



# **London International Model United Nations**

## **Position Paper Guide**



A 'Position Paper' quite literally communicates the position of a country on a particular topic. It is a short paper specifying your country's policies on the topics being discussed in your committee. Each country represented in a committee should send a concise and clear position paper to the chairs well in advance of the conference. Each paper should be approximately one page for each topic.

### The necessity of a Position Paper

A well written position paper provides a basis for future Working Papers and Draft Resolutions. Good position papers also make for a great introductory speech. Writing a position paper will help you organize your ideas so that you can share your country's position with the rest of the committee, they will help you to stay focused on your country's stance when discussing particular agenda topics on the conference.

### How do you write a Position Paper?

The best position papers are backed by facts and figures. However, the position paper is quite short and too many facts and figures might make a statistical summary out of it. Please remember that the main purpose of this paper is to briefly explain your policy. You will have plenty of time on the conference to support your policy by statistics and analysis.

The most important thing is that the Position Paper should not describe the topic but rather describe the country's position on the topic. If for example the topic is about 'euthanasia' then it should be mentioned from the Introduction whether the country is in favour or against. Therefore to write a position paper a delegate should look at governmental documents on the relevant sites of the country that he/she represents.

It is also useful to search through the databases of the UN and detect for which resolutions country voted in favour and which against. Furthermore look at the actions that a country is taking in the current news (e.g. any treaties signed or rejected, any acts or legislations that passed from the national parliament/congress)

The Position Paper should seek to:

- Include an introduction to the country in context of the topic and committee, incorporating historical references (please keep this as short as possible)
- Show how and why the country is affected by the issue;
- Include country's position and policies and their justification;
- Discuss any measures taken by the country and reasons for these;
- Mention previous international participation by the country, citing previous resolutions, treaties and UN action on the issue;
- Include your country's proposals on the issue and solution to the problem.

## Tips for writing a Position Paper

- **Formal:** MUNs are formal events, and it is important that all communication be carried out in a formal manner, which obviously requires formal language
- **Simple:** In order to communicate effectively, it is important that uncomplicated language is used and woolly sentence structure be avoided
- **Well argued:** It is not enough to name actions taken by your country. Most importantly, you need to justify them
- **Structured:** Try to deal with each issue in a new paragraph. Check if the organisation makes sense and that the content follows through. Practicing the position papers as a speech helps a lot
- **Concise:** As most of you will be using the position papers for opening speeches, it is important that the document be concise, effective and interesting
- **Suggesting solutions:** The best position papers provide a basis for Working Papers and Draft Resolutions
- **Statistics:** Well-cited statistics are important and most effective for backing up a country's stance.

## Format

The position paper should begin with the three headings below.

**Committee:**

**Country:**

**Delegate:**

On the next page you will find them again, followed by actual content, which is usually not more than one page in length.

## Sample Position Paper

**Committee:** World Health Organization

**Country:** Democratic People's Republic of Korea

**Delegate:** Tanya Reece, St. George's, University of London

**Topic A:** Social, Legal and Ethical Issue Related to Genetically Altered Foods

925 million people are hungry and one child dies every five seconds. Hunger is a ubiquitous part of life for millions in both the developing and developed world. While the most basic understanding of what causes hunger is simple – not enough food – the underlying causes of that lack are diverse. From lack of resources to inability to transport the food to the neediest, the causes of hunger run the gamut.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea supports the use of genetically-modified foods and is part of an international program that provides scientific information about genetically-modified foods to help other countries make the decision of whether or not to use them. They are also in favour of the United Nations resolution 184, Sustainable Agriculture Centre, which agrees with the use of genetically modified foods.

As the population of the Earth grows, more resources are consumed. Advocates of the genetically-modified foods movement argue that by modifying foods there are greater crop yields and less loss to disease and pests. They argue that they take less time to make or grow the product, and have more nutrients. Also, energy is conserved as there is better natural waste management, quicker processing of foods, and more food is available for the increasing number of people in the world – in essence, a better use of limited resources.

However, on the other side of the argument, opponents of genetically-modified foods argue that the long-term effects on human health and the environment are unknown. Opponents argue that genetic modifications put stress on animals, create problems with labelling, and destroy the natural scheme of things. Genetically-modified foods pose social, ethical and legal issues in how foods should be grown, processed and distributed.

The World Health Organization must address this issue because for people that are starving, it is not an academic issue. Their needs are great and immediate. For people of sub-Saharan Africa and south-west Asia that are starving, modified foods are a quick and available solution that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea fully supports.