

# Conference Preparation

## **General Research and Preparation**

There are three equally important aspects of delegate preparation : functional , substantive , and positional preparation. Functional preparation equips the delegates with basic tools, including an understanding of the rules necessary to perform in committee . The substantive element provides a groundwork of specific information on the topic areas. Finally, positional preparation requires the students to adopt perspectives that are not their own. With this in mind ,BHISMUN provides two tools to aid you: this Guide to Delegate Preparation and the Study Guides . Together ,these will ensure you will be ready for the conference . Beyond reading and understanding the material we have provided , the more practical experience you can acquire through debate , resolution -writing , making presentations, and the better prepared you will be.

## **Functional Preparation**

In order to perform in committee, delegates must have an understanding of the basic structural elements of model UN. This Guide to Delegate Preparation covers most of that information. Herein, you may find an overview of the the Rules of Procedure , and the resolution writing process . Billabong High International School Model United Nations views the application of rules primarily as a means to the end of a smoothly functioning committee, and secondarily as an indicator of delegate performance. Mock sessions in the classroom or club and other practice can be very useful in learning these rules.

## **Substantive Preparation**

The Study Guides are a result of extensive research and effort on the part of the Executive Board and are the foundation of substantive preparation for each committee. We suggest that

you read them, discuss them, and read them again. If a delegate has not read and absorbed the information in the Study Guide, he or she will not be able to contribute effectively to the committee. An early start on the Study Guides will enable you to fully understand the topics and begin to flesh out your own ideas. Remind yourself that you must act as policymakers, analyzing and molding the information you have received into solutions and resolutions. Discussions with other delegates will also help you develop your ideas. While the Study Guide will provide most of your substantive preparation, independent research is useful, rewarding and necessary for a successful conference. To this end, we have included links in the Study Guides for further research. Research on the topic areas should be carried out in conjunction with the exploration of country policies.

## **Positional Preparation**

BHISMUN requires delegates to adopt the position of a specific country throughout the UN simulation. This is a key element of the “international” experience of model UN as it forces delegates to examine the perspectives, problems, and policies of another country at a very fundamental level. It is also one of the most difficult aspects of MUN because students must confront inherent biases of their own national perspectives and historical information.

## **Where to Begin Your Research**

Materials prepared by the BHISMUN staff are not meant to be a substitute for your individual research. Instead, they should provide a starting point, inspiring you to ask yourself questions about the issues at hand. The best prepared delegates are those that take the provided materials as the beginning of their research and delve deeper into the topic areas. Beyond BHISMUN materials are a host of information services, beginning with United Nations sources. UN resources often have compiled statistics, charts, and graphs which you may find helpful in understanding the issues. Apart from this try digging up news reports from reputable news outlets such as Al-Jazeera, BBC, Reuters and the AP.

## COMMITTEE DYNAMICS

### **The Stages of Committee Session**

The twenty-hours of committee session are governed by the BHISMUN rules of parliamentary procedure . Committee time is divided between formal debate and caucus. During formal debate, delegates have the opportunity to share their views with the entire committee , and the parliamentary rules of procedure are in force . Delegates make speeches , take questions and comments, and debate resolutions and amendments. While formal debate can further the work of the committee, delegates who lack an understanding of the rules can hamper the progress of an otherwise productive committee session. Thus, in order to prevent misunderstandings and delays during formal committee debate, delegates must have a comprehensive understanding of the rules and their use.

### **Agenda**

The first committee session is Saturday morning . The main goal at the onset is to set the agenda . Essentially , the committee will decide if it wants to discuss agenda A or B. Once the topic of discussion is selected, a speakers list will be opened , and delegates will sign up in order to give opening remarks and opinions in a formal setting . At some point, a delegate usually calls for a caucus in order to discuss ideas in an informal manner. An unmoderated caucus is a break in formal debate where delegates may speak to one another directly for a certain amount of time free from the constraints of parliamentary procedure. Towards the end of this first session, some delegates will begin writing working papers that will be presented at the following session.

## **Working Papers**

Working papers are the first step towards a resolution. They are the result of caucusing and coordinated writing efforts by the delegates. A working paper provides the delegates with exactly what the name suggests—something to work on. It is the first attempt to place the abstract ideas from debate and position papers into written form. Working papers are concrete in that they are relatively formal, yet they are also flexible because they are not bound by the format of resolutions. They are usually one page proposals and help to focus discussion on certain aspects of the entire topic at hand. Likewise, as the papers themselves are rough drafts, they can be combined or altered to piece together a coherent resolution. This is key. In the working paper stage, it is very important for the committee to gain as much consensus as possible. During this interim step toward a resolution, some of the most valuable debate takes place. If problems are dealt with during this phase, the resolution process will usually be much smoother. Please note that there is no set format for working papers.

## **Resolutions**

Your solution to the problems that the committee confronts take the form of a resolution. Resolutions represent the committee's final attempt to draw together the interests of many competing nations into a comprehensive solution that serves the interests of the collective world community. From the procedural perspective, the resolution is the formal document upon which the committee will take action via the amendment and voting processes. A resolution is a complex document that follows a strict format and reflects the negotiation, debate, and innovative proposals that the committee has produced. Before a resolution can be formally introduced into a committee, it must receive the approval of the Director. The Director will sign a resolution if it demonstrates an adequate understanding of the issue, answers the questions posed in the Background Guide, and has a wide base of support. A wellwritten resolution exhibits the following qualities:

- Familiarity with the problem: Relevant background information and previous UN actions should be referenced. In addition, a good resolution should keep in mind the actual power and influence of the committee. An ambiguous, unenforceable resolution is useless.
- Recognition of the issues. At the very least, the resolution should address the ideas in the that form the crux of the debate in the committee sessions .
- Concision. Every clause and phrase has a purpose.
- Good form. An otherwise sound resolution may suffer from clumsy grammar or sloppy format.

The heading of a resolutions should include the resolution name, the list of signatories, and the topic addressed by the resolution. The body of the resolution is written in the format of a long sentence.

- The next section, consisting of preambulatory clauses, describes the problem being addressed, recalls past actions taken, explains the purpose of the resolution, and offers support for the operative clauses that follow. Each clause in the preamble begins with an underlined participle and ends with a comma.
- Operative clauses are numbered and state the action to be taken by the body. These clauses all begin with present tense, active verbs, which are generally stronger words than those used in the Preamble. Each operative clause is followed by a semicolon except the last, which ends with a period. Of course, compromise on resolutions is not always possible, as delegates must also protect their own national interests. Thus, every BHISMUN resolution proposed does not have to be based entirely on compromise and consensus. Such a demand would ignore the essential national interests of the member nations of the UN. Compromise is not an end in itself, and neither is “the compromise resolution.” Delegates should never feel forced to unduly compromise their national interests for the sake of consensus.

## **Amendments**

As not everything can be worked out prior to the introduction of resolutions, it is expected that amendments to resolutions will be presented on the floor. The amendment process allows delegates to alter parts of a resolution without scrapping the entire document, strengthening consensus on the resolution by allowing delegates to change sections upon which they disagree. However, delegates must be aware of the direction in which the amendments are steering the committee. If the amendments are not substantive, they merely ensnarl the committee in procedure.

# THE ART OF COMMUNICATION

Often the most serious obstacle to a committee's progress is not some irreconcilable ideological difference but simply a failure on the part of the delegates to listen to and understand one another. This section is designed to help you better utilize your opportunities for communication to effectively debate the issues at HMUN. The skills you learn from this may help you become a better speaker and debater.

## Using the Speakers List

During formal debate, the order in which delegates make their speeches is dictated by their order on the Speakers List. Since you can only be on the Speakers List once at any given time, you should resubmit your name as soon as you finish speaking to maximize speaking opportunities. Do not worry about not knowing what you will say next time; by the time that your turn arrives there will be plenty of issues that you will want to talk about. You can also attempt to increase the number of times you can address the committee by asking other delegates to yield their remaining time to you.

## Speech Preparation and Content

When you are planning your upcoming speech, you need not write it out word for word. A written speech takes much time to prepare and may lack enthusiasm or spontaneity. You may prefer to outline your points and perhaps jot down a few key phrases. Pay attention to the previous few speeches: their content may prompt you to change what you were planning to say. Also, by referring back to previous speeches, you make it far clearer how your position relates to other delegates' positions. You have a wide range of choices for the substantive content of your speech. You can introduce new ideas, elaborate on old ones, support and defend allies' positions, attack opposing positions, or do any combination of the above. Keep in mind, however, that

the content of your speech should be a balance between what you want to say and what the committee is currently discussing.

## **Delivery**

The key to a successful speech is strong and effective presentation of your ideas. Be confident in your public speaking. Avoid showing any signs of fear, stress, doubt, anxiety, or nervousness. In terms of style, it is especially important that in your first few speeches you give the impression of confidence: confidence in your preparation, confidence in your ideas, and confidence in your ability to communicate. Remember that the point is to get your ideas across; you know what you want to say, so relax and concentrate on making your views clear.

## **Yields**

There are three different types of yields you can make. Please remember, though, that yields only apply to substantive speeches, there is only one yield per speech, and yielding precludes any comments.

- **To questions:** With this yield, the Chair selects up to three delegates who wish to ask you questions. Each delegate is allowed one question, and only your answer time is subtracted from your remaining time. Often the best kind of yield that you can make, yielding to questions lets you clear any misconceptions that delegates may have.
- **To a delegate:** When you yield to another delegate, he or she is given your remaining time to speak. You usually opt for this yield when an ally knows a particular idea especially well and would be better able to express it.
- **To the Chair:** After you make this yield, the Chair proceeds to the next speaker, unless there are any motions.

## **Moderated Caucus**

Compared to the strict parliamentary order of formal debate, caucus may appear to be disorganized and hectic. If it proves impossible to conduct productive caucuses, consider asking the EB to give you some help. One successful format for a moderated caucus divides the delegates pro and con on a particular issue and then alternates delegates from both groups, according each one minute to speak. Such moderated caucuses combine the best elements of formal debate and caucus, providing the order of formal debate with the spontaneous flow of ideas associated with caucus.

## **Unmoderated Caucus**

An unmoderated caucus is a state of committee during which no speakers are recognized by the Chair. Though no debate takes place, the committee invariably hums with activity. During unmoderated caucuses, delegates often try to come to consensus, organize blocs, and write documents.

## **How and When to Move to Caucus**

A motion to caucus, since it is a non-debatable procedural motion, takes precedence over all other motions except for Parliamentary Points. When you motion for a caucus, the Chair will ask you for how long and for what purpose you want to caucus. If you feel that discussion among delegates outside of formal debate is necessary, then move to caucus. Generally, delegates will call for a caucus to accomplish one of the following specific goals:

- **Review ideas:** One of the first things you should do in caucus is meet with your allies and review what was said, deciding which new ideas are acceptable and which are not. Encourage delegates in your caucusing session to put forth any new ideas they have. Also, you should analyze the response of the rest of the committee to the ideas you and your allies brought up.

- **Establish a consensus:** Try to establish a consensus on the major points as soon as you can. Do not expect to hammer out all the little differences, as that will take a while. Just reach an agreement on the fundamentals so that your bloc can present a unified front to the committee during the next formal debate session.
- **Contact other people:** Besides talking to delegates in your own bloc, it is a good idea to talk to delegates in other blocs. Try to get some rough idea as to the positions of the other blocs and see which delegates are potential allies and which will be your opposition. In addition, you should talk to the Assistant Directors and let them know your ideas and how negotiations are proceeding. Finally, you should begin thinking about forming strong coalitions. Regardless of any suggested divisions, simplified or actual, you are, of course, free to caucus with any delegates you choose. In fact, after several caucuses, you will find blocs dividing and recombining in new ways, depending on both personalities and goals.

## **Negotiation**

While the ability to communicate is necessary to functioning in committee, the art of negotiation is necessary to producing a successful resolution. BHISMUN's value as a simulation lies not only with the substantive education one gets on current international problems, but more importantly, with the opportunity one has at the conference to hone one's negotiation skills, which are vital to future leaders in any field.

## **Coming to Resolution**

The desired product of successful negotiation is, of course, the resolution. At HMUN, we allow only one resolution to be passed per topic area and believe that this results in a more rigorous and ultimately more exciting process.

## **Drafting the Resolution**

Every good resolution should merit description by “the Three Cs”: comprehensive, collaborative, and conceivable. Virtually all the problems that the UN tackles are quite complex; for a resolution to be a good solution to a problem of global importance it must be comprehensive. If the resolution is to gain enough support to be passed by the committee, then it must also be collaborative. Finally, if the resolution is to gain the approval of the Director, then it must be conceivable. The realistic resolution takes into account UN limitations and the current international balance of power so as to make the most effective use of diplomacy.

## **Finalizing the Resolution**

At this stage, it is important to carefully check over grammar, syntax, style, etc. Not only is a well-written resolution easier to comprehend, it is more impressive to delegate and hence more likely to gain their support. Resolutions for you to follow. Improperly formatted resolutions will be returned to delegates for revision. You must now get the required number of delegate signatures. When attempting to get signatures, it is important to remind delegates hesitant to sign that their signature does not bind them in any way to any future support, a signature only implies a desire to see the resolution out on the committee floor.

# RULES OF PROCEDURE

## General Rules

1. **Language:** English will be the official and working language of the conference.
2. **Delegations:** Each member state will be represented by one or two delegates and shall have one vote on each committee.
3. **Credentials:** The credentials of all delegations have been accepted upon registration. The Secretary-General shall be the final arbiter of the validity of all credentials. Any representative to whose admission a member objects will provisionally be seated with the same rights as other representatives, pending a decision from the Secretary-General.
4. **General Powers of the Committee Staff:** The Secretary-General will declare the opening and closing of each meeting and may propose the adoption of any procedural motion to which there is no significant objection. Subject to these rules, the Secretary-General will have complete control of the proceedings at any meeting. The Chair will direct discussions, accord the right to speak, put questions, announce decisions, rule on points of order, and ensure and enforce the observance of these rules. The Chair may temporarily transfer his duties to another member of the committee staff or other designees of the Secretary-General.
5. **Appeal:** Any decision of the Chair, with the exception of those matters for which the BHISMUN Rules of Procedure explicitly prohibit appeal, may be appealed immediately by a delegate. The Chair may speak briefly in defense of the ruling. The appeal will then be put to the Secretary-General has ultimate discretion on any ruling, whether it is appealed successfully or not.
6. **Quorum:** The Chair may declare a committee open and permit debate to proceed when at least one-fifth of the voting members of the committee is present. The presence of a majority of the members will be required for a vote. A roll call is required to determine the presence of a quorum.

7. **Courtesy:** Delegates will show courtesy and respect to the committee staff and to other delegates. The Chair will immediately call to order any delegate who fails to comply with this rule.
8. **Electronic Devices:** No laptops, tablets, cell phones, or other electronic devices may be used in the committee room , with internet and cellular abilities switched on ; i.e keep the “airplane mode “ on, during formal debate or moderated caucus.

## **Rules Governing Debate**

1. **Agenda:** The first order of business for the committee, if the committee has more than one topic area to discuss, will be the consideration of the agenda. If the committee has only one topic area, the agenda is automatically adopted. To set the agenda a motion should be made to set the agenda to one of the committee’s topic areas.
2. **Debate:** After the agenda has been determined, one continuously open speakers’ list will be established for the duration of the topic area, except as interrupted by procedural points or motions, caucuses, discussion of amendments, and introduction of draft resolutions. Speakers may speak generally on the topic area being considered and may address any working paper or any draft resolution currently on the floor. A draft resolution can only be referred to as such once it has been introduced to the committee.
3. **Unmoderated Caucus:** An unmoderated caucus temporarily suspends formal debate and allows members to discuss ideas informally in the committee room. A motion for an unmoderated caucus is in order at any time when the floor is open, prior to closure of debate. The delegate making the motion must briefly explain the purpose of the motion and specify a time limit for the caucus, not to exceed fifteen minutes. The motion will be put to a vote immediately, and a simple majority is required for passage. The Chair may use his discretion and dismiss the motion, his or her decision is not subject to appeal. The Chair may prematurely end an unmoderated caucus if the Chair feels that the caucus has ceased to be productive, and this decision is not subject to appeal.

4. **Moderated Caucus:** The purpose of the moderated caucus is to facilitate substantive debate at critical junctures in the discussion. A motion for a moderated caucus is in order at any time when the floor is open, prior to closure of debate. The delegate making the motion must briefly specify a topic, a speaking time, and an overall time limit, not to exceed fifteen minutes, for the caucus. Once raised, the motion will be voted on immediately, with a simple majority required for passage. The Chair may rule the motion dilatory and his or her decision is not subject to appeal. If the motion passes, the Chair will call on delegates to speak at his or her discretion for the stipulated time. Only speeches will be counted against the overall time of the caucus, and each speech will be counted as taking up the full duration of the speaking time. If no delegates wish to speak, the moderated caucus will immediately conclude, even if time remains in the caucus. The Chair may also decide, subject to appeal, to suspend the caucus early.
5. **Closure of Debate:** When the floor is open, a delegate may move to close debate on the substantive or procedural matter under discussion. The Chair may, subject to appeal, rule such a motion dilatory.
6. **Postponement and Resumption of Debate:** Whenever the floor is open, a delegate may move for the postponement of debate on a resolution or amendment currently on the floor. The motion, otherwise known as “tabling,” will require a two-thirds majority to pass. No debate or action will be allowed on any resolution or amendment on which debate has been postponed, and if debate on a resolution or amendment has not been resumed before debate is closed, that resolution or amendment may not be voted upon. A motion to resume debate on an amendment or resolution on which debate has been postponed will require a simple majority to pass. Resumption of debate will cancel the effects of postponement of debate.

## Rules Governing Speeches

7. **Speakers' List:** The committee will have an open speakers' list for the topic area being discussed. Separate speakers' lists will be established as needed for motions to set the agenda and debate on amendments. At his or her discretion (usually only when a new speakers' list is opened) the Chair may solicit nations to be added to the speakers' list by raising their placard. The speakers' list for the second Topic Area will not be open until the committee has proceeded to that topic.
8. **Speeches:** No delegate may address a session without having previously obtained the permission of the Chair. The Chair may call a speaker to order if his or her remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion, or offensive to committee members or staff. Delegates who are absent when recognized by the dais automatically forfeit their time, and debate will continue.
9. **Speaking Time:** When any speakers' list is opened, the speaking time is automatically set to one and a half minute. This motion requires a simple majority to pass.
10. **Yields:** A delegate granted the right to speak from a speakers' list may, after speaking, yield in one of three ways: to another delegate, to questions, or to the dais.
  - **Yield to another delegate:** Any remaining time will be given to that delegate, who may not, however, then yield any remaining time to a third delegate. To turn the floor over to a co-delegate is not considered a yield.
  - **Yield to questions:** Questioners will be selected by the Chair and limited to one question each. Follow-up questions will be allowed only at the discretion of the Chair. Only the speaker's answers to questions will be deducted from the speaker's remaining time.
  - **Yield to the Chair:** Such a yield should be made if the delegate has finished speaking and does not wish to yield to

another delegate or to questions, and further does not wish his or her speech to be subject to comments. The Moderator will then move to the next speaker. A yield to the Chair is in order.

\*Yields are in order only on substantive speeches and not during moderated caucus.

11. **Comments:** If a substantive speech is followed by no yields, the Moderator may recognize two delegations, other than the initial speaker, to comment for thirty seconds each on the specific content of the speech just completed. Delegates who make comments may not yield. No comments will be in order during debate on procedural motions, moderated caucus, or debate on amendments.
12. **Right of Reply:** A delegate whose personal or national integrity has been impugned may request in writing a Right of Reply. The Reply, if granted, will take the form of a thirty-second speech. The Moderator's decision whether to grant the Right of Reply cannot be appealed, and a delegate granted a Right of Reply will not address the committee until requested to do so by the Moderator.

## **Points**

13. **Point of Personal Privilege:** Whenever a delegate experiences personal discomfort which impairs his or her ability to participate in the proceedings, he or she may rise to a point of personal privilege to request that the discomfort be corrected. While a point of personal privilege may interrupt a speaker, delegates should use this power with the utmost discretion.
14. **Point of Order:** During the discussion of any matter, a delegate may rise to a point of order to indicate an instance of improper use of parliamentary procedure. The point of order will be immediately ruled upon by the Moderator in accordance with these Rules of Procedure. The Moderator may rule out of order those points that are dilatory or improper; such a decision cannot be appealed. A representative rising to a point of order may not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion. A point of order may

only interrupt a speaker when the speech itself is not following proper parliamentary procedure.

15. **Point of Parliamentary Inquiry:** When the floor is open, a delegate may rise to a point-of-parliamentary inquiry to ask the Moderator a question regarding the Rules of Procedure. A point of parliamentary inquiry may never interrupt a speaker. Delegates with substantive questions should not rise to this point, but should rather approach the committee staff at an appropriate time.

## **Rules Governing Substantive Matters**

16. **Working Papers:** Delegates may propose working papers for committee consideration. Working papers are intended to aid the committee in its discussion and formulation of resolutions and need not be written in resolution format. Working papers are not official documents, and do not require formal introduction, but do require the signature of the Director to be copied and distributed. Working papers do not have signatories.
17. **Resolutions:** A resolution may be introduced when it receives the approval of the Director and is signed by twenty five members in General Assembly committees, eight members in the Economic and Social Council committees and Regional Bodies, and five members in the Security Council and Historical Security Council. Signing a resolution need not indicate support of the resolution, and the signatory has no further rights or obligations and may sign more than one draft resolution. There are no official sponsors of resolutions. The Director's decision not to sign a resolution or amendment may not be appealed. Resolutions require a simple majority to pass unless otherwise stated in specific committee rules. More than one resolution may be on the floor at any one time, but at most one resolution may be passed per topic area.