



## American Model United Nations Conference Preparation Newsletter 18-21 November 2023

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### AMUN's Commitment to Realism

Greetings from the AMUN Secretariat. In this newsletter we will be discussing AMUN's philosophy of realism and why AMUN doesn't use a speakers list. Our commitment to producing an exceptional, educational conference is a source of great pride for AMUN and something that helps AMUN stand out as one of the nation's leading conferences.

### AMUN's Philosophy of Realism

The AMUN Secretariat wants you to have an enjoyable Conference, but most of all we want you to have an *educational* experience. To that end, AMUN goes to considerable lengths to ensure that we are providing a simulation of United Nations bodies that is as realistic as possible. This is why AMUN simulates only topics that have been previously addressed by the United Nations and why our materials and staff assist delegates with understanding the purview of each body. [Purview](#) is the basic delineation of responsibilities that limits what steps a body can take on the topics under debate.

Through both the [AMUN Accords](#) and the [2023 Handbook](#), the AMUN Secretariat spends a great deal of time researching and producing content that will enable your students to draft substantively grounded resolutions and reports. At the conference, Home Government is available via Rapporteurs stationed in GA/ECOSOC simulations and Simulations Staff in SC and HSC simulations to answer substantive questions and provide roleplayers for bodies, peoples and countries that are not in attendance at AMUN.

If you want to read more about AMUN's dedication to realism, read [A Commitment to Realism and Education: Understanding AMUN's approach to Model UN](#) by Dr. Jacqueline E. Whitt or [Why Realism is Important: The Goals of AMUN's Security Council Simulations](#) by Nia Indelicato, both found on the [AMUN Accords](#) section of our website.

### Why AMUN Does Not Use Speakers Lists

AMUN does not use speakers lists at the Conference. This is a departure from the practice of the United Nations, where speakers lists are used in all committee, council and plenary sessions. We do not use this United Nations staple for a variety of reasons.

1. **There is not enough time.** Listening to every Member State and Observer equally takes days at the United Nations—in fact, usually more than the four we have at AMUN to conclude our deliberations.
2. **It is not educational.** A formal speakers list with no questioning of the speaker, with no back-and-forth debate, is not a great learning opportunity for representatives. It does not encourage extemporaneous speaking, the debate and defense of ideas or the challenge of answering unexpected questions.
3. **It does not fit the flow of Model UN.** In Model UN, formal debate is more like informal caucusing at the United Nations. This is necessary because the resolutions that the United Nations votes on are often worked on over months by a staff of hundreds before they are ready to be voted on. We are asking your students to simulate this process over only four days of debate. That is a tall order for anyone, and we believe a debate with more back and forth helps representatives accomplish their goals.

If you want to read more about AMUN's take on Speakers Lists, read [\*Where's the Speakers List? by Dr. Jacqueline E. Whitt\*](#) on the [\*AMUN Accords\*](#).

## The Purview of Each Simulation

The [\*AMUN Handbook\*](#) provides a brief overview of the purview of each body simulated at AMUN. These purviews provide a general outline of the types of discussions each simulation might have on the topics in question. Purview is an extremely important, though often informally understood, concept in the United Nations system, where a variety of different committees, councils and commissions may discuss different aspects of an international problem. Not stepping on another body's toes or into its territory is a matter of diplomatic courtesy, respect and an acknowledgement of specific expertise. Representatives should research their topics carefully, so their deliberations can focus on the piece of the problem considered within their simulation's purview.

Purview is usually best understood through an extended example. Consider the topic of development. A wide variety of committees, councils and commissions at the United Nations address this topic, but will do so in different ways. The General Assembly First Committee might discuss the relationship between disarmament and development. At the same time, the General Assembly Second Committee may discuss a variety of financing initiatives to assist Least Developed Countries. Similarly, the General Assembly Third Committee might discuss the social and humanitarian considerations that stem from a lack of development, including gender issues, economic concerns or the impact on underrepresented populations such as the elderly or disabled. The General Assembly Fourth Committee may discuss the development issues of Non-Self-Governing Territories. The General Assembly Concurrent Plenary might discuss the problem in its entirety or address issues that cut across the mandates of the committees. By contrast, the Economic and Social Council would focus on how the United Nations specialized and technical agencies work with Member States to support economic and social development. The

Security Council would address the interlinkages between peace, security and development.

Clearly, different aspects of a single problem are regularly discussed in different bodies. More importantly, at the United Nations, 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.

## Questions, Comments or Concerns?

If you have any questions about this email, please contact us directly at [mail@amun.org](mailto:mail@amun.org) and we will be happy to help. As always, if you are no longer the primary contact for your school's Model UN club or class, please contact us at [mail@amun.org](mailto:mail@amun.org) with updated contact information or fill out our [Change of Address/Contact](#) form online.

Good luck on your preparations,

Shannon L. Dunn  
AMUN Executive Director

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2023 Secretary-General

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