

Researching Your Topic

After your country, you will find out what topic your committee will be discussing. You should develop an understanding of the issues that will be debated at your Model UN conference. Many conferences send out background materials or issue summaries, which can help jumpstart your research. You may want to look at the sources cited in these materials for more in-depth information. You should also research any people, events, or organizations that are brought up to gain a fuller understanding of the topic. If the conference background materials pose questions, you should answer them with your country information in mind.

Here are some additional questions to help guide your research:

- What is the problem? How does it affect your country?
- What has your country done to combat the problem?
- What are the various “sides” in the debate?
- Which aspects of the issue are most important to your country?
- If your country is not involved with the issue, how can it become involved?
- How will your country shape the debate at the conference?
- What arguments will other countries make?
- How do the positions of other countries affect your country’s position?
- Is there evidence or statistics that might help to back up your country’s position?

Some tips for researching issues:

- Check out news and media sources for up-to-date developments on an issue (<http://www.reuters.com/>, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/>, <http://www.cnn.com/>).
- Look at the UN Economic and Social Development page (<http://www.un.org/esa>), which has an index to some prominent issues as well as a list of UN agencies that work in various issue-areas. Also, through the United Nations Documentation Center (<http://www.un.org/documents/>), you can find resolutions and voting records from the current and previous years.
- Visit non-governmental organization (NGO) websites. NGOs are an important part of the UN system, in part due to the valuable research and information they generate. Look for NGOs that address your topic.