

Developing a Policy

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THIMUN: Preparation
and Practice –
Booklet 5

Before you attend the MUN conference, you need to develop a policy and to produce this in a written statement to share with the other members of your delegation and to provide the basis for subsequent draft resolutions.

You can only perform well at the conference if you are thinking like a representative of your assigned country or organisation and formulating policy accordingly.

In order to formulate your policy, you need:

- to know as much as possible about the workings of the United Nations Organisation and the role played by your country or organisation within the international community;
- to learn as much as possible about the country or organisation you will be representing;
- to find out as much as possible about the issues you will be dealing with, both the historical background and the current developments.

Do not become frustrated if the country you are representing seems to lack a well-defined policy on some issues.

In many cases the significance of any particular issue for a country will change as circumstances and events develop and, consequently, so will its policy.

At a real international conference certain nations may not even take a position on an issue. The delegation may choose to wait and see what emerges from other delegations before reacting.

As a delegate at a MUN conference, however, you cannot afford to take up such a “wait-and-see policy”, since, for you, it is a one-time experience and you do not want to lose the opportunity to exchange ideas on issues with other delegates.

In MUN, there is an element of creativity, both in the preparation and in participation, which is not normally available to professional diplomats.

Although you should play your role as realistically and as professionally as possible, you should also allow yourself some imaginative thinking on the issues, while still remaining within the realm of what your country’s position might possibly be.

Of course, you should not jeopardize or sacrifice your country's legitimate interests in seeking a diplomatic breakthrough. At the same time, you cannot achieve a breakthrough in diplomacy by strictly adhering to the status quo.

The Policy Statement or Position Paper

As part of your MUN preparation you will write a brief but comprehensive statement of the policy of your country on each of the issues you personally will be dealing with. This can be called a Policy Statement or a Position Paper.

Your individual policy statement serves three important purposes:

Firstly, it forces you to think your policy through more thoroughly. From all the research you have done, all the websites you have visited, all the documents you have read, you will need to select only the essential elements and to formulate these in a readable way for the other delegates in your delegation.

Secondly, it contributes towards the final document outlining your country's policy on all the issues being dealt with at the conference. This is necessary to maintain consistency in policy among the various members of the delegation.

Thirdly, it provides you with an outline for your first draft resolution and your opening speech. The Policy Statement should provide:

- background information on the issue and current status on the global agenda;
- your particular country's position and previous actions related to the issue;
- your country's current stance on the issue;
- recommendations for global cooperation.

This will enable you to discuss and debate the issue from your nation's viewpoint. It will also contain the seeds of your first draft resolution and your opening speech.

The individual policy statements produced by the various members of the delegation should be combined into one document. This will represent the whole delegation's policy on all the issues on the agenda.

Components of a Policy Statement

Your policy statement should include the following components:

- An explanation and definition of the issue and its key terms as they appear on the agenda.
- A short summary of recent international action related to the question.
- Some reference to key documents relating to the issue.
- A general statement of the country's position on the issue.
- Specific suggestions for a solution to the question which may provide ideas for the operative clauses of a draft resolution.

Sample Policy Statements

Delegation: UNIFEM

Commission: ECOSOC

The Question of Implementation of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), including Elimination of the Trafficking in Women and Girls

Discrimination against women takes many forms whether it be in the workplace, at home, or in society at large. Increasingly, and at an alarming rate, the crime of trafficking in women and girls has grown in practice. The multilateral conventions that have been agreed to by the majority of Member States and in many cases, universally, provide all the legitimate means of states to implement and enforce measures that will end discrimination and, in severe cases, end the persecution that crosses from exploitation to slavery.

Particular conventions include the most important 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, more commonly referred to as CEDAW and the agreements reached at the 1995 follow-up Conference on Women held in Beijing.

UNIFEM supports all efforts at implementation and especially supports these efforts in countries with poor economies where the integration of women into the workplace and society as a whole will not only create equity but will also help to increase economic productivity.

UNIFEM urges all member states to cooperate in measures to eliminate the worst forms of discrimination by sharing resources to end human trafficking.

Delegation: Iran Commission:
Disarmament

The Question of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZs)

Despite general views of the western world about Iran's development of nuclear technology, Iran believes it is vital for peaceful coexistence that we encourage the establishment of nuclear weapon-free zones in various regions of the world as we hope that such efforts will lead to the total denuclearization of the world.

As defined in previous General Assembly resolutions, nuclear weapon-free zones shall be any zone, recognized as such by the General Assembly, established by any group of states in the free exercise of their sovereignty, under a treaty or convention which:

- defines the status of complete absence of nuclear weapons to which the zone shall be subject;
- establishes an international system of verification and control to guarantee compliance with the obligations derived from this status.

Until such time as regional associations or any genuine multilateral efforts are organized into fair and verifiable regimes allowing for each state's development of technology for legitimate needs, and until such time as denuclearization of weapons follows a global plan of implementation, Iran reserves its right to develop means to meet the energy needs of its people and to defend itself against the threat of nuclear states.

In the spirit of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 58/59 ("A Path to the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons"), Iran recommends the creation of a multilateral arm of the IAEA that will propose and monitor a verifiable plan for nuclear disarmament of all states.

Iran also endorses the right of all independent states to develop technology that will meet the energy needs of its people in this changing resource-short world.