



Research Guide

In order to prepare effectively for your participation within the Model United Nations General Assembly, it is essential to understand background information about the country you are representing. This research guide is a suggested way to conduct your research and should be the minimum amount of preparation done prior to the Model United Nations convention.

In order to participate successfully, delegates must gain a basic understanding of the United Nations--its structure and internal rules of procedure. They must familiarize themselves with the foreign policy of their assigned country, as well as its pattern of participation within the United Nations. The country information students will find most useful includes: current political history; historical voting patterns; speeches and statements from political leaders; resolutions their country has sponsored; and groups of countries they have formed coalitions with in drafting resolutions and voting on resolutions.

This guide identifies a seven-step strategy and key sources to assist Model UN participants in their research. (These seven steps are adapted from Stanford University Libraries & Academic Information Resources)

Step #1: Familiarize yourself with the country that you are representing

The internet is a great place to begin research on the country you are representing. Delegates must be careful to avoid sources that lack credibility. The library is a good place to look for books regarding a delegate's country, but be take note of old publication dates, as information may be outdated.

This outline is the basic information delegates will want to know about their respective countries.

1. Country's Official Name:
2. Bloc:
3. Geography:
 - a. Location
 - b. Neighboring Countries
 - c. Topography
- . People:
 - a. Population
 - b. Poverty
 - c. Ethnic Groups
 - d. Languages
 - e. Religion(s)
 - f. Conflicts

5. Political Structure:

- a. Type
- b. Divisions
- c. Capital(s)
- d. Cities

6. Economy:

- a. Industries
- b. Minerals
- c. Chief Crops
- d. Other Resources
- e. Imports
- f. Exports
- g. Transportation
- h. Currency
- i. GNP
- j. Energy

7. Education:

8. International Involvement:

9. United Nations Involvement:

10. Country's Position on Climate Change:

Step #2: Gather Background Information on the United Nations Organization

Successful participation in the Model UN sessions requires a baseline understanding of the United Nations organization itself, including its structure and rules of procedures. The best resource for the General Assembly is found online at www.un.org.

Step #3: Gather Background Information on the Assigned Issues

At the same time that Model UN participants immerse themselves in the foreign policy stance of their assigned country, they need to acquaint themselves with the international issue areas. Delegates are responsible for researching the status of discussions amongst the UN in the area of climate change and its effects on poverty. The current discussion in the area of climate change is important to research as well as specific country's responses to the issue.

For very current information, newspapers such as the *New York Times*, *The Times* (London), *Le Monde* and *Le Monde Diplomatique* include significant coverage of United Nations activities as do magazines such as the *United*

Nations Chronicle and the *Economist*. Up to date information about activities of the UN organizations is available by <http://www.un.org/apps/pressreleases/>.

A good outline of climate change can be found at the UN Department website of Public Information:

<http://www.un.org/dpi/ngosection/pdfs2007/Final%20Report%20web.pdf>

Step #4: Review Speeches at the UN by the Country's Representatives

Speeches and statements in discussions in meetings of the principal organs of the United Nations (General Assembly) are key sources for establishing the international policy position of UN member nations.

Step #5: Review Policy Statements from the Country's Political Leadership

There are other useful sources for locating official statements of policy from foreign countries. Perhaps most important are **letters** written by heads of state and foreign ministers to the Secretary-General on issues of mutual interest.

Step #6: Study the Texts of Resolutions Sponsored by the Country

Model UN participants are interested in resolutions and draft resolutions for several reasons. First, these documents serve as examples for writing their own resolutions in terms of form. But MUN participants are also interested in the content of the resolutions that their own country has participated in sponsoring.

It is also possible to easily identify draft resolutions sponsored by particular countries on selected topics by searching the United Nations website by inserting the country name and phrase "draft resolution" with the desired topic in the "subject" field in the search engine. A key advantage of this database is that the retrieved reference will indicate not only the resolution number, but also the names of the countries that co-sponsored the resolution.

Draft resolutions that have been officially passed are first printed in the masthead series (A/RES; S/RES; E/RES) and then republished in a supplement to the Official Records for each of the principal UN organs.

Step #7: Develop an Understanding of the Country's Voting Pattern

Establishing the voting pattern for a nation in particular issue areas at the United Nations is a challenge. The only source for locating votes on draft resolutions in all of the four principal organs is the record found in the summary ("SR") or verbatim ("PV") meeting record at which the vote on a draft resolution is held.

For the record of all resolutions that have been passed, the most current source for the General Assembly is the annual *Resolutions and Decisions* press releases.

Helpful Online Resources:

United Nations Human Development Report 2007/2008: Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World.

<http://hdr.undp.org/en/>

United Nations Human Development Report 2007/2008: Press Releases:
(helpful for determining a specific country's response or position on the issue of Climate Change)

<http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2007-2008/press/>>

60th Annual DPI/NGO Conference, Climate Change

<http://www.un.org/dpi/ngosection/conference/>

The United Nations 60th Annual DPI/NGO Conference:

"Climate Change: How It Impacts Us All"

<http://www.un.org/dpi/ngosection/pdfs2007/Final%20Report%20web.pdf>

United Nations Bibliographic Information System:

<http://unbisnet.un.org/>

This source is one of the most basic and useful sources delegates should be using when preparing for the Conference. It includes landmark UN documents, resolutions of UN bodies, meeting and voting records or press releases. It provides a research guide to get acquainted with the UN documentation system; it allows delegates to research by organ or by main issues; in short, this is an excellent gateway to explore the work of the United Nations, the agenda items and individual Member States role in committee.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

<http://unfccc.int/2860.php>

http://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/background_publications_htmlpdf/application/txt/pub_07_impacts.pdf

CIA World Fact Book:

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

WorldBank Website:

<http://www.worldbank.org/>