

## How to write a Position Paper?

### Introduction

The Model United Nations Conferences (MUN) move around debate and negotiation. The constant training of the Delegates and the proper preparation of the documents that strengthen their foreign policy, such as the speeches and the Position Papers, allow a better representation of the country. That is the main reason why writing is included in the MUN and this should be the most important communication tool before and during the educational simulations. In the MUN, the participants must write two types of main documents: Position Papers and Draft Resolutions. Each of them requires different approaches and writing skills.

Prior to the beginning of a MUN, each Delegation prepares its Position Paper in each of the topics that will be discussed in the different committees in which the country will participate. . In the event that a Delegation is made up of two persons who will represent a Member State of the United Nations (country) as Delegate and co-Delegate in the same committee, both persons should study the topic and will write together the Position Paper of each of the topics in the Agenda of the committee assigned to them in the MUN. If there are several topics on your committee, a Position Paper should be prepared for each topic.

The writing of this document is an important part in the preparation of each person that will be part of the Delegation and the preparation of them is extremely useful. These documents not only help the Delegates to organize their ideas but also encourage the entire Delegation in the formation and representation of foreign policy.

The Position Paper should be the most careful element in the MUN. It exposes and supports the opinion of a nation and is the starting point for international negotiations. The Position Papers must not only define the topic in the Agenda, but they must also present the relationship that this has with their national interests.

It is extremely important to respect the delivery date of Position Papers established by the Organizing Committee.

The Position Papers allow the Delegates to define their strategies and possible actions in advance of the working meetings scheduled by the Organizing Committee. For this they must take into account the position of the rest of the Member States present regarding the topics that will be discussed.

### Format

- Typeface: Times New Roman.
- Size: 12 points.
- Structure of the paragraphs: they must contain indentations at the beginning of each paragraph.
- Line spacing: 1 (simple, without spaces before or after).
- Margins of the document: 2.54 cm or 1 inch on each side.
- Appointment style: It will be based on the APA Sixth Edition citation system.
- Length per topic: Minimum 500 words and maximum 800, to facilitate reading or distribution

### Content

The Position Paper will be divided into 3 main parts:

#### 1. Header:

The heading of the document should include the name of the Delegates, the name of the country they represent and the topic they will present.

## 2. Development of the topic:

It should be written in an essay format divided into 3 paragraphs.

### **First paragraph - Background:**

It will consist of a brief exposition of the antecedents of the problem and the advances that have been made to date. It is recommended to briefly describe recent events related to the problem to be treated and to incorporate data and statistical information that sustains it, highlighting the position that the country has adopted in the most relevant cases.

### **Second paragraph - Foreign Policy:**

Its objective is to show the relationship that the topic has with its country and the reason why the issue is of national interest, as well as the contributions that your country has made over time to try to solve the problem in question. To build this paragraph you can mention one or more of the following elements:

- a) Articles or paragraphs of the Charter of the United Nations;
- b) Agreements or Treaties that have been ratified by the Member State you represent or Resolutions that have been adopted (approved) thanks to the support of your country;
- c) Statements made by the Head of State and/or Government (President, King/Queen, Prime Minister, etc.), Minister of Foreign Affairs or Head of any other ministry or government office, Permanent Representatives or Delegates to the United Nations or any other international organization, about the issue, as well as;
- d) Any other international document that you consider relevant to mention.

### **Third paragraph - Proposals:**

Its goal is to present the conclusions and possible solutions that your nation proposes with respect to the issue.

You may consult:

- a) Reports of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the issue.
- b) Recommendations for actions that were already proposed in the committee and that your Delegation retakes with a renewed vision to facilitate its implementation or execution.

## 3. References:

The sources of information consulted for the drafting of the Position Paper should be included. If a reference is made to textual citations or statistical information, the APA citation system should be used, and the source incorporated into the text. For more information visit the SIBIUNAM Libraries website: <https://goo.gl/BUVvj4>.

Recommendations for writing a Position Paper:

- Avoid speaking in the first person, use the name of the Delegation or expressions such as "our Government", "our country", "our nation".
- Keep in mind that a Position Paper is characterized by being a general perspective of a particular topic of interest to the country you represent, without the characteristics of an essay.
- To write a short and concise document such as the one described, the participants must carry out an extensive research and put into practice their synthesis and expression skills.

- It is recommended to complete the process in 4 phases:
  - a) Research the general and particular aspects of the topic to be discussed.
  - b) Know the context and cultural aspects of the country you represent (geography; history; foreign policy; economic, cultural and social situation; current national and international conflicts; accession and reservations to international treaties; official position on the topics in the Agenda of the MUN, etc.).
  - c) Learn the organs, committees, commissions and specialized agencies in which the Member State you represent participates, as well as the main policies and positions (historical and current) that your nation has had on them.
  - d) Identify the policies and positions that their allied countries have had, as well as their counterparts. Anticipating the arguments of other countries can provide some advantage to the Delegates who have prepared their issues in depth.

### Sources and websites recommended for consultation

- Libraries and documentation centers of United Nations specialized agencies and programs.
- University and specialized libraries.
- Charter of the United Nations: <http://www.un.org/en/charter-united-nations/index.html>.
- United Nations official website: <http://www.un.org/es/index.html>.
- United Nations Official Document System Search (ODS): <http://www.un.org/en/documents/index.html>.
- United Nations Bibliographic Information System: <http://unbisnet.un.org/>.
- United Nations Information Center (CINU) website: <http://www.onunoticias.mx/>.
- Websites of the Permanent Missions of the countries to the UN: <http://www.un.org/en/member-states/index.html>.
- Websites of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs: <https://www.usip.org/publications/2008/03/foreign-affairs-ministries-web>.
- United Nations web microsite on the activity of the Member States "UN Member States on the Record": <http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/unms/>.
- United Nations website on "Matters that matter to us": <http://www.un.org/es/sections/issues-depth/global-issues-overview/index.html>.
- Online database on the terminology used in the United Nations System: <https://unterm.un.org>.
- Governments websites.
- Media.
- Embassies – A very useful research alternative is to schedule a visit to the embassy or representative office of the country you will be representing at the MUN. An interview with a foreign service officer must be conducted in the most formal manner.
- Read history books of the countries and/or topics to be discussed.

NOTE: Visiting sites and reading documents in different languages will give a broader view to the Delegates on the topics to be discussed.

### List of References

United Nations. Delegate Preparation Retrieved on March 10, 2018, from <https://outreach.un.org/mun/content/delegate-preparation>.

United Nations Information Center for Mexico, Cuba and the Dominican Republic. *Modelos de las Naciones Unidas. Cómo organizar tu modelo*. Retrieved on March 10, 2018, from <http://www.cinu.mx/modelos/como-organizar-tu-modelo/preparacion/>.