

# The Colgate Model United Nations Handbook

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**Produced by the Colgate Model United Nations Society**  
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# Position Papers and Research

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When preparing for a Model UN conference, all you have to go on is the background guide and your general knowledge of the topics. However, to be a successful delegate, you must be able to come up with detailed policy solutions that fit with your country's position and the only way to do that is to do research.

## Questions to consider

- What sort of government does your country have?
- What types of ideologies (political, religious or other) influence your country's government?
- Which domestic issues might influence your country's foreign policy?
- What are some major events in your country's history? Are they applicable to the topic?
- Which ethnicities, religions and languages can be found in your country?
- Where is your country located and how does its geography affect its political relationships?
- Which countries share a border with your country?
- Which countries are considered allies of your country?
- Which countries are considered enemies of your country?
- What are the characteristics of your country's economy?
- What is your country's gross domestic product (GDP)?
- When did your country become a member of the UN? Is your country on the Security Council?
- Does your country belong to any Intergovernmental Organizations outside the UN system such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)?
- Does your country belong to any regional organizations such as the European Union (EU), the African Union (AU) or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)?
- Does your country belong to any trade organizations or agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) or the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)?

## Research Tools

- CIA World Factbook (consolidate and print out your country's report)
- Wikipedia (for basic information)
- Google search countries on topics and see what you find ex. "Germany climate change measures" or "South Africa torture policy"
- Your committee's background guide articles
- Google news, BBC, CNN, NYT, The Economist, Washington Post, Asia Times Online, allafrika.com, npr.com,
- Colgate library website especially article databases such as JSTOR or ECO
- Strategypage (for military news), themonkeypage (good IR articles)

- For extensive research on voting records and speeches you can access the United Nations Bibliographic Information Website: <http://unbisnet.un.org/>
- Colgate Speaking Union Moodle: [moodle.colgate.edu/course/view.php?id=1467](http://moodle.colgate.edu/course/view.php?id=1467)

## **Position Papers**

Once you have completed your preliminary research, you are ready to write your position paper. A position paper is an outline of your country's position on the topic. It is an opportunity for you to use your background research to express your ideas concisely and clearly, making you better prepared for the conference. It is important to spend time on your position paper, as committee chairs will refer to it when judging how well you know your country's stance and when determining awards. Most conferences require a one page position paper per country for each topic that is being discussed. Although some committees have specific requirements for position papers the majority of them follow the formula below.

### **Each position paper should have three paragraphs**

#### Background of the Topic

- What is your country's history concerning the topic?
- In your country's opinion, what are the main elements of the problem?
- What are the major roots of those elements?

#### Position Taken by your Delegation

- What are your national interests in the situation?
- What are your nation's policies on the topic? Justifications?
- What has your nation done in the past to help the problem?

#### Proposed Solutions

- What does your nation plan to do in the future to help the problem?
- What ideas can you think of to come to a solution?
- What do you predict will be the main opposition to your proposals? How can you get around them?

A good position paper will also include:

- Quotes from your country's leaders about the issue;
- Statistics to back up your country's position on the issue;
- Conventions and resolutions that your country has signed or ratified;
- UN actions that your country supported or opposed;
- What your country would like to accomplish in the committee's resolution; and
- How the positions of other countries affect your country's position.

## What do I Wear?

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At Model UN conferences, you are required to wear “Western Business Attire.” This means suits, jackets, and professional looking clothing, as summarized in the table below. Importantly, clothes must fit well. Men, this means you shouldn’t be swimming in your pants, neither should your jacket be too small or too big. Ladies, this means that you should not have cleavage popping out, pants should not outline every curve in your body, and you should abide to the rule in middle school: skirts and dresses must be approaching the knee (put your arms against



**Dressed to impress**

your body- is your skirt higher up than your hands? If so, this is a problem). If you think something might possibly be on the short side, then it is.

Clothing is one of the primary ways you make a first impression, so take it seriously. If your country or character has goofy props that could go along with your attire, restrict the use to only one committee session and/or the last day. Of course, this will depend on the nature of your committee, but in general, your goal is for people to take you seriously. If you look put-together and professional, others are more apt to perceive you as such and will want to work with you. While we don’t expect freshmen to run out and buy expensive business attire, it is important to acquire sufficiently formal clothing at some point if you want to continue doing Model UN (or get an internship for that matter.)

<b>Clothing</b>	<b>Ladies</b>	<b>Men</b>
Suits	Nothing says power delegate like a pantsuit. Not a must but strongly encouraged.	A must. Ideally, you will have more than one but you aren't expected to. If you have only one, bring along a blazer and slacks and alternate between the two. If you have none, bring enough nice clothing to put together at least two distinct outfits.
Tops	Absolutely NO t-shirts. A blouse, cardigan, or button-down shirt is appropriate. Dresses are appropriate if they are long enough. If you're wearing an over jacket in between sessions, have it look nice (longer is preferable).	Absolutely NO t-shirts. A collared/button down shirt (oxford) is appropriate. Polos are NOT considered professional. Try to bring at least two different oxfords as you will need your nice shirts for 4 days. Make sure they are decent quality and sufficiently formal.
Bottoms	Absolutely NO jeans or shorts. Slacks and suit-pants are good. Skirts should be of appropriate length. Don't be overly flashy in color or design.	Absolutely NO jeans or shorts. Slacks and suit-pants are good. Pants that match a suit jacket and are of dark colored are preferred. "Nice" khakis or cords can be substituted.
Shoes	Absolutely no sneakers or open-toed shoes. Peep toe is okay. High heels are nice looking- can be uncomfortable. Flats are great too!	Absolutely no sneakers or open-toed shoes. Loafers and other dress shoes are preferred.
Accessories	Do not wear an excessive amount of bracelets. Wearing jewelry can be a definite plus, but don't overdo it. Remember, the goal is to look professional.	Wearing a tie is mandatory. If you don't have ties, someone on the team will loan you one. Interesting tie colors/designs can be cool- but keep in mind that your goal is to look professional. Make sure you have a nice belt. Other accessories (pocket squares, tie clips, suspenders) are a plus.

## Representing Countries or How to be Bad

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At Model UN conferences, you will often be asked to address controversial issues. In any given conference, committees will discuss topics like defining torture, dealing with terrorism and protecting women's rights. From our Western perspective, it is easy to forget that there are two sides to these issues but for many countries, our own cultural and political assumptions do not apply. For many, it is tempting to go off policy and follow your gut on an issue while others will follow their countries policies but frame them in a distinctly Western light. In this section, we'll discuss how to analyze a country, understand its cultural and political beliefs and to justify these beliefs in non-Western terms.

### Thinking outside the box

One of the main problems facing a delegate trying to defend a policy that he disagrees with is that sometimes, you can't find any justification. How can the Sudan defend genocide? The obvious answer is to deny that you are engaged in genocide. While this is certainly a start, it does not go nearly far enough. Imagine yourself on the other side of that conversation; would you take a mere denial seriously? Instead, you have to get into the heads of the leaders of Sudan. What would they say?

Instead of merely denying the existence of genocide, the Sudanese government might argue that even if genocide did exist, the UN's mandate does not allow them to intervene in your national affairs. Furthermore, the presence of armed conflict with multiple non-governmental parties warring has led to atrocities being committed by both sides but the Sudanese government respects the human rights of all of its citizens and wants to take steps *itself*, not through the UN to bring the perpetrators to justice. If the UN would like the offer funding, that might be appreciated but other than that, the government of Sudan is committed to demonstrating that it can handle its own internal affairs but also to ensuring that justice is served.

While this argument might not conform to exactly what Sudan would say, we can see it encompasses many things that the Sudan would likely say about itself, namely that it is not involved in genocide but that it recognizes that there is a problem and wants to work to fix it. However, in doing so, the Sudan will not allow any sort of international intervention into its lands and instead just wants international support to carry out 'justice' itself, the point being that the Sudan would never prosecute those responsible. However, in framing your argument in a seemingly constructive manner, you can go from obviously useless roadblock to progress to potential problem solver with a secret agenda. This is the difference between having a successful agenda and an irrelevant one.

### The silent majority

How can sophistry like the above argument pass for a serious attempt at problem solving? Won't people see through your bullshit and expose you for the genocide abettor you are? The answer to this question is both yes and no. While many will see through your words and try to

discredit you, others will take you at face value. However, there is a third, more important group; those who see your argument for what it truly is but who support you anyway.

Consider for a minute what genocide legislation would actually accomplish. For the UN to prevent genocide, it must be granted significant new powers. These new powers would necessarily erode the UN's commitment to respecting national sovereignty (see page 14). Now, imagine that you are a country like Thailand. Thailand has never contemplated genocide and probably would like to see measures taken to curb it. However, Thailand has its own issues of political oppression that have historically drawn unwelcome international attention. Is Thailand really prepared to erode the doctrine of national sovereignty in a way that might come back to bite them in the ass? While Thailand wants to look out for its own interests, it will not do so by blatantly supporting or ignoring genocide. However, while considering various solutions, Thailand will (if it is on policy) place its own national interests above humanitarian concerns and compromise. The result is that Thailand will probably be willing to look the other way, to a degree, in order to safeguard its own national interests.

Most nations in the world are like Thailand; committed to preventing blatant human rights violations but also aware that the powers granted to the UN can also be turned against them in the future. By offering a middle ground, a resolution that says much but does little, you can capture the attention of "the silent majority." Thus, to successfully represent a nation with interests that fall outside the mainstream, the delegate must not only think about what countries profess to want but the deeper concerns that may motivate them.

## Big and Small Committees

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In Model United Nations, committee size ranges from upwards of 500 delegates fewer than 10. While there are many commonalities to how the good delegate pursues his goals in committee, it is important to recognize that different tactics will be needed in differently sized committees.

### Big Committees

The large committees are typically GAs (General Assemblies). There are several factors to keep in mind when debating in a GA setting. In a large GA, where you sit is important. It is important to choose a seat where you are visible to the chair but at the same time, not limited by being too close. Also, good delegates typically sit near the front of the committee and the good delegate knows that being close to your allies is important. Therefore, as a general rule it is advisable to sit in the front of committee (3 or 4 rows back or  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the way back) and near the aisle.

Second, if you are in such a large committee, you will typically be in a double delegation. It is very important that you and your co-delegate have a plan of attack before going into committee. The best approach for a double delegation is to have one delegate outside the room working on resolutions with other delegates, and to have the other delegate inside the room taking note of any developments and advocating your own resolution. While roles will undoubtedly rotate during the course of the conference, it is important for a delegation to figure out where their relative strengths and weaknesses lie so as to maximize the effectiveness of the delegation as a whole



The UN General Assembly Room

The most important thing in a large committee is to make sure that you are noticed by the chair. Although you may only be called to speak 2 or 3 times in a session, it is important to constantly have your placard in the air, even if you do not necessarily want to speak. You will most likely not be called on immediately after speaking but if your placard is up, your chair will think that you want to speak which will help when awards time comes around. Another way to engage the chair is to make sure that you propose original ideas or become associated with one specific idea. While committees' topics often can accommodate many different solutions, becoming the person most associated with one specific idea can help distinguish you in a sea of suggestions. A sign of success here is when your country is consistently referenced by speakers as being the source of or a major proponent of a specific idea or plan.

Another important note is that in a large committee, you will typically only have to vote on resolutions at the very end of the conference. As such, your working relationships with other delegates will be more fluid than it is in a crisis where delegates are constantly building alliances based on action. It is important to note that unless a delegate has his name down on a document, you can very easily lose his support.

It is also crucial to realize that during the merger process, a delegate who yields moderate influence in his caucus can very easily be marginalized by more influential delegates. Perhaps the most difficult task associated with success in a large committee is ensuring that you maintain prominence throughout the whole resolution formation process. A good way to do this is to build strong relations (both professional and personal) with other influential delegates in your caucus. Additionally, making yourself indispensable to the group in some way (being the 'expert' on specific clauses, carrying close personal support from the bulk of less influential members of your caucus, etc.) will make you much less likely to be edged out. Finally, finding a delegation that is representing very influential country (the US, China, Russia) but lacking in the skills required to represent it and coopting them into your caucus (as one of your supporters, not vice versa) is a good strategy.

In sum, there are various ways to be successful in a big committee but they all revolve around attention. In order to be successful, you *must* make sure that both you and your work are well known to everyone in the committee.

### **Small Committees**

Small committees are inherently different from big committees. While on a big committee the main struggle is to be noticed, the small committee demands a greater focus on content. Small committees are typically either crisis committees or specialized bodies such as ECOSOC. Crisis committees normally have around a dozen delegates while specialized bodies have 25-40. This discrepancy between the big GAs and the small specialized bodies means that a different method of attack is required.



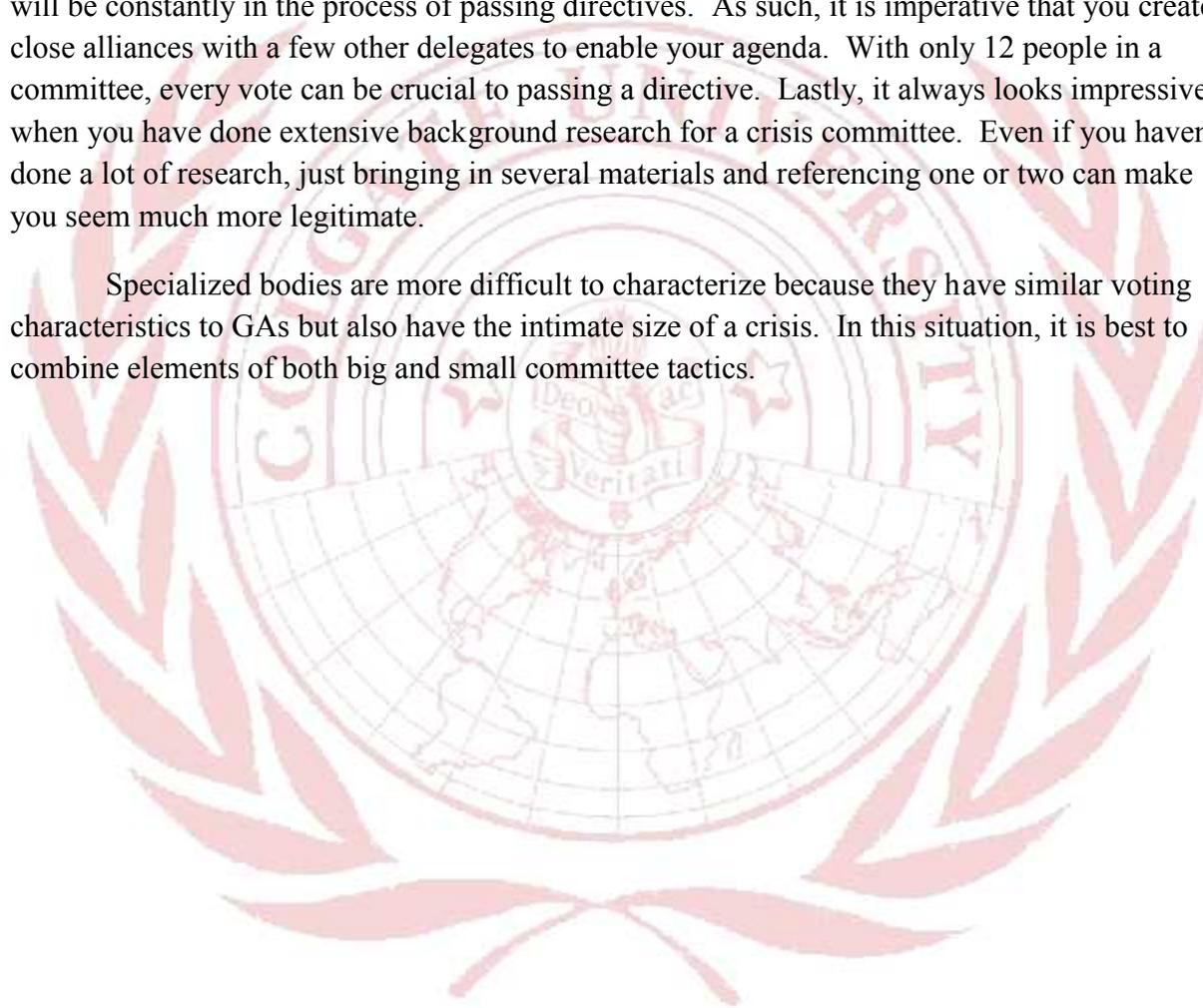
Unlike in a GA, a small committee will not require constant attention seeking. While it makes sense to raise your placard in a GA when you don't want to speak, doing the same thing in a small committee or simply speaking for the sake of speaking will not earn you any points. With only a few other delegates to compete with, you don't need to worry about receiving sufficient airtime.

Instead, you should try to speak substantively on as many points as possible without worrying about becoming identified with a single issue like you would in a GA. In a small committee,

there is a lower threshold to rise above the din so worry less about visibility and more about substance.

In a crisis committee, the goal is to respond to events as rapidly as possible. One of the best ways to look good in a crisis committee is to be the delegate who is writing directives. While many delegates will debate in circles, taking decisive action and writing a short directive on what's already being discuss can go a long way. You want to be "that" delegate who always is proposing a directive that gets passed. Unlike a GA or a specialized body, a crisis committee will be constantly in the process of passing directives. As such, it is imperative that you create close alliances with a few other delegates to enable your agenda. With only 12 people in a committee, every vote can be crucial to passing a directive. Lastly, it always looks impressive when you have done extensive background research for a crisis committee. Even if you haven't done a lot of research, just bringing in several materials and referencing one or two can make you seem much more legitimate.

Specialized bodies are more difficult to characterize because they have similar voting characteristics to GAs but also have the intimate size of a crisis. In this situation, it is best to combine elements of both big and small committee tactics.



## Speaking Tips

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One of the key parts of Model UN is public speaking. In any committee, be it a General Assembly or a 10 person crisis, the brunt of your time and efforts will be spent speaking in a moderated format of short 30 second to 5 minute intervals trying to convince other people of the merits of your point. As such, it is crucial for the successful delegate to know a few basic strategies when speaking.

### Clarity

When speaking, there is nothing more important than being clear. You could have the best, most original idea in your committee but if you are unable to express clearly what it is that you want to do, you will get nowhere. Clarity in this context means two things; clarity of the physical speech and clarity of message.



Clarity of speech means that when you speak, people understand what you are trying to say. Delegates who mumble, speak too quietly or speak too fast when in front of the committee will be unable to make their presence felt. Even if you can be physically understood, monotonous or speech infused with too much “um” or “uh” is tedious and difficult to listen to and will further inhibit your ability to get your point across. When speaking, try to take a deep breath and, in the words of my former mock trial coach, “talk like your audience is retarded.” While it may sound silly to you to talk slowly and exaggerate your syllables, it makes a crucial

difference in comprehensibility while speaking in front of a large group.

### Have a point!

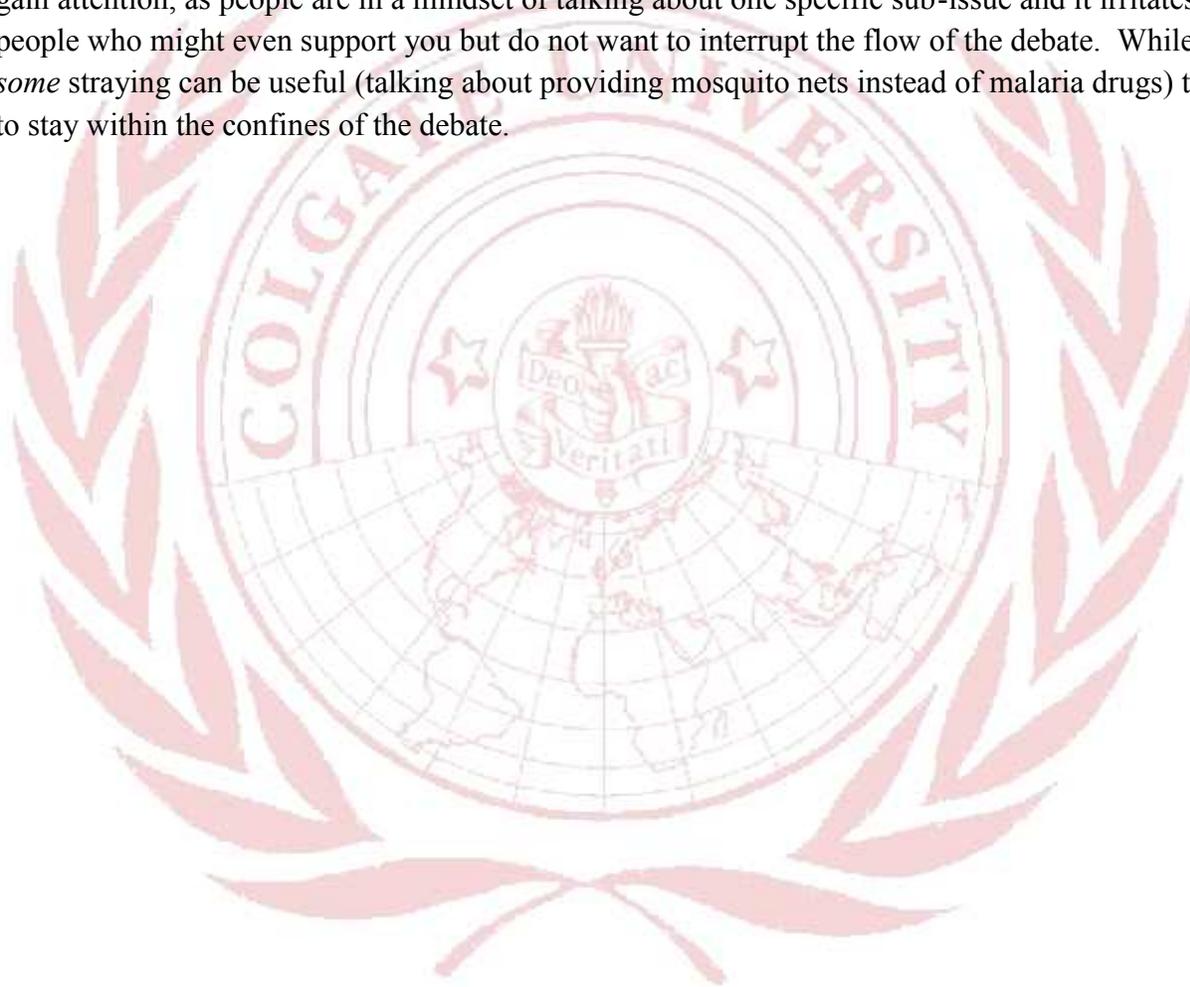
Even if you have perfectly mastered the mechanics of public speaking, if you cannot send a clear message to whoever is listening, you will not have much impact. In a typical Model UN committee, there will be hundreds of speeches every day with each delegate speaking maybe 5-10 times at most. In a situation like this, where listeners do not need to respond to you and are most likely not going to be speaking anytime soon, a speaker who does not seem to be making a point will lose people’s attention quickly. To avoid this, it is best to plan out your speech *before* you get up to talk. You do not need to think of what you want to say word for word but try writing down the first sentence, bullet points that you want to cover and a closing sentence. By outlining the structure of your speech *before* you give it, you can look at it to make sure that it actually makes sense and flows in a logical, comprehensible manner.

### Relevance

Everyone in a Model UN conference has his own pet topic. For example, on the Spanish Reconquista committee, one delegate, Don Abraham, was the patron of the Jews of Spain.

Literally whatever we talked about, Don Abraham made sure that he linked it in some way to Jewish interests. While this was all very nice and good for Don Abraham, it drove every single other committee member insane to the point where we had him “flayed alive.”

The lesson to be drawn from Don Abraham’s untimely death is that while *you* may have a pet concern, it is important to not push it in speeches *ad nauseum*. If you are on the WHO talking about the health crisis in the Congo and the debate has steered towards the benefits of different malaria drugs, don’t be that kid who gets up there and talks about reforming the police force. While your idea may be great, interrupting debate makes your idea less likely to actually gain attention, as people are in a mindset of talking about one specific sub-issue and it irritates people who might even support you but do not want to interrupt the flow of the debate. While *some* straying can be useful (talking about providing mosquito nets instead of malaria drugs) try to stay within the confines of the debate.



## Canned Arguments

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Everyone has their routines. You might get up in the morning, brush your teeth and take a shower every day or say grace before dinner or pregame before going to the jug. In Model United Nations too, there are routines. In particular, there are certain arguments that you will often hear in a conference which you can either employ for your own means to criticize those who disagree with you or be subjected to by your critics. Either way, it is important to know the basic arguments that virtually all committees have in common so that you can either use them to illustrate your point or so that you can explain why your critics who employ them are wrong.

### National Sovereignty

One of the most common arguments in Model UN is the national sovereignty argument. The basic idea is that the UN charter guarantees every member state that the UN will not encroach upon their national sovereignty. In other words, the UN will *not* have the authority to override the will of the people (or rulers anyway) of any individual member nation. For example, the UN cannot tell a country that they cannot discriminate against women, they can merely encourage them to not do so by asking them or by doing things (such as offering schooling to women) that the subject nation or nations will allow. The exception to this rule is the Security Council, which has the power to tell nations to do things. Keeping this principle in mind, you will often find people who will use this argument to claim that your proposal violates the UN's charter. Sometimes, they will be right and you will need to either reword or scrap parts of your proposal.

Other times, delegates will use twisted logic to support their positions. For example, at one conference, I encountered a delegate who said the United Nations should ban the use of embargos because embargos infringe on the national sovereignty; the theory being that because nations with smaller economies are, in effect, being coerced by wealthier nations into changing their internal policies, their national sovereignty is being infringed upon. While on the surface this might seem to make sense, the logic is questionable. If the United Nations were to ban embargos entirely, as the speaker desired, that would require it to infringe on the national sovereignty of the nation that wishes to place an embargo. Secondly, the UN's mandate to uphold national sovereignty only applies to actions the UN takes *itself*; it has minimal ability to keep sovereign states from taking some sort of action except in the Security Council. In short, while national sovereignty arguments are important, it is also good to make sure that you do not allow overstated or unfounded claims to go unchallenged (unless they work to your benefit!)

### Funding

Another commonplace argument in Model UN is the budgeting argument. In a UN conference where everyone is trying to get *their* legislation passed, it is tempting for paper writers to simply include almost any non-controversial material that coalition members want to put in. For example, in a meeting of the WHO about the health crisis in the Congo I participated

in, one resolution called for, among other things, psychological care for rape victims, sensitivity training for local police and constructing roads.

At this point, you might wonder what's wrong with providing psychiatric care to rape victims, helping the local police become more effective, and building roads. The answer is that there is nothing wrong with any of these goals, they are all admirable ideas that ought to be put into place. The problem is that the UN has limited resources which are better spent on the more central aspects of the issue. Would you rather spend millions building a road that will be marginally effective at addressing the issue or would you rather spend that same amount of money on malaria medication and water filtration systems that are significantly cheaper? Furthermore, not only are they cheaper but they give you the highest relative utility. That is they offer the best results for the least amount of money. Things like roads are, in addition to being cost inefficient, tangentially related to the real issue, the healthcare crisis in the Congo. While someone might be very attached to the idea of road building, its implementation would consume funding that could be better spent on better solutions.

While this argument is not often brought up in committees, it is an issue that is perhaps even more pervasive than that of national sovereignty. The temptation to include earmarks to placate individual nations is strong as it is politically expedient and often harmless (if the suggestion is not extremely costly). In virtually any committee you attend, you will find some useless residue of diplomatic deal making manifesting itself in final resolutions. However, when representing your nation's interests, you must keep in mind that the UN has limited resources and make sure that whatever course of action your committee pursues, it does not lavish spending on such marginally useful projects such as road building (unless that's what your nation wants). Either way, it is important to be aware of the financing argument before going into the committee room.

## Caucusing

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While Model UN might appear to be all about speeches, the real action in committee takes place in the more informal format of a caucus. Caucusing is when you talk to delegates in private or in small groups outside of the normal bounds of parliamentary procedure. While it might seem simple enough to just talk to your fellow delegates, a successful delegate knows the subtleties of caucusing, subtleties that, if mastered, make for a great delegate.

From the moment you walk into a committee room, caucusing is crucial for the successful delegate. In a typical committee, people will arrive early to committee to make sure that they get a good seat and to chat with other delegates. While some use this time merely to socialize, the beginning of committee is a crucial time for informal caucusing. While socialization is a key part of informal caucusing, it is important to make sure that

you are thinking about the issues at hand. A good way to go about the situation is to wander around the room introducing yourself to other delegates and asking them what they think about the issues that the committee is slated to discuss. By doing this, the delegate can acquaint himself with his fellow delegates, size up which delegates will be most effectual and which delegates will be his allies. With this in mind, you should still feel free to make small talk as well in order to build a repertoire with others that might come in handy later.



Always be friendly...

Once committee gets started, the methods of caucusing change. While at the start you were trying to just feel people out for possible help later, once you enter into the substantive stage of debate, the caucusing becomes more formal as well. In the next stage of the committee, caucusing will be less about feeling out people than finding a group of delegates with whom you can successfully work to achieve a common goal.

Caucusing blocs can range from a few delegates to an entire geographic region and are typically based on either an ideological commonality (China and Zimbabwe looking to restrain the reach of human rights legislation) or geographic (the European Union looking to form a consensus among its members). While geographic blocs can be advantageous in that they are easily defined and often ideologically similar, ideological blocs are advantageous in that, particularly in a case when you want to form a consensus around a specific point or set of points. While caucus groups are not usually clean cut regional or ideological, it is important to think about what your nation is trying to achieve when committing to a group. It is also important to note that not all members of a caucus group are created equally. In every committee, there will be those who are looking to find people they agree with but not to

contribute original ideas or writing. For these people, try to keep them up to date with your group's work but make sure that you identify the leaders of your group early on and work with them primarily.

Having discussed how to select a caucus group, we should step back now and consider why you want to be in a caucus group in the first place. Once you form your caucus group with



a few other delegates, you will write a working paper. This stage of the caucusing process is *crucial* for the delegate who wants to have influence on the committee's final result. It is in this stage where the quality of the delegate really shines through. The good delegate will be able to put together some original writing for a working paper that, in conjunction with work by your caucusing partners, should address the issues being discussed in your committee. At this stage, the leaders of the caucus group will be identified by

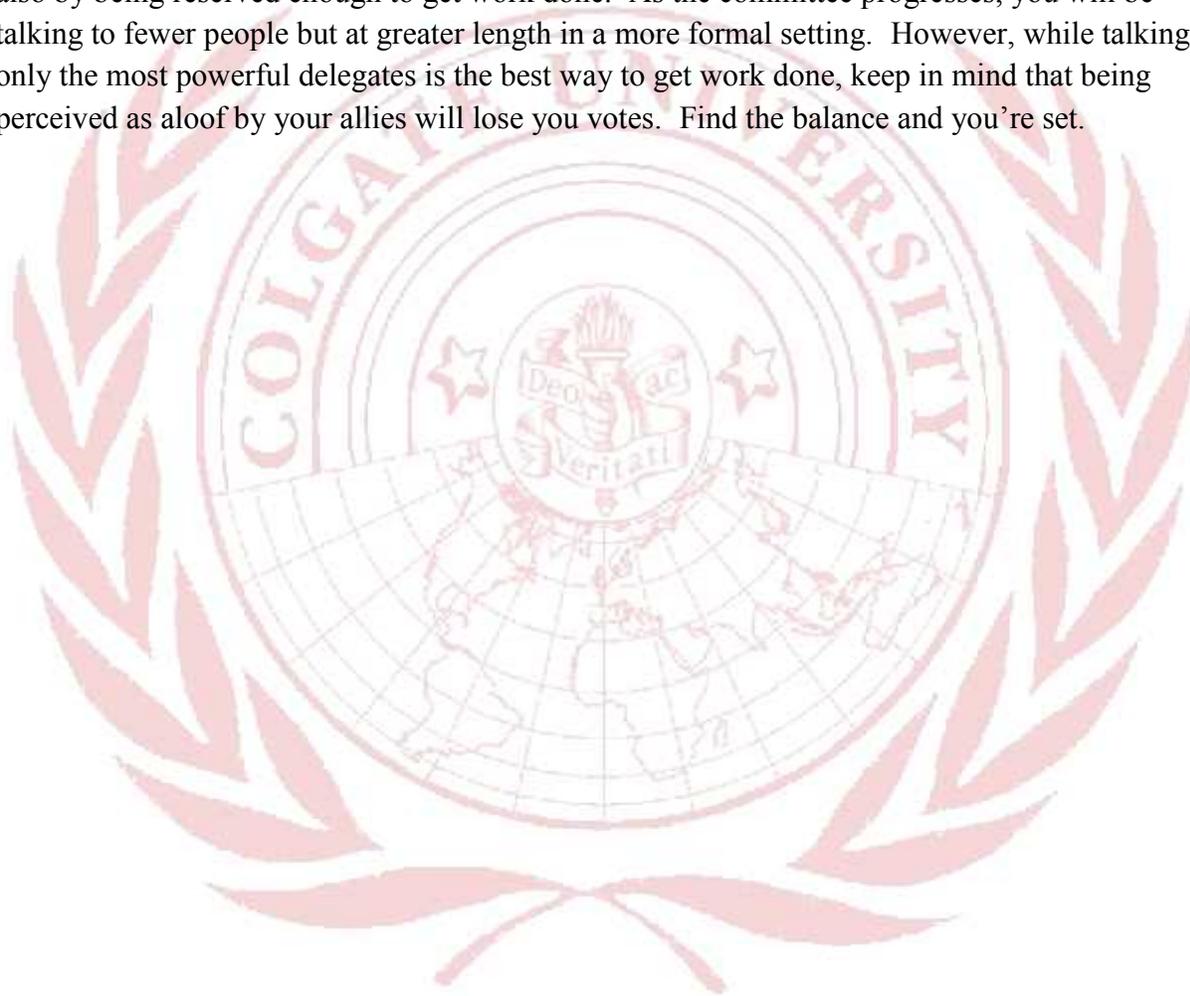
...But not too friendly

their contributions in writing to the working paper. It is important to note again that most delegates will not contribute either ideas or writing to your working paper, just their votes and support. While it is important to keep these delegates happy (as you will need their votes and speeches in favor of your work) make sure that you do not let minor concerns by one or two individual nations hamper the final goal of getting a workable piece of legislation out there. The goal of your work is to best represent *your* interests in a manner that will garner enough support to eventually ensure passage. While putting vague ideas into more specific proposals, someone is inevitably going to object so it is best to not waste your time if the specific issue is irreconcilable with your goals or the political feasibility of your work.

At this point, there will be several working papers out on the floor. To advance to the next step, draft resolutions, a working paper will typically have to merge with another paper in order to be comprehensive enough (other delegates might think of ideas that your caucus group did not) or to garner enough popular support (papers will often be similar but delegates are insistent that *their* version is the best and working with a group with similar aspirations to your own will help your gain votes). At this point, you will probably want to avoid large scale caucusing and try to meet with the leaders of other caucus groups either alone or in small groups. While supporters of papers like to be included in meetings (it makes them feel important), their presence and input can often slow down progress to the point where nothing is done. Once again, use your judgment to balance the desires of the signatories and the need to get things done to avoid either getting nothing done or offending your allies.

Once draft resolutions are presented, the field should be considerably narrower than it was before. There will most likely be only a handful of groups still standing after the wave of working paper mergers. Sometimes you will need to merge your draft resolution to ensure passage and sometimes you won't. If you do, simply follow the same steps that you used in the draft resolution stage of committee. If not, sit back and watch your resolution pass.

In summation, the most important part of caucusing is keeping control of your group. In order to achieve your goals, you will need to gain control by being diplomatically friendly but also by being reserved enough to get work done. As the committee progresses, you will be talking to fewer people but at greater length in a more formal setting. However, while talking to only the most powerful delegates is the best way to get work done, keep in mind that being perceived as aloof by your allies will lose you votes. Find the balance and you're set.



# Resolution Guide

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In every UN committee, the end result of 4 days of conferencing is a resolution. Below, you'll find a brief description of preambulatory and operative clauses, taken from the UN Association of America, and some examples.

## Preambulatory Clauses

The preamble of a draft resolution states the reasons for which the committee is addressing the topic and highlights past international action on the issue. Each clause begins with a present participle (called a preambulatory phrase) and ends with a comma. Preambulatory clauses can include:

- References to the UN Charter;
- Citations of past UN resolutions or treaties on the topic under discussion;
- Mentions of statements made by the Secretary-General or a relevant UN body or agency;
- Recognition of the efforts of regional or nongovernmental organizations in dealing with the issue; and
- General statements on the topic, its significance and its impact.

## Sample Preambulatory Phrases

Affirming	Expecting	Having studied
Alarmed by	Expressing its appreciation	Keeping in mind
Approving	Expressing its satisfaction	Noting with regret
Aware of	Fulfilling	Noting with deep concern
Bearing in mind	Fully alarmed	Noting with satisfaction
Believing	Fully aware	Noting further
Confident	Fully believing	Noting with approval
Contemplating	Further deploring	Observing
Convinced	Further recalling	Reaffirming
Declaring	Guided by	Realizing
Deeply concerned	Having adopted	Recalling
Deeply conscious	Having considered	Recognizing
Deeply convinced	Having considered further	Referring
Deeply disturbed	Having devoted attention	Seeking
Deeply regretting	Having examined	Taking into account
Desiring	Having heard	Taking into consideration
Emphasizing	Having received	Taking note
		Viewing with appreciation
		Welcoming

## Operative Clauses

Operative clauses identify the actions or recommendations made in a resolution. Each operative clause begins with a verb (called an operative phrase) and ends with a semicolon. Operative clauses should be organized in a logical progression, with each containing a single idea or proposal, and are always numbered. If a clause requires further explanation, bulleted lists set off by letters or roman numerals can also be used. After the last operative clause, the resolution ends in a period.

## Sample Operative Phrases



Accepts	Encourages	Further recommends
Affirms	Endorses	Further requests
Approves	Expresses its appreciation	Further resolves
Authorizes	Expresses its hope	Has resolved
Calls	Further invites	Notes
Calls upon	Deplores	Proclaims
Condemns	Designates	Reaffirms
Confirms	Draws the attention	Recommends
Congratulates	Emphasizes	Regrets
Considers	Encourages	Reminds
Declares accordingly	Endorses	Requests
Deplores	Expresses its appreciation	Solemnly affirms
Designates	Expresses its hope	Strongly condemns
Draws the attention	Further invites	Supports
Emphasizes	Further proclaims	Takes note of
	Further reminds	Transmits

# Basic Parliamentary Procedure

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Being familiar with parliamentary procedure is an essential element to succeeding at any Model UN conference. The following is a general list of points and motions used at most conferences along with a brief explanation of each. Some conferences may employ slightly different rules, so always be sure to check the conference handbook for any changes.

**Point of Order:** This point may be raised when you feel that a delegate or the Chair is not abiding by correct parliamentary procedure (as laid out for the conference). A point of order is allowed to interrupt the speaker.

**Point of Personal Privilege:** This point is used to indicate personal discomforts or impediments to debate. It may be raised during the debate if, for example, you cannot hear the speaker or feel uncomfortably hot or cold. This point is allowed to interrupt a speaker, but may not refer to the content of any speech or working paper.

**Point of Inquiry:** This point may be raised after a speaker yields to questions. It is used to ask a question of the speaker relating to the speech just given. It may also be used to ask the chair a questions regarding parliamentary procedure during a normal session.

**Motion to Open Debate:** This is the first motion of the conference and is made to move into formal debate and open the primary speakers list. If there are multiple topics on the agenda, the body will first debate on the order they are to be discussed until there is a motion to set the agenda. All delegates wishing to be added to the speakers list should raise their placards at the request of the chair or send a note to the dais. Speaking time during debate may be limited with a Motion to Limit Debate (see below).

**Motion to Set the Agenda:** This motion is made with a specific topic mentioned to be debated first and the other second. Two speakers for, two against, and requires a simple majority to pass.

**Motion to Adjourn the Session:** This motion adjourns the committee sessions for good. It will only be entertained by the chair at the end of the last committee session. This motion requires a second, is not debatable, and needs a simple majority to pass.

**Motion to Suspend the Meeting:** This motion suspends the body between sessions. This motion requires a second, is not debatable, and needs a simple majority to pass.

**Motion to Enter Unmoderated Caucus:** This motion temporarily suspends the meeting for a specified amount of time. Use it to create resolutions, talk to other delegates, or anything else you may need to do. It requires a second, is not debatable, and needs a simple majority to pass.

**Motion to Enter Moderated Caucus:** This motion brings the body into a moderated debate on the issue on the floor for a specified amount of time. The moderating officer will then recognize speakers for a specified amount of time, who cannot yield to anyone but the Chair at the end of

their speech. This motion requires a second, is not debatable, and needs a simple majority to pass. This motion may not be made once debate has been closed.

**Motion to Table the Topic:** This motion tables a topic (ending debate on the topic) until it is reopened with a Motion to Reconsider. This motion requires a second, is debatable (two speeches in favor and two against), and needs a two-thirds majority to pass.

**Motion to Divide the Question:** This motion may be made to request that the resolution be divided in a manner specified by the motioner (it can be by every other letter, by prime numbers, or even by every ten words). These clauses will then be voted on individually. This motion requires a second, is debatable (2 speeches pro/2 con), and needs a simple majority to pass. If the motion passes, the body then votes on the operative clauses as they were divided out. If an operative clause fails to receive a majority vote, it is left out of the resolution.

**Motion for a Roll Call Vote:** This motion requests that the Chair conduct a roll-call vote on the resolution. This motion only requires a second to be accepted.

**Motion to Adopt by Consensus:** This motion requests that the body adopt the resolution by consensus, meaning that no delegation would be casting a “no” vote if the resolution were to be voted upon normally. A delegation may abstain, but should one delegation object, the motion is out of order.

**Motion to Appeal the Decision of the Chair:** This motion appeals a decision of the Chair to the body. This motion requires the consent of the Chair and may be deemed out of order. If accepted by the Chair, the Chair and the Delegate shall each be given one minute to present their argument to the body. This motion needs a simple majority to pass. If passed, the decision of the Chair is repealed.

**Motion to Introduce an Unfriendly Amendment:** This motion brings an amendment that has already been submitted to the Chair with the appropriate number of signatories to the floor for general debate and a vote when debate is closed on the resolution. No second is required. It is only for unfriendly amendments, for friendly amendments are just considered automatically part of the resolution.

**Motion to Introduce a Working Paper:** This motion brings a working paper that has already been approved by the Chair with the appropriate number of signatories to the floor for general debate. It requires a second, is not debatable, and needs a simple majority to pass.

**Motion to Limit Debate:** This motion sets the amount of time a delegate has the floor during normal debate (excluding moderated caucuses). It may also be used to change the set speaking time.

**Motion to Reconsider:** This motion is used to bring a resolution or topic that has been previously tabled back to the floor. It requires two speakers in favor and two against and needs a two-thirds majority to pass.



# Sample Position Paper

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**General Assembly**  
**Nigeria**  
**David Schulman**  
**UNAMID**

The situation on the ground in Darfur has escalated in recent months resulting in the deaths of over one hundred peacekeepers. Although a motion to drastically strengthen the peacekeeping mission in Darfur has been blocked, the situation on the ground has never been more dire. Violence against civilians has continued to escalate. The tumultuous environment in Sudan has begun to spread, threatening to topple the relative peace and stability of nearby Chad. In light of these malicious developments on the ground, Nigeria sees the undeniable need for a change in the mandate of this operation. If left to its own devices, the situation will only continue to deteriorate.

Over the past decade, Nigeria has committed itself to a number of pan-African processes with the intention of putting out the fires of conflict. In order to do this effectively and stop the atrocities in Darfur from continuing, Nigeria believes that the General Assembly should expand the mission in Darfur.

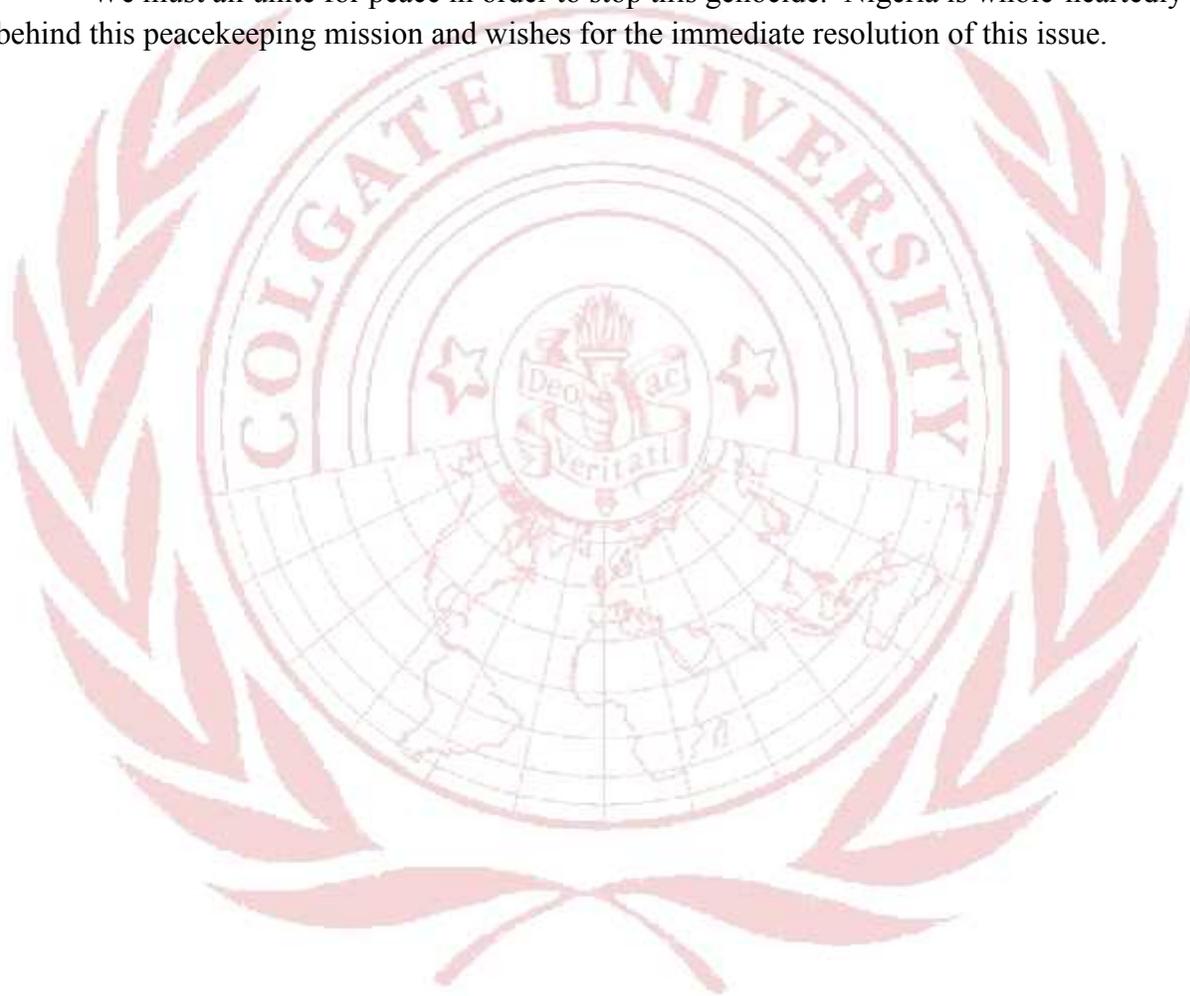
One of the key issues that we believe this revamped mandate should address is the importance of having a highly mobile ground force which can evaluate and respond to situations quickly. To do this, Nigeria believes that an increase in tactical air support (namely helicopters) is paramount. Having increased tactical air support will give peacekeepers a better picture of the situation on the ground and increase the mission's ability to respond quickly.

In addition, we believe that we need to increase our ground presence further. Nigeria is willing to send additional troops and hopes that other nations will follow our lead. Currently, there are only around 14,000 troops deployed. While this is enough to prevent outright warfare between the feuding factions, our presence is too sparse to prevent small skirmishes that often result in civilian casualties. There are 14,000 peacekeepers in Sudan presently, and Nigeria would like to see a multilateral effort towards a goal of 20,000 troops over the next few months. Furthermore, there is an increasing need for more sophisticated equipment and logistical support. This would aid the overall mission and would enable our peacekeepers to fulfill their duties more effectively.

However, increasing our ground presence, technologies, and tactical air support cannot holistically deal with this problem. To comprehensively address this problem, we recommend that all nations who believe in basic human rights officially recognize the genocide occurring in Darfur. By gathering international recognition of this holocaust, our mission gains that much more legitimacy and increased global awareness puts that much more pressure on the rebel

factions. Secondly, although the primary concern of our mission is to stabilize the current situation on the ground, Nigeria believes that we must remain cognizant of “collateral damage.” There has been an influx of hundreds of thousands of Sudanese refugees into neighboring African nations. These nations have become inundated with so many refugees and cannot possibly provide for all of them. Therefore, Nigeria calls upon other countries to follow its lead and accept as many Sudanese refugees as possible into their nation, so long as they are given suitable living conditions.

We must all unite for peace in order to stop this genocide. Nigeria is whole-heartedly behind this peacekeeping mission and wishes for the immediate resolution of this issue.



# Sample Resolution

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McMUN

UNEP

Topic 1 – Draft Resolution 1.5

Sponsors: Russia, United States, Israel, Netherlands, Slovenia, Australia, Indonesia, Sweden, China

Signatories: Haiti,

*The Governing Council of the United Nations Environmental Program,*

**Fully aware** of the necessity to protect national sovereignty,

**Recognizing** the global need for infrastructure to deal with environmental issues,

**Fully Alarmed** with the amount of waste and damage of the environment and living conditions in urban areas,

**Observing** that over half of the world's population currently resides in urban area and that this number is ever increasing,

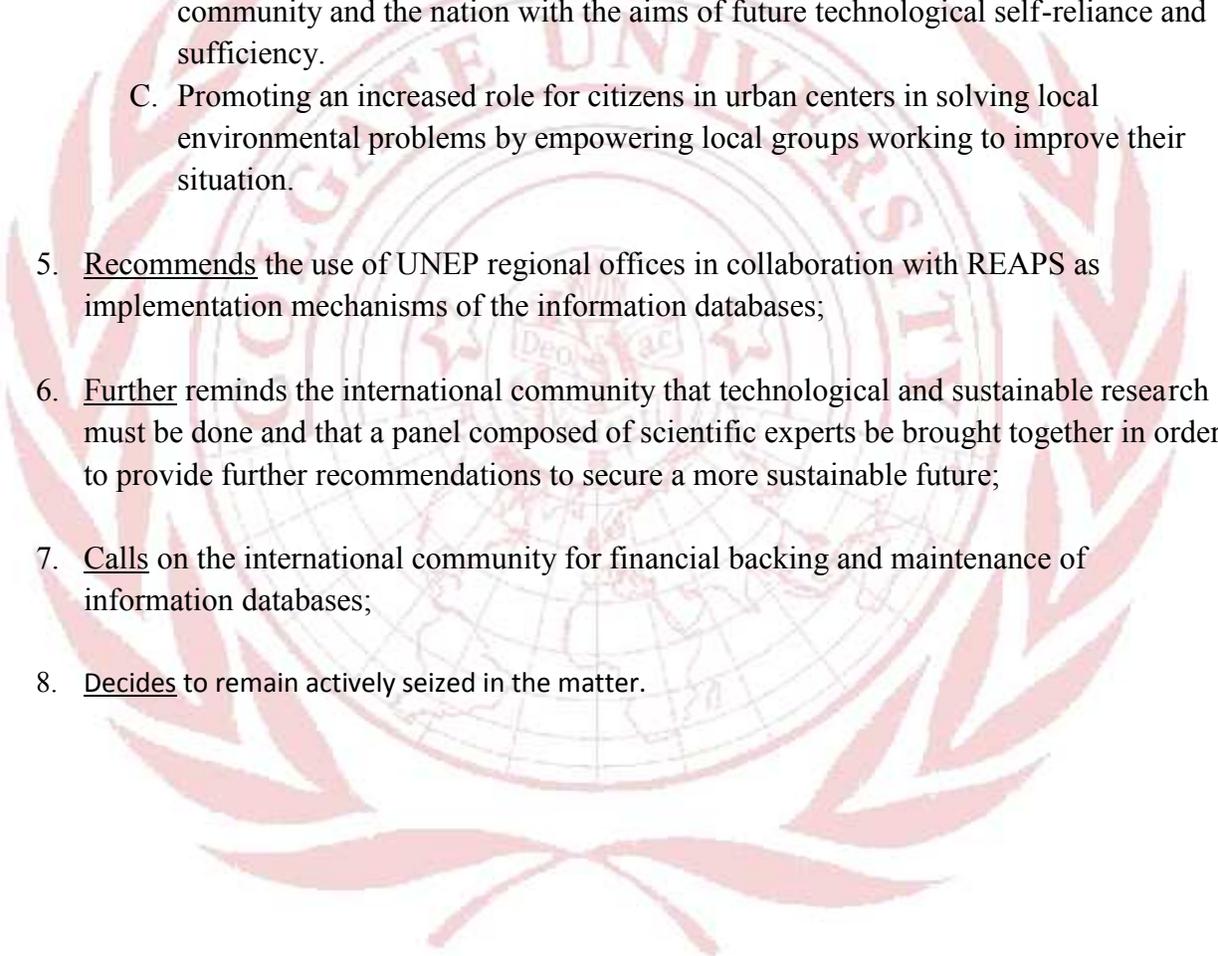
**Reaffirming** the importance of developing a future of sustainable technologies,

**Bearing In Mind** the necessity of cooperation of the international community,

**Respecting** the fact that each region of the globe has various needs, abilities and unique experiences,

**Noting** the desire to improve the international environmental condition and that each country needs access to certain resources, including expert knowledge,

1. Recommends the establishment of a voluntary submission accessible information database for the purpose of:
  - a. Offering a procedural system for infrastructure development in a two-tiered infrastructure system determined by relative importance
    - A. Tier I – Waste management, general and water sanitation, urban planning, renewable energy,
    - B. Tier II – Recycling services, reusable production, industrial, commercial, and residential sustainability
  - b. Serving as an outlet for accessing resources and scientific information;
2. Supports the creation of REAPS (regional expert advisors panels) composed of UN staff and technological experts in the environmental problem areas such as:
  - a. Waste management, water supply, alternative clean energy sources, mass transport transportation.
  - b. Offering a procedural system for infrastructure development
  - c. Serving as an outlet for accessing resources and scientific information;

- 
3. Endorses training of representatives from individual countries by REAPS in order to educate and create more efficient programs;
  4. Emphasizes the importance of educating all levels of implementing programs dealing with environmental problems:
    - A. A multi-faceted approach to implementation should occur at the national, regional, and local communities.
    - B. To encourage, rather than impose, further self-planning and education within the community and the nation with the aims of future technological self-reliance and sufficiency.
    - C. Promoting an increased role for citizens in urban centers in solving local environmental problems by empowering local groups working to improve their situation.
  5. Recommends the use of UNEP regional offices in collaboration with REAPS as implementation mechanisms of the information databases;
  6. Further reminds the international community that technological and sustainable research must be done and that a panel composed of scientific experts be brought together in order to provide further recommendations to secure a more sustainable future;
  7. Calls on the international community for financial backing and maintenance of information databases;
  8. Decides to remain actively seized in the matter.