

International Model United Nations of Middle East and North Africa

*** I.Mena.Mun ***

<http://internationalmenamun.org>



General Preparation

- **Country**
- **Issue**
- **UN System**
- **Position papers**

1. Country

Answering the questions belows will be a good starting point for researching on a country and its position

- 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? Why are they important?
- 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)? How does this compare to other countries in the world?
- When did your country become a member of the UN?
- 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 Organization of American States (OAS)?
- 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)?

2. Issue

After a complete and thorough research on your country, the next thing you should be looking at is the issue at hand. Developing a full understanding of the issue will put you in a position to fully defend your country's position and debate confidently at the conference. Below are a few questions that could help you better in your research on the issue.

- 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?

3. The UN System

Understanding the UN System and its sister Organs is of vital importance to being a successful MUN participant. Having an idea of the UN mandate and its boundaries when it comes to international mediation and negotiations will enable you know what the UN can do and what the UN cannot do. Below are a few questions that to get you started.

- What are the important elements of the UN Charter?
- What are the main bodies of the UN?
- How are the UN's bodies and agencies organized?
- Which countries serve on the body or agency you are simulating?
- How does the body or agency you are simulating operate?
- What are the most recent UN actions on your issue?
- Why did past UN actions succeed or fail?
- What conferences and meetings have been held with regard to your issue?
- What have UN officials said about your issue?
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4. Position papers

The Position Paper is a one or two page document that is essentially a summary of your knowledge of the topic and the position your country plans to take when it enters committee. It typically contains four sections: Background of Topic, Past International Actions, Country Policy, and Possible Solutions. Position Papers are usually due before the conference.

The key starting points for researching each section are listed below. They will help you get started with participating in your first Model UN conference, but you will want to dig deeper as you develop more experience.

- **Background of topic:** Background guide of the topic provided by the conference, Google, the news, Wikipedia (to frame the topic)
- **Past international actions:** UN website, your committee's website, key treaties or resolutions mentioned in your background guide, UN or NGO reports
- **Country policy:** CIA World Fact book, your country's foreign ministry website, domestic programs within your country, and your country's voting record on key treaties or resolutions
- **Possible Solutions:** NGO or think tank policy recommendations, past UN resolutions that you'd like to change or expand on, and your own creativity!

Example: BUT NOT THE ONLY WAY..

Committee

Country

Issue

In the first part of your Position Paper you should briefly specify the issue of your Committee.

- Why is this issue relevant? What is the scope of the problem? You can name statistics, the major players or the current developments concerning the issue under discussion.
- You can also mention the UN action that has been taken in this respect already. Which resolutions have been passed so far? Which conferences have been held? What is planned for the future?

In the second and most important part you should specify the official position of the country / organization you represent in respect to the issue under consideration.

- What is your country's / organization's policy on the topic? Why? What issues in this area are particularly relevant to the country / organization you represent? What action has your country / organization taken already?
- What are the possible solutions to the problems in this area? What is the type of resolution your country / organization tries to accomplish?

Remember that you have to represent the position of your country / organization in the Committee. Therefore you should not speak in the first person ("I"), but with the voice of the country you represent (for example: "Algeria suggests..." "Germany proposes..."). You may offer your own ideas for a solution of the problem, but always make sure that these ideas do not contradict with the policies of the country you represent