



Main Model United Nations Conference

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SDGs – Leave No One Behind

GUIDE

HOW TO WRITE A WORKING PAPER

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How to write a Working Paper

Your committee aims to pass a resolution or a report that outlines what the United Nations and the Member States try to achieve and how to achieve that goal. But before a resolution is passed, there needs to be a Working Paper. During the session, there are different modes of debate (see Rules of Procedure). During the formal debate, delegates may discuss about their views on the topic, goals, and solutions. It would be best if you listened closely to find allies with the same or similar positions to those of the country you represent.

During the informal debate, the delegates will form different groups and work on a Working Paper together. We will provide a template on our website, and you can also find it on Ryver. We will upload it under “Topics”.

For the Working Paper itself, remember your position paper and the position of your country on the topic. In the preambulatory clauses, you will refer to past resolutions and decisions and state the problems you want to tackle in your Working Paper. Then in the operative clauses, say how you want to solve the issues. Here you can remember the last section of your position paper, what does your country like to implement? The Working Paper will be a product of many delegates. Remember who your allies are and listen to the speeches; some unexpected allies may share the same views and follow similar strategies. Furthermore, there will be compromises, so you decide your priorities and on what points you are willing to negotiate.

Formalities

There are some points for you to remember. First go from vague to specific, both in the preambulatory clauses and in the operative clauses. Second, for every preambulatory clause, there should be at least one operative clause. There can be more than one, however. Remember, only the Security Council is allowed to use “Decides” for an operative clause. The only exception you can write is that the committee “Decides to remain actively seized on the matter”. You can find a comprehensive list of words for preambulatory and operative clauses at the very end of our Rules of Procedure. Lastly, this is a simulation, but remember to stay in Decorum and speak English, even when working on your papers in informal sessions. Do not exclude anyone and remember the diplomatic conduct.

When you are happy with your Working Paper – keep in mind that compromises will most likely be necessary – your group can hand it in to the dais. The dais will read it and may give you feedback on the Working Paper. After correcting it, you can hand it in again. If the dais approves, your Working Paper will become a Draft Resolution on which the committee will vote later. If a consensus or a majority of the committee votes in favour of a Draft Resolution, it will become a Resolution.

Some committees, for example the Peacebuilding Commission, vote on reports instead of resolutions. The form of reports differs in some aspects from resolutions. Reports have to be passed unanimously, meaning that a report only passes if all members of the committee vote either “in favour” or abstain from voting. If any committee member votes “against” a report, it automatically fails. If your committee writes a report, you will find more information in your Background Guide.

The universal rules regarding plagiarism are, of course, as relevant at this MUN as at all others. Reusing resolutions and speeches formulated by other people or bodies is unacceptable. Also, pre-written resolutions will not be accepted at MainMUN since they harm the dynamics of the negotiations.

The objective of the United Nations is to pursue and achieve consensus-based decision-making wherever possible. If your committee has multiple working papers addressing the same aspect of the topic, your dais may encourage you to merge them with other papers before moving into voting. This process will help create consensus on the topic, avoid duplication of ideas, and create more robust and effective resolutions.

Sponsors and Signatories

The required number of signatories for a paper to be submitted is equivalent to 20% of the membership in attendance during the first committee session. This can be any combination of sponsors and signatories, with a minimum of one sponsor. The dais will provide the required number after the first session's roll call. When a working group feels that the working paper is complete, in the correct format, and ready to be considered by the entire body, they may submit it to the dais.

Draft Resolutions

After approval, the working paper is considered a draft resolution, assigned a number, and sent to the secretariat for posting online. At this time, the names of all sponsors and signatories are removed from the document by the MainMUN secretariat.

The electronic distribution of a draft resolution is considered to be its formal introduction to the committee – no procedural motion or reading of the draft resolution by a sponsor is necessary. All draft resolutions will be made available electronically with no printed copies distributed.

Once a draft resolution has been introduced, it is formally debated as part of the topic area, and amendments may be proposed. It can also be referred to in speeches made during formal debate.

Have fun negotiating and writing together!