

POSITION PAPER GUIDE



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INTRODUCTION

Writing a position paper is a task a delegate will have to complete before attending any Model United Nations conference. The purpose of a position paper is to outline a delegation's past action and current stance on its committee's topics. It is an essay covering a country's perspective on the assigned topics of a conference, as well as possibly give some insight into the future actions and leanings of same delegation. Position papers are not mandatory, but are required in order to be eligible for an award. Thus, this guide is designed to help you write a strong position paper.

POSITION PAPER OVERVIEW

▪ WHAT IS A POSITION PAPER

A position paper is a paper in which a Member State, Observer State, or non-governmental Organization (NGO) represents their position on a set of topics. Delegates are expected to submit a position paper on the topics that are outlined in their Committee Background Guide before the deadline that will be communicated on the LMUN official website.

▪ IMPORTANCE OF A POSITION PAPER

A **position paper** is important to generate support on an issue. It describes the **position** of Member States regarding issues that the committee assigned to a delegate is trying to tackle and it explains the rationale for that **position**. The **position paper** is based on facts that provide a solid foundation for your deliberation.

POSITION PAPER GUIDELINES

▪ RESEARCHING YOUR POSITION PAPER

Research is the most important step to writing a position paper. Without research, position papers will be void of substance. Hence, there are different steps in the research procedure:

1. The first step to your research is to read your committee's background guide. The background guide will give you a general scope of the topics before the committee and will allow you to narrow the field of your own personal research. With respect to writing a position paper, the "Further Questions" section is one of the most important sections to consider in the guide, as these questions are explicitly designed to help guide your research for the topic.
2. When you have completed reading the background guide, you should begin researching your own country's stance on the given topic(s). In order to ensure an adequate researching process, take note of resources you use for future reference. Once you feel comfortable with your research, you can begin writing.



GETTING TO KNOW YOUR COMMITTEE AND YOUR TOPICS

Background guides provide a summary of delegates' committees and their mandates but delegates still have to do further research on how much their committees can do regarding the topic they have been assigned. As regards topics, delegates have to research on the general idea of their topics before then focusing on how their country perceives the topics. General research first, then specific research after.

WRITING YOUR POSITION PAPER

▪ **STRUCTURING YOUR POSITION PAPER**

As representatives of a country, the position paper must be written in the third person. For example: instead of writing "I believe..." you must write "the country of (country name) believes..."

For each topic, the position paper should provide:

- Concise policy statement of the position of delegate's assigned Member State;
- The key issues to be figured in each topic;
- Make reference to International and regional conventions, treaties, declarations, resolutions, and other precedents that are relevant to the topic;
- A comprehensive summary of what a delegate's country has done to address the issue; and
- Recommendations for the committee as a way forward.

The structure of a position paper is;

- The first page must have the name of the delegation which is the name of the assigned country in bold at top left. For example- "Delegation from (Member State);
- And at on the top right of the first page in bold the name of the school the delegate represents for example- "Represented by School Name";
- Coming immediately after the first line reflecting step 1, should be written in bold or italics the name of the committee. For example- Position Paper for the (Committee);
- The position paper should however, properly start with a short introductory paragraph introducing the topics on committee's agenda and your country's commitment to address these topics.



SAMPLE OF THESE REQUIREMENTS;

Delegation from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Represented by the University of Lagos

Position Paper for the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

The topics before the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) are Protecting Cultural Heritage in Conflicting Zones; Education as a Tool to Prevent Extremism; and Ensuring Freedom of Information for all. Pakistan is eager to cooperate and collaborate with all Member States, NGOs and stakeholders to develop innovative strategies to achieving the objectives of UNESCO.

- The body of the position paper must then address the two topics within your Committee Background Guide and each topic must start with its title boldly written.

In addressing the body of the position paper which is also known as the content, there are certain things that must be present, and the content of each topic is to be addressed in three paragraphs.

Paragraph 1: *contains the introduction which establishes the importance of the topic and your country's position.*

For example;

I. Protecting Cultural Heritage in Conflicting Zones

According to the World Heritage Convention, as of July 2018, there are a total of 1,092 world heritage sites, which are a combination of cultural heritage and other forms of heritage. The protection of cultural heritage is a necessity, especially in conflict-prone zones, because it helps in creating a sense of identity. This protection also ensures the continuity of various cultures, traditions and beliefs for future generations in our fast-changing world. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan believes that cultural heritage is a basis for national identity and image-building, and as a country with sites declared to be of universal significance because of their historical and cultural value by UNESCO, further believes that adequate protection is required to be given to them.

Paragraph 2: *requires delegates to tell us about the international, regional and national precedents relating to the topic. What has been done before to discuss the topic, key international documents, conferences, conventions, resolutions, treaties etc. that the United Nations and your committee have created on the topic?*



For example;

Pakistan has been party to a number of international conventions and has ratified resolutions relating to the protection of cultural heritage, some of which include: The *Hague Convention* (1954) and, the *World Heritage Convention* (1972). This is reflective of Pakistan's passion and commitment to protecting cultural heritage in conflicting zones. Pakistan understands the need to recognize and be proud custodians of heritage spanning over decades. In view of this, Pakistan was involved in the preparation of an Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Inventory. It was initiated in November 2015 through a collaborative endeavor undertaken by Torquay Harbour Area Action plan (THAAP) in conjunction with UNESCO *Islamabad*. In 2018, Pakistan co-sponsored the Human Rights Council resolution 37/17 which emphasizes the engagement of States to respect, protect and fulfill cultural rights in the area of culture.

Paragraph 3: *It is highlighted as the most significant aspect of your position paper. This contains the solutions and recommendations that your country is proposing in order to solve the issues in the topic. It can be thoughtful, creative, specific or general. Your recommendations should be within your committee's mandate.*

For example;

Accordingly, Pakistan recommends that Member States should take up the responsibility of providing cultural rights, mechanisms and cultural inclusion and also support the creation of cultural spaces around their countries, by enacting mandatory laws that will facilitate this objective. On the maintenance and conservation of all types of heritage, Pakistan recommends investment in cultural workers, cultural and creative industries, local crafts and cultural institutions, as well as women and youth for cultural empowerment. These investments will enable close maintenance, organization and security for cultural heritage as well as job opportunities. Furthermore, cultural heritage located in conflicting zones are highly prone to destruction, therefore Pakistan suggests that just as in the case of Swat Museum in Pakistan, if cultural heritage sites are destroyed, they should be reconstructed and rehabilitated through funds contributed by other Member States or by partnerships with international bodies to promote tourism and raise public awareness about protection of cultural heritage. In conclusion, Pakistan believes these suggestions will further the appreciation of cultural heritage by various Member States.



EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES AND HELPFUL TIPS FOR WRITING POSITION PAPER

The following are additional strategies and tips that you can employ as you write your position paper:

- Use topic sentences at the beginning of each paragraph to provide information to your reader about what you will be discussing within that paragraph and to enable smooth transitioning from paragraph to paragraph. A topic sentence summarizes the key idea or ideas that will be discussed within that paragraph. At the end of each paragraph, also look to provide conclusion sentences; it is particularly effective to include a conclusion sentence at the end of each topic to summarize the position of your Member State or Observer on the topic and to emphasize the continuing need for the international community to address the topic;
- Whenever using an acronym, give its full name in your first mention, and then immediately afterwards include the acronym in parentheses. For all subsequent references, simply use the acronym. For example, the first mention of the Economic and Social Council in your position paper would be “the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)”, and then your subsequent references throughout your position paper would simply be “ECOSOC”;
- Look to use the third person, instead of the first person, throughout your position paper. For example, rather than saying, “We believe that it is important to address this topic,” say, “Germany believes that it is important to address this topic”;
- When citing UN resolutions in your position paper, list the UN entity that produced the resolution, the resolution number, and the year that it is from, rather than simply providing the document code. For example, cite A/RES/70/1 as “General Assembly resolution 70/1 [2015]” or E/RES/2008/8 as “Economic and Social Council resolution 2008/8”;
- UN resolutions often include “RES” in their document code – for example, A/RES/70/1 or E/RES/2008/8. If a UN source does not have a “RES” in its code – such as E/2015/7 – it may be a report rather than a resolution. You can check the front page of the document to see what type of source it is; you can then cite it as “ECOSOC report 2015/7,” etc.;
- It is often best to use the term “Member States” (with each word capitalized) rather than “countries” or “nations,” since in most cases you’ll specifically be referring to countries who are Member States of the United Nations. (Some exceptions to this include terms such as “developing countries” and “least developed countries.”);
- When mentioning important international or regional precedents, such as major conventions, declarations, and treaties, please italicize the titles of these documents and provide the year of adoption – Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979). Titles of reports should



also be italicized – The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015. When mentioning the names of UN organizations, you do not need to use italics or quotation marks – the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the World Health Organization (WHO);

- If you are interested in citing a short quote as a part of your position paper, please be sure to include the quote in quotation marks and provide contextual information on the quote within the larger sentence where you give the quote. For example: “United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated at the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ‘The new agenda is a promise by leaders to all people everywhere.’” It is best to use quotes sparingly, as this will give extra emphasis to the quotes that you do include, while also allowing you to tell the reader your Member State’s or Observer’s positions in your own words.



POSITION PAPER FORMAT

- For each topic, delegates must address the global/regional context of the topic using relevant data and information.
- The length of the position paper must stay within the confines of two pages and must not exceed that.
- The allowed margins must be 1 inch for the whole paper.
- The Font is Arial, between 10 pt. and 12 pt.
- Delegates must justify the text of their paragraphs making both the right and left sides have straight ends.
- Position Papers should be saved in this format: "CommitteeName_CountryAssignment.pdf"; E.g. UNICEF_UnitedKingdom.pdf"
- Position Paper must be submitted in PDF format.