as searchable archives of previous news stories. *Google News* at news.google.com is also an excellent source for country and topic information, allowing you to input specific key words and then providing a daily synopsis of worldwide news using those words.

UN Documents: Many United Nations resolutions, documents, speeches and other resources can be accessed through the Internet. Most UN agencies are represented, along with databases containing information on various regions around the world.

In particular, the main United Nations Website at www.un.org provides up-to-date information on UN Documents passed in the General Assembly, Security Council, and ECOSOC, as well as historical information from these bodies, reports of the Secretary-General on various issues, and other very useful documents.

Many UN members now have websites for their permanent missions in New York and Geneva. When a website is available, it often includes details on the country's policy and may have actual speeches given by Representatives of that country at the United Nations. These addresses can be found at www.un.org/members.

The UN also provides public access to its Optical Disk System (ODS), which includes nearly all of the documents published by the UN, including many that are not available on the UN's main website. The ODS system is available at documents.un.org. Please note that the search engine available on ODS is not always easy to use, but it is very easy to find files if you know the UN document number.

You may want to utilize the UNBISNET search engine to find your document name/number, and then move to ODS to find the actual document. UNBISNET also provides access to voting records and country speeches. It is located at unbisnet.un.org.

One of the best sources of up-to-date, timely and broad-ranging news is the UN Foundation's *UN Wire* daily newsletter. This publication, which is provided for free by the UN Foundation, provides 20+ daily stories on UN-related issues and topics. These usually involve a brief (1-2 paragraph) synopsis of the current story, along with invaluable links to more information, both inside the UN system and across the Internet. The highlights of *UN Wire* can be e-mailed to you daily

(again at no charge) or you can visit it on the web at www.smartbrief.com/un_wire. You can also access *UN Wire* issues published before August, 2004 at www.unwire.org.

The UN Information Centre (UNIC) also provides a weekly update on UN activities. You can request this free e-mail service at www.unicwash.org.

If you have any trouble reaching AMUN's Website, or would like additional assistance in finding UN resources (whether general or specific) on the Internet, please feel free to contact the AMUN Executive Office or e-mail AMUN at mail@amun.org.

