



RESEARCH AND PREPARATION

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 not only should know the basics of the UN's structure, but also should have a good understanding of how the Committee they will be working on fits into the organization. Understanding this information will allow Representatives to better understand what their Committee 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 and should be handled by another UN body. The *Issues at AMUN* handbook includes, for each Committee, a brief description of that body's purview. 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 general background of the represented state'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, areas such as population, government type, natural resources, and trade data. 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 (i.e., civil war, violent struggle, peaceful movement, etc.).
- 3. Specific background of the state'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 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.

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
- inferences 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 which 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 state:** 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 and perspectives of the only remaining superpower and a nation with very little military might. Even more significant at the UN is the differences on many issues between the policies of the relatively rich, industrialized nations and the relatively poor, developing (and especially least-developed) nations. 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. The perspectives of states 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, 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. In roleplaying, then, flexibility is key: Representatives must aggregate and assimilate new information they gain at the Conference with their pre-Conference research in order to reach consensus and compromise on complex issues.
- 6. AMUN Rules of Procedure:** 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, encapsulated



on the Rules Short Forms on pages 35-36 of the *AMUN Rules & Procedures Handbook*. The Dais Staff 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 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 established 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 individually-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 or oral report, and allow for greater knowledge-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 comprehensive perspective on its country's policies.

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 (e-mail for information on your nation and the specific issues under consideration)
- UN Department of Public Information (e-mail 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).

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, or by e-mail at unicdc@unicwash.org.

USING THE INTERNET

AMUN website: When using the Internet, a great starting point is AMUN'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 and are an excellent source for country and topic information, allowing you to access a daily synopsis of worldwide news.

UN documents: Most 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/en/members/index.shtml 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.

Most 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 Official Documents 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. The bibliography section of each topic brief in the *Issues at AMUN* handbook contains references to several UN documents and can act as a starting place for your preparations. 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. Found online at unbisnet.un.org.



WHY DRAFT A POSITION PAPER?

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 use 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. These 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 draft 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 shared with each group member, thus providing a more well-rounded view of the represented country's positions on all issues.

PUBLIC POSITION PAPERS

Public position papers are intended as a public statement of your country's positions on the topics being discussed at the AMUN Conference. Each paper 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 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.

There are a number of other items that you might include in a public position paper depending on the specific topic, the available information and your country's particular situation. You should consider incorporating some or all of these elements in your position papers:

- 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 actions 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 each delegation submit a position paper to the Conference, covering each Committee on which it is seated, **no later than 25 October**. These papers should include **no more than one-half page on each topic** that is covered under the committee. 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 two main topics of discussion for



that Council. Delegations represented on the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) should also include the two topics of discussion for the Commission. Delegations represented on the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) should also include the two topics of discussion for the Commission. Delegations represented on the Security Council or Historical Security Councils should choose the two or three topics which they think are the most important for their respective Council to discuss, and include these in their position paper. If a delegation chooses to place a Representative on the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (SCPKO), a section for that committee should also be included.

Format of Papers: One comprehensive position paper should be submitted online for each *delegation*, combining all of the committees on which that delegation is seated. A sample position paper, along with full submission instructions, is available at AMUN's website: www.amun.org/sample-position-papers/.

The AMUN Secretariat will not judge the position papers, other than to check for completeness and general germaneness. Position papers will be collected and organized by the AMUN Secretariat, posted on the AMUN website prior to Conference and then made available in the Home Government office for public perusal during the Conference. As public documents, position papers must conform to the standards laid out in AMUN's policy on plagiarism (see below).

Submission Specifications: All position papers must be submitted via AMUN's online web form, available at 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, does not comport to basic standards of diplomatic courtesy or is determined to violate the policy on plagiarism.

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

POSITION PAPER AWARD CERTIFICATES

AMUN will provide a Position Paper Award Certificate for each delegation that submits an approved, completed position paper, including sections for each topic in all assigned simulations, by 11:59 p.m. Central Time on 25 October. Note that this must include sections for the General Assembly Plenary, all GA Committees, and any other simulation on which the delegation has a Representative seated. If a school is representing multiple countries, each country will be considered separately for Position Paper Awards.

For answers to any questions about writing or submitting position papers or about Position Paper Awards, please contact the AMUN Executive Office at mail@amun.org.

PLAGIARISM

AMUN strives to create a simulation of the United Nations which is as realistic as possible, while still allowing for the fulfillment of our participants' and the organization's educational goals. As such, the AMUN policy regarding plagiarism focuses on an educative rather than a punitive goal. At AMUN, plagiarism involves the substantial, verbatim, or near-verbatim copying of language, without attribution, in published or unpublished texts, speeches, or documents. Representatives should adhere to their country's policies at all times, but this does not give license to plagiarize existing materials. Thus, parts of speeches or position papers may be derived or paraphrased from previous speeches or papers, but should not be copied verbatim.

Similarly, it is expected that all Representatives are familiar with past resolutions at the UN, but the work of the UN should be expanded on in Representatives' work, not copied verbatim. There are some exceptions: for example, Representatives are not necessarily expected to expand upon a phrase that is often or always used when a country gives a formal speech or a clause that is repeated verbatim through several years of resolutions on a topic. Generally, it is not necessary to explicitly credit such sources, although if substantial language is quoted, it should be acknowledged and cited. Final determinations on plagiarism and its consequences are at the discretion of the AMUN Secretariat.

THE PURVIEW OF EACH SIMULATION

Each simulation's background guide contains a brief overview of that simulation's purview, which provides a general outline of the types of discussions each simulation might have on the topics in question. This is extremely important in the UN system, where a variety of different Committees, Councils and Commissions may discuss different aspects of an international problem. Representatives should exercise great care in researching a topic, so their deliberations can focus on the piece of the problem considered within their simulation's purview. These purview briefs are guidelines for the discussions of each body.

An excellent example of this shifting focus among Committees, Councils and Commissions is the Palestinian question. The First Committee might discuss aspects of the situation dealing with weapons shipments. At the same time, the Second Committee may discuss a variety of financing initiatives to help the Palestinian Authority. Similarly, the Third Committee, or in some cases the Economic and Social Council, might discuss the social and humanitarian considerations that arise from Israeli occupation of various territories. And the Fourth Committee may discuss the plight of the Palestinian refugees. Only the GA Plenary Session would discuss the problem in its entirety, including the possible creation of a legal Palestinian State or Member status for that State. The Security Council would deal with any appropriate peace and security issues that arose on the situation.

Clearly, different aspects of a single problem are regularly discussed in different bodies. More importantly, at the UN, delegations are typically careful to *only* discuss those aspects relevant to their own Committees, Councils and Commissions, leaving other aspects to others in their delegation to address in the appropriate forum.