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How to Write a Position Paper

# Position Papers

## Model UN Preparation

Many conferences require that each delegation submit a position paper—an essay detailing your country's policies on the topics being discussed in your committee. Writing a position paper will help you organize your ideas so that you can share your country's position with the rest of the committee. If you conduct extensive research, a position paper should be easy to write.

Most conferences that require position papers ask for them about one month before the conference so that staff members can read them and get a feel for the direction debate will take. If the conference you are attending does not require a position paper, you should still consider writing one to help you organize your research and prepare your speeches. Many delegates use their position papers as their opening remarks.

## How to Write a Position Paper

Writing a position paper might appear to be a daunting task, especially for new delegates. But with enough research, you will find that writing a position paper will be easy and useful.

Position papers are usually one to one-and-a-half pages in length. Your position paper should include a brief introduction followed by a comprehensive breakdown of your country's position on the topics that are being discussed by the committee. A good position paper will not only provide facts but also make proposals for resolutions.

Many conferences will ask for specific details in a position paper, so be sure to include all the required information. Most conferences will provide delegates a background guide to the issue. Usually, the background guide will contain questions to consider. Make sure that your position paper answers these questions.

### **A good position paper will include:**

- A brief introduction to your country and its history concerning the topic and committee;
- How the issue affects your country;
- Your country's policies with respect to the issue and your country's justification for these policies;
- Quotes from your country's leaders about the issue;
- Statistics to back up your country's position on the issue;
- Actions taken by your government with regard to the issue;
- Conventions and resolutions that your country has signed or ratified;
- UN actions that your country supported or opposed;
- What your country believes should be done to address the issue;
- What your country would like to accomplish in the committee's resolution; and
- How the positions of other countries affect your country's position.

### **Position Paper Tips**

- **Keep it simple.** To communicate strongly and effectively, avoid flowery wording and stick to uncomplicated language and sentence structure.
- **Make it official.** Try to use the seal of your country or create an "official" letterhead for your position paper. The more realistic it looks, the more others will want to read it.
- **Get organized.** Give each separate idea or proposal its own paragraph. Make sure each paragraph starts with a topic sentence.
- **Cite your sources.** Use footnotes or endnotes to show where you found your facts and statistics. If you are unfamiliar with bibliographic form, look up the Modern Language Association (MLA) guidelines at your school's library.
- **Read and reread.** Leave time to edit your position paper. Ask yourself if the organization of the paper makes sense and double-check your spelling and grammar.

- **Speech! Speech!** Do you plan to make an opening statement at your conference? A good position paper makes a great introductory speech. During debate, a good position paper will also help you to stick to your country's policies.
- **Let the bullets fly.** Try not to let your proposals become lost in a sea of information. For speechmaking, create a bulleted list of your proposals along with your most important facts and statistics so that you will not lose time looking for them during debate

# Sample Position Paper

Committee: International Labor Organization

Topic: Globalization and Development

Country: Romania

*\*This sample position paper was submitted by the delegation of Romania at the 2007 UNA-USA Model UN Conference in New York City.*

In the past two decades the rapidly growing world trend has been toward globalization. With the emergence of the internet as a means of communication and the increasing accessibility of international trade physical barriers are not the only barriers withering away. Protective tariffs are plummeting and free trade agreements are becoming more prevalent. Romania appreciates that globalization creates favorable situations for expansion of commercial as well as economic assets. In the past year Romania has seen a foreign direct investment (FDI) increase of 199%. Inward FDI increased from EURO 234 million in 2005 to EURO 699 million in 2006. However, Romania realizes that increased globalization does not automatically produce more equality.

Globalization and Development can contribute to the advancement of the overall international human condition; however, the delegation of Romania recognizes that without proper regulation the potential for advancement will remain limited to an elite few individuals, businesses, and nations. Unless checked and aimed toward the common good, globalization cannot effectively serve the global community. Crucial in dealing with the complexities of

globalization, good governance must act with solidarity and responsibility. Romania believes that in involving people in globalization we must promote moral values, democratic principals, inclusive global political culture, institutions that safeguard both individual civil rights and inherent freedoms, and the common good. In addition, coping with the influx of information from globalization governments must act with solidarity and insight. Access to digital education will undoubtedly result in the confidence of citizens in their respective administrations and allow for a greater degree of transparency, and therefore a lesser degree of corruption.

Romania believes the multinational business community has the ability and the obligation to support pertinent values in human rights, labor standards, and environmental preservation. As stated by the president, Mr. Traion Basescu, Romania feels a "heartfelt attachment to multilateralism, as an effective instrument designed to identify the adequate answers to the challenges brought by globalization."

Romania is party to the majority of multilateral treaties and conventions identified as such by the Secretary General in the context of the Millennium Summit in 2001. Romania has always supported innovative and effective ways of establishing cooperation within and between regional organizations. As one of the newest members of the European Union, Romania is an active member of the World Trade Organization, and looks forward to offering its support to the redirection of globalization to best benefit the global community.