Resolution Writing

Lagos Model United Nations

Resolution Writing

Introduction

Resolutions are one of the most important parts of any Model United Nations (MUN) conference. In fact, they can be said to be the major purpose for which an MUN is organized – to work together with others to create ingenious, practical and lasting solutions to global problems. Just as in the actual United Nations, a resolution is a document containing solutions to the topic before the committee.

During the conference, delegates come together during informal sessions to work on ideas and solutions to the topic being addressed. At this point, the document is called a **Working Paper**. After the document has passed through rigorous reviews by the members of the Dias, it is accepted and becomes a **Draft Resolution**. After this stage, the document is presented before the entire committee and voted upon. If the document is voted for by a majority of the committee members or adopted by acclamation, it becomes a **Resolution**.

The authors of a Working Paper are known as **Sponsors**. They actually write parts of the document, or contribute substantial ideas to it. **Signatories** are members of the committee who do not necessarily write the document or contribute to it in any manner, but are in support of what it seeks to achieve or want to see it debated upon as a Draft Resolution. In many conferences, such as LMUN, there is a required number of Sponsors and Signatories that must be met before a Working Paper is accepted as a Draft Resolution by the Dias.

How to Write a Resolution

Resolutions are often divided into three sections namely:

1. Heading

2. Preambular Clauses

3. Operative Clauses

At LMUN, delegates are given a Working Paper template during the conference which they are expected to work with.

Heading

The Heading usually consists of important information such as the committee name, topic, document code, names of Sponsors and the name of Signatories. At LMUN, delegates are expected to fill in all the information in the heading **except** the code.

Sample

Code: Draft Resolution 1.2

Committee: The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Topic: Decriminalizing Abortion in Africa: A Milestone towards Ensuring Women's Right to Health

Sponsors: Republic of Ireland, Commonwealth of Australia, Republic of Rwanda, United States of America

Signatories: Kenya, Cameroun, Ghana, Angola, Burkina Faso, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, India, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, China, Morocco

Preambular Clauses

The Preambular Clauses are the introductory part of the document. They aim to achieve a number of things including highlighting the problems or issues, describing the subject matter and the current situation, emphasizing important documents and resolutions of the UN, stating past action by the UN, UN committees and other relevant organizations, providing general information on the topic, previous efforts amongst others.

Each Preambular Clause begins with a preambular phrase. Examples include 'affirming', 'appreciating', 'bearing in mind', 'guided by', 'having considered', amongst others. **Kindly view the LMUN Delegate Prep Guide for a full list of these phrases**. A typical preambular clause has its preambular phrases in italics and ends with a comma (,)

Sample

Guided by Article 25 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) which guarantees the right to health, reproductive health and family planning,

Operational Clauses

The Operative Clauses contain the solutions to the problems or issues highlighted in the preambular clauses. They are very detailed expositions, and attempt to answer the questions: What? How? Who? When? Why? Operative clauses can be broken into sub-topics and even further. Each operative clause begins with an operative phrase. Some of which are 'calls upon', 'encourages', 'recommends', 'proclaims', 'strongly condemns', 'requests', amongst others. **Kindly view the LMUN Delegate Prep Guide for a full list of these phrases**. An operative clause usually begins with an operative phrase in italics and ends with a semi-colon (;) The last operative clause in the document ends with a period. (.)

Sample

1. Urges African Member States to provide adequate post-abortion care for all women, fulfilling their obligation to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly which should include physical and mental healthcare by:

    a. Encouraging African Member States to incorporate the rights stated in the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which they are obligated to do by law;

    b. Partnering with the African Union International Centre for Girls and Women Education in Africa and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as the African Mental Health Training and Research Foundation, and the Perinatal Mental Health Project to:

        i. Provide professional counselling and psychotherapy services for women of all ages who have gone through the process of abortion;

        ii. Train youth counsellors to handle cases of women who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder and other abortion related mental illness;

NB – Kindly view the LMUN Delegate Prep Guide to view samples of a Working Paper and Draft Resolution.

Amendments

At first glance, writing amendments may seem like a daunting task. However, it is a simple process. Amendments seek to modify operative clauses in Draft Resolutions. They may strike out a clause, add a clause or change a clause. You cannot raise an amendment to modify a preambular clause, or remove all the operative clauses. Typically, an amendment would only arise when the document is already a Draft Resolution, and moving into voting stage. An amendment template is usually given to the committee by the Dias.

There are two kinds of amendments. They are unfriendly amendments and friendly amendments. Unfriendly amendments are changes which are not supported by all of the sponsors of the Draft Resolution. Hence, this amendment must be voted upon. Friendly amendments, on the other hand are agreed upon by all sponsors and does not require a vote.

Sample

Committee: The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

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Add clause 12 in Draft Resolution 1.2

12. Encourages the use of funds or grants from the Fund for Gender Equality (FGE) to fund organizations dedicated to training and research for sexual and reproductive health.

Tips for Resolution Writing

- It is very important to align each preambular clause to an operative clause in a working paper. For example, Operative Clause (OC) 1 should provide solutions to the statement in Preambular Clause (PC) 1. This will apply to OC2 and PC2, OC3 and PC3 and so on.

- The number of preambular clauses should not be more than the number of operative clauses. It is highly advised that they are the same number, or that the operative clauses are more in number.

- Be very detailed yet, straightforward. Learn to trouble-shoot your ideas and punch holes in them. This would help you to create water-tight and credible solutions that can stand the tests of times (or rather, your committee) Attempt to answer the questions – Why? How? What? When? Who?

- Organize your resolution logically. The document is essentially one big sentence so, it should flow and adopt a natural progression, one clause after the other. It could helpful to arrange your clauses in order of importance.

- Funding for the solutions, although important is often over-looked by delegates. Always ensure that your idea has a practical means of finance.

- Do not plagiarize. It is usually very easy for the Dias to determine that a particular part of a working paper has been lifted off a UN document or website. And once found, this could result in your suspension from the conference or other consequences. Hence, avoid plagiarism at all costs.

- Merging blocs or working papers at MUNs is not a bad thing. In fact, if managed well, it would be a chance for a smart delegate to negotiate, network and show diplomatic skills. If your bloc or working paper has been merged with another, do not waste time whining or complaining. Divide your work and work fast. However, if you do not wish to merge, you can justify this by showing the Chair how your working paper differs from that of the other bloc.

- Review your work before it is submitted. Dot your i's and cross your t's. Ensure that you use the correct punctuation marks and format. However, do not attempt to change the format of the working paper.

- Master the art of track changes and comments. While reviewing your work, the Dias would make changes to your documents and leave comments on the side. It is very important to work on these comments and accept the changes. Try your best to resolve the comments appropriately, and follow the guidelines of the Chair or you might spend a long time working on that one comment.

- Practice! Practice! Practice! While it is unacceptable to bring working papers or clauses already worked on before the conference (in fact, this is a violation of LMUN's rules of procedure), you should practice as much as you can especially, if it is your first conference. This will help you to organize your thoughts, learn how to work under pressure and enhance your thinking on the spot.

- Research is absolutely important. It is the backbone of any good resolution. Hence, ensure that you are well read and well researched on your topic and solutions. Have the relevant fact and figures needed.

- In creating solutions to the problem, you may look at past solutions and ask yourself why these solutions haven't worked. Doing this would help you to discover practical solutions. Remember to pay attention to individual, local, national and international solutions.

That's it! See you at the conference!