

Creating a Position Paper

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(information adapted from UNA-USA website)

A position paper is an essay giving details on your assigned country's policy on the topic being discussed in your committee. Writing a position paper will help you to organise 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.

A position paper is usually presented one month before the conference. This is so all the members of your committee can read them and get a feel for the direction the debate will take. Position papers are also useful in creating your speeches. You could use your position paper as your country's opening remarks.

How to write a Position Paper

Position papers are usually one to one-and-a-half pages in length. Your position paper should include:

1. A brief introduction – why is this topic so important to you and the world
2. Provide facts and evidence for the topic under discussion – what is happening with this topic in your country and other countries
3. Provide proposals for resolutions – what type of action do you want the world/UN to take on this topic

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 this issue
- ✓ What your country would like to accomplish in the committee resolution
- ✓ 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 – 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 organised.** 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, check out the MLA guidelines in class.
- **Read and reread.** Leave time to edit your position paper. Ask yourself if the organisation of the paper makes sense and double-check your spelling and grammar.
- **Speech!** A good position paper makes a great introductory speech. During debate, a good position paper will also help you stick to your country’s policies.
- **Bullet Facts.** Try not to let your proposals become lost in a sea of information. Keep 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

Here is a 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

Research Tips

- **Get a Grip.** Begin by researching your topic in general and then narrow your focus. In other words if you were researching infectious diseases, you would want to start by identifying the most common infectious disease, who is most vulnerable to it and why, what causes them, what role environmental conditions play in the spread of these diseases. You may want to get an idea on what treatment is available and what educational programs are available to stop the spread of this/these diseases.
- **Try these.** Google – Permanent Missions to the United Nations; United States Embassies web site; United Kingdom Overseas Mission Policy Pages; Ministries of Foreign Affairs, UNCyberschoolbus. Google various NGO's. These sites should give you information on what your country's position is on various topics. If they do not then you need to run general websearches on your topic using the main keywords and the name of your country.

- **Double check!** Remember information found on the net can be biased – double check your information and distinguish between opinions and facts.
- **The Source.** Go and read some of the UN resolutions on your topic to find out what issues tend to be discussed when your topic is debated. Google “UN Documentation Centre” to find resolutions that have been passed in the General Assembly, Security Council, and ECOSOC.

Diplomatic Intelligence – Knowledge is Power

Remember that to represent your country well you need to interact with delegates from other countries. If you know their position on your questions this will help you predict their arguments during debate. You might be able to decide in advance who would be useful in seeking cooperation and compromise. Furthermore, this knowledge can help you prepare your arguments to support your own position.