

UNITED NATIONS



GUIDE TO MODEL UN



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United Nations Guide to Model UN

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Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION



■ A DELEGATE REPRESENTING THE CZECH REPUBLIC SPEAKS IN MODEL UN. UN PHOTO/JEAN-MARC FERRÉ

Model United Nations—also known as Model UN or MUN—is a popular extra-curricular activity in which students roleplay delegates to the United Nations, simulate UN committees, and learn about diplomacy, international relations, current world issues, and the UN itself. It is estimated that hundreds of thousands of students worldwide participate every year in Model UN conferences at all educational levels in schools and universities. Many of today's leaders in law, government, business, humanities and the arts participated in such simulations as students.

Over the past seven decades, Model UN conferences have helped students develop public speaking, writing, and research skills. They often provide students with their first entry point into international affairs and concepts including peace and security, human rights, development, and rule of law issues. By learning about the UN as an institution, its role in world affairs, and the diplomacy involved in UN decisions, students also learn the importance of seeing matters from someone else's perspective. Indeed, many students have described their participation in Model UN as a life-changing experience, one that influenced their world view, impacted the choice of a future career and/or enabled them to build an international network of friends and contacts that continue to be part of their life.

In 2009, the UN organized its first Global Model United Nations. Many participants were veteran Model UN-goers who were surprised to discover that the UN-organized Model UN was quite different to those they had previously taken part in. In reality, many Model UNs have not always precisely followed the actual rules and practices used at the UN. This book is therefore designed to help aspiring Model UN students and teachers on the practicalities of organizing and participating in simulations that are more in line with the way the UN actually works.

One of the real challenges to competitive Model UN enthusiasts is to negotiate to achieve *consensus* and not to win with a simple majority. In the real world, the General Assembly is not about winners and losers, it is about finding common ground where all Member States feel included. If some delegations push through a resolution at the expense of others, that is not seen as a victory but as a missed opportunity. Member States consider it very important to adopt a resolution that has the widest possible agreement.

This book contains much of what has been learned about how to properly simulate today's United Nations. To ensure that leaders and advisors will be able to organize accurate simulations of UN meetings, the book provides information about the UN structure; recent trends in how resolutions are negotiated and adopted; and the roles that consensus and diplomacy play in the UN's decision-making procedures and processes.

The United Nations encourages all students—Model UN participants or otherwise—to get directly involved in the issues on the United Nations agenda, particularly Agenda 2030 and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

There are many ways for young people to take action on the global challenges discussed and debated in Model UN simulations, to go a step further and become engaged citizens. For some ideas, initiatives and resources, visit www.un.org/youth.

Educational Value of Model UN Conferences

Model UN conferences help students develop public speaking, writing, and research skills. In addition, they often provide students with their first entry point into international affairs and concepts. These affairs and concepts include peace and security, human rights, development, and rule of law issues.

Yet Model UN conferences can also teach students about the UN as an institution, its role in world affairs, and the diplomacy involved in UN decisions.

Some Model UN conferences use Rules of Procedure that do not give students a true picture and appreciation of how the UN functions. This book aims to provide a comprehensive guide to assist Model UN programmes in organizing conferences that are more accurate. It also aims to provide students with an opportunity to learn about the role that diplomacy plays in the UN decision-making process.

It is our hope that you will find this Guide a useful resource.

OVERVIEW OF THIS GUIDE

Who this Guide is for

The Guide is written principally for student leaders and Model UN advisors who organize Model UN conferences. The Guide's aim is to provide information about the UN structure, as well as its decision-making procedures and processes, so that leaders and advisors will be able to organize accurate simulations of UN meetings. At the same time, much of the material in the appendices (e.g., The Essential UN, UN Structure) is useful for students looking to learn more about Model UN conferences and the UN.

How this Guide is Different from Other Model UN Guides

Model UN was established around the same time the UN was created, some say even before. Yet Model UN was not initially monitored by the UN. The first time that a Model UN conference was co-sponsored by the UN was in August 2000 at UN Headquarters in New York. The UN later organized three GMUN conferences in 2009 – 2011. These three conferences led to new Rules of Procedure and a new approach for conducting Model UN conferences. This Guide builds on the three conferences' pioneering approach.



■ HUNDREDS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS FROM 23 COUNTRIES ATTEND MODEL UN IN UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY HALL. UN PHOTO/ESKINDER DEBEBE

This Guide introduces a leadership structure and responsibilities that more accurately mirror the relationship between the GA and the UN Secretariat. As a result, student leaders play a more substantive role in conferences than they do in some Model UN conferences.

Second, it uses Rules of Procedure that are much closer to those used at the UN. While there is some variety in the Rules of Procedure used by Model UN programmes, they are largely based on Rules of Procedure that are different than those used at the UN. The General Assembly Rules of Procedure do not have many of the points and motions used during many Model UN conferences, such as Points of Information, Points of Personal Privilege, or Points of Inquiry. In some instances, procedures violate the sovereign rights of Member States, and are therefore not appropriate for General Assembly (GA) or Security Council (SC) conferences.

Third, most decisions adopted by the GA and the SC are made by consensus—that is, without taking a vote. The leadership structure and Rules of Procedure should support a working environment that encourages delegates to build consensus. This Guide introduces new ideas of how Model UN conferences can encourage building consensus.

How to Use this Guide

The Guide is comprised of three main, interrelated sections: structure, procedures, and processes.

The section on structure focuses on two main UN organs: the General Assembly and the Security Council. The information is designed to help organizers of Model UN programmes decide on the appropriate leadership structure.

The section on procedures focuses on how to adapt the Rules of Procedures used in actual GA meetings to a Model UN conference, where the timeframes for making decisions are much shorter. It also highlights the differences between the rules used in most Model UN programmes and those used at the UN.

The section on processes focuses on a wide range of topics, including:

- the importance of building consensus,
- how to chair a Committee meeting,
- how to write and table resolutions and amendments,
- how to write scripts for the President of the GA (PGA) and Committee Chairs, and
- the art of negotiation.

The content aims to give an overview of the skills needed to run an engaging and successful conference.

HOW DECISIONS ARE MADE AT THE UN

The annual GA session opens every year on the third Tuesday of September and runs for a year. The GA's work follows a cycle of (1) debate, (2) negotiation, (3) decision, (4) implementation, and (5) reporting. Most Model UN conferences focus exclusively on the first three phases of the cycle.

There are three general components to the decision-making process that are crucial for anyone participating in a Model UN conference to understand: debating, negotiating, and decision-making. This section will provide an overview of these three components and highlight what aspects are important to include in Model UN conferences. In addition, it will highlight what gets lost in most Model UN conferences when the implementation phase is neglected.

Setting the GA Agenda

At the beginning of each new GA session, the GA plenary and its six Main Committees are allocated agenda items to consider. The items on the UN agenda represent the UN's priority issues. The main goal of each GA session is to take action on each agenda item that has been allocated to the GA for its consideration. "Considering" an agenda item involves first discussing the item, and then adopting one or more resolutions on that item.

According to Article 10 of the UN Charter, which defines the functions and powers of the GA, "The General Assembly may discuss any questions or any



■ PARTICIPANTS OF MODEL UN IN THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY HALL. UN PHOTO/LOEY FELIPE

matters within the scope of the present Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any organs provided for in the present Charter, and . . . may make recommendations to the Members of the United Nations or the SC or to both on any such questions or matters.” In other words, resolutions adopted by the GA on agenda items are considered to be recommendations. They are not legally binding on the Member States. The only resolutions that have the potential to be legally binding are those adopted by the SC.

Why Consensus is so Important

Member States consider it very important to adopt a resolution that has the widest possible agreement among Member States. Before taking action on a draft resolution, Member States spend hours discussing every word in the resolution to reach agreement on the text. When consensus on the text is reached, in the General Assembly all Member States agree to adopt the draft resolution without taking a vote. Adopting a draft without a vote is the most basic definition of what consensus means. If 192 Member States agree on the text, but just one Member State requests a vote, then consensus is not reached.

If a GA resolution is not legally binding, then the best way to encourage all Member States to implement the recommendations expressed in a resolution is to get them to agree on the same text. When a resolution is adopted by a simple majority, Member States that did not vote in favour of a resolution on a particular agenda item will be less likely to implement the actions on an agenda item.

When the UN was created in 1945, there were only 51 Member States, and resolutions were adopted by a vote. Today, there are 193 Member States, and roughly 80% of the GA resolutions are adopted by consensus.

When you adopt resolutions by a vote, you only need to get a majority to agree on the text of a resolution. You do not need to care about or try to understand the perspectives of the minority who disagree. This process is divisive.

When you adopt resolutions by consensus, you have to be concerned about the viewpoint of everyone, and engage in negotiations that often result in compromises, so that different points of view are taken into consideration. This process is inclusive.

Given the dramatic increase in Member States over time, reaching the widest possible agreement is more vital today than ever. Because the GA's resolutions are recommendations and not legally binding, reaching consensus has helped ensure the widest possible implementation of GA decisions.

In some Model UN conferences, delegates do not even consider implementation. Therefore, delegates do not learn the value of reaching consensus over voting. Most resolutions at a Model UN conference are adopted by a vote. This way of operating does not reflect how the UN has changed. Moreover, by valuing voting over reaching consensus, most conferences do not model the negotiation process that is required to reach consensus. You cannot truly understand the UN as an institution without understanding its decision-making process. This Guide aims to assist organizers in modifying their GA conferences so that they reflect these changes.

As mentioned above, consensus is reached when all Member States have agreed to adopt the text of a draft resolution without taking a vote. However, reaching consensus is not the same thing as being unanimous. It is important to note that consensus does not mean that all Member States agree on every word or paragraph in the draft resolution. Member States can agree to adopt a draft resolution without a vote but still have reservations. The important point is that there is nothing so disagreeable in the resolution that Member States feel it must be put to a vote.

When Member States have reservations about elements of a draft resolution that they have agreed to adopt by consensus, those who are not sponsors of the resolution have the opportunity to explain their position.

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Chapter 2
**THE UN AT
A GLANCE**



RESOURCES



This section provides links to other sources of information of use in preparing for a MUN conference.

You can also find links to resources here.

General Information about the United Nations

Model United Nations Website: www.un.org/mun

The Essential UN: www.shop.un.org/books/essential-un-66755

Basic Facts about the United Nations: www.shop.un.org/books/basic-facts-about-un-42nd-ed-53170

United Nations Publications: www.shop.un.org

United Nations i-Library: www.un-ilibrary.org

Dag Hammarskjöld Library Research Guide: research.un.org

The UN Charter: www.un.org/en/charter-united-nations/index.html

United Nations General Assembly

General Assembly: www.un.org/en/ga/

General Assembly Resolutions: www.un.org/en/sections/documents/general-assembly-resolutions/

General Assembly Rules of Procedure: www.un.org/en/ga/about/ropga/

The GA Handbook (A practical guide to the UNGA): www.eda.admin.ch/dam/mission-new-york/en/documents/UN_GA_Final.pdf

United Nations Security Council

Security Council: www.un.org/securitycouncil/

Security Council Resolutions: www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/resolutions

Provisional Rules of Procedure: www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/provisional-rules-procedure

Working Methods Handbook: www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/working-methods-handbook

Introduction to the Work of the Security Council (A presentation for MUN New York Workshop 2013): www.outreach.un.org/mun/sites/outreach.un.org/files/mun_legacy/2013/06/MUN-Workshop_Security-Council-presentation.pdf

United Nations Documents

Overview of UN Documents: www.research.un.org/en/docs

How to find UN Documents: www.research.un.org/en/docs/find

UN Document Symbols: www.research.un.org/content.php?pid=320836&sid=2626142

Tools and Resources for Accessing UN documents (A presentation for MUN New York Workshop): www.outreach.un.org/mun/sites/outreach.un.org/files/mun_legacy/2013/06/MUN-Workshop_Security-Council-presentation.pdf

Other Online Resources

United Nations Digital Library: www.digitallibrary.un.org/

Official Document System (ODS): www.documents.un.org/ (complex search screen) or www.un.org/en/sections/general/documents/index.html

UN Member States on the Record: www.un.org/depts/dhl/unms

Press Releases: www.un.org/press/en

Daily Journal: www.un.org/en/documents/journal.asp

UN Terminology database (UNTERM): www.unterm.un.org/

UN-I-Que database: www.lib-unique.un.org/DPI/DHL/unique.nsf

Additional Resources

The UN Yearbook: www.unyearbook.un.org/

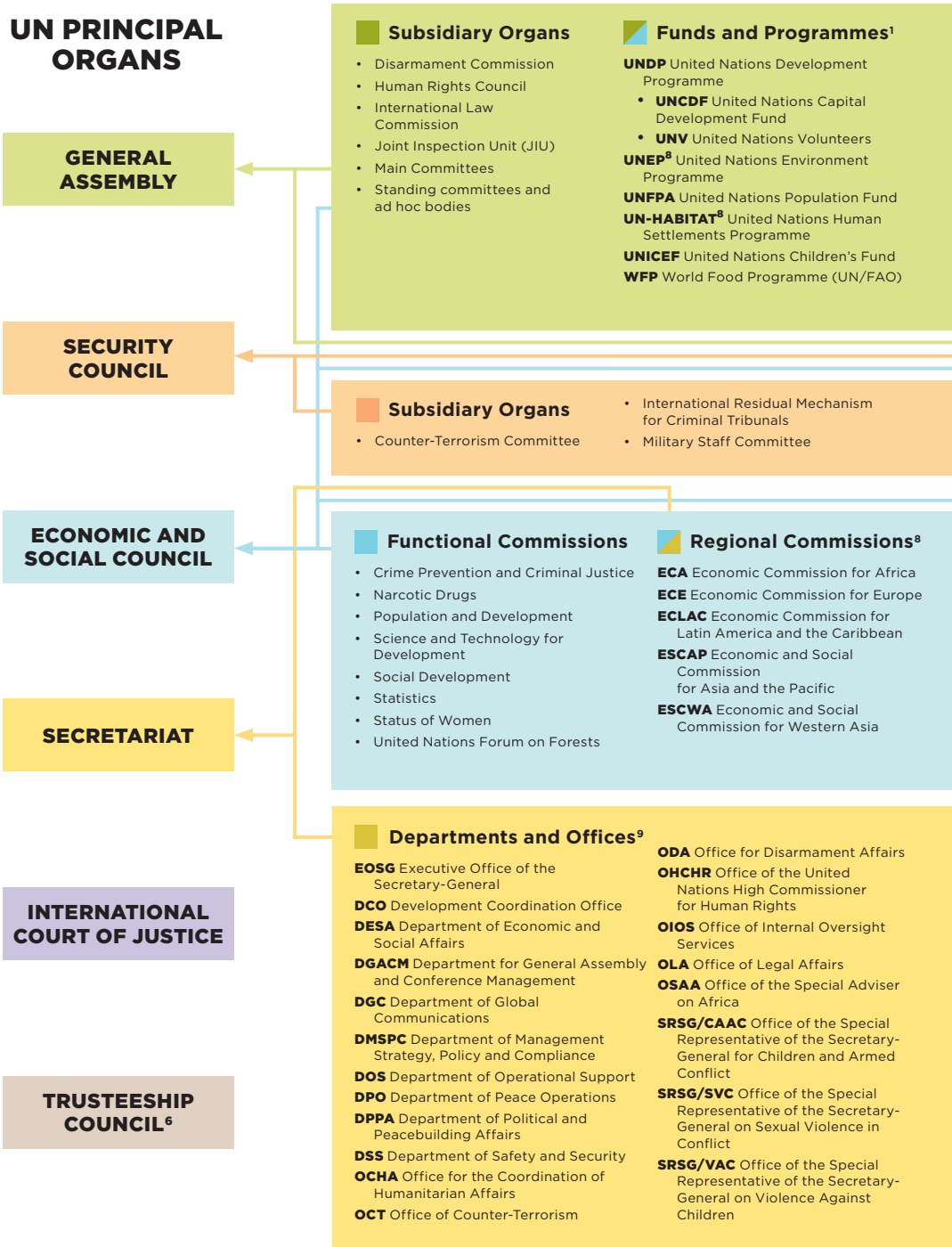
■ INTERNATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL MODEL UN CONFERENCE. UN PHOTO/PAULO FILGUEIRAS





The United Nations System

UN PRINCIPAL ORGANS



Research and Training

UNIDIR United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research

UNITAR United Nations Institute for Training and Research

UNSSC United Nations System Staff College

UNU United Nations University

Other Entities

ITC International Trade Centre (UN/WTO)

UNCTAD^{1,8} United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

UNHCR¹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNOPS¹ United Nations Office for Project Services

UNRWA¹ United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

UN-WOMEN¹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

- Peacekeeping operations and political missions
- Sanctions committees (ad hoc)
- Standing committees and ad hoc bodies

Other Bodies¹⁰

- Committee for Development Policy
- Committee of Experts on Public Administration
- Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations
- Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

UNAIDS Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

UNGEGN United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

UNGGIM Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management

Research and Training

UNICRI United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute

UNRISD United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

UNDRR United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

UNODC¹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

UNOG United Nations Office at Geneva

UN-OHRLS Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

UNON United Nations Office at Nairobi

UNOP² United Nations Office for Partnerships

UNOV United Nations Office at Vienna

Related Organizations

CTBTO PREPARATORY COMMISSION Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

IAEA^{1,3} International Atomic Energy Agency

ICC International Criminal Court

IOM¹ International Organization for Migration

ISA International Seabed Authority

ITLOS International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea

OPCW³ Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

WTO^{1,4} World Trade Organization

Peacebuilding Commission

HLPF
High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

Specialized Agencies^{1,5}

FAO Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

ICAO International Civil Aviation Organization

IFAD International Fund for Agricultural Development

ILO International Labour Organization

IMF International Monetary Fund

IMO International Maritime Organization

ITU International Telecommunication Union

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNIDO United Nations Industrial Development Organization

UNWTO World Tourism Organization

UPU Universal Postal Union

WHO World Health Organization

WIPO World Intellectual Property Organization

WMO World Meteorological Organization

WORLD BANK GROUP⁷

- **IBRD** International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
- **IDA** International Development Association
- **IFC** International Finance Corporation

Notes:

- 1 Members of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB).
- 2 UN Office for Partnerships (UNOP) is the UN's focal point vis-a-vis the United Nations Foundation, Inc.
- 3 IAEA and OPCW report to the Security Council and the General Assembly (GA).
- 4 WTO has no reporting obligation to the GA, but contributes on an ad hoc basis to GA and Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) work on, inter alia, finance and development issues.
- 5 Specialized agencies are autonomous organizations whose work is coordinated through ECOSOC (intergovernmental level) and CEB (inter-secretariat level).
- 6 The Trusteeship Council suspended operation on 1 November 1994, as on 1 October 1994 Palau, the last United Nations Trust Territory, became independent.
- 7 International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) are not specialized agencies in accordance with Articles 57 and 63 of the Charter, but are part of the World Bank Group.
- 8 The secretariats of these organs are part of the UN Secretariat.
- 9 The Secretariat also includes the following offices: The Ethics Office, United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services, and the Office of Administration of Justice.
- 10 For a complete list of ECOSOC Subsidiary Bodies see un.org/ecosoc.

This Chart is a reflection of the functional organization of the United Nations System and for informational purposes only. It does not include all offices or entities of the United Nations System.

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