



WHAT IS MODEL UN?

CHAPTER A1

CONTENTS OF CHAPTER A1

INTRODUCTION	3
YOUR FIRST CONFERENCE	3
Registering For A Conference	3
Registration	3
Secretariat	3
Councils	3
Country Matrix	3
Payment	4
Delegate	4
Delegation	4
Double Delegation	4
Pre-Conference Affairs	4
Research Reports	4
Position Papers	4
Pre-Lobbying	5
Research	5
During the Conference	5
Registration/Checking-In	5
Lanyard	5
Opening Ceremony	5
Council Sessions	5
Socials	6
Awards	6
Closing Ceremony	6
During Council	6
Placard	6
Chair	6
Rules of Procedure	6



Admins/Notepassers	6
Decorum	7
Quorum	7
WHY DO WE MUN?	7
Learning New Skills	7
Meeting New People	7
Becoming Politically Conscious	7
A MUN Career	8
TYPES OF MODEL UN COUNCILS	8
General Assemblies	8
Subsidiary Organs And Specialised Agencies	8
United Nations Security Council	9
International Court Of Justice	9
Regional Organisations	10
Parliaments	10
Youth Assemblies	10
Historical Councils	10
Crisis Councils	10
BASIC RULES OF PROCEDURE	11
Giving Speeches	11
Writing Resolutions	11



Introduction

Model United Nations (MUN) is an extracurricular activity that allows participants to simulate member states in the United Nations. Students participate in MUN conferences that usually span over a weekend, discussing global issues and how to resolve them. This chapter will explain what you should expect when joining your first MUN conference, why you should join MUN and the types of councils you will be able to experience in your MUN journey.

Your First Conference

When you register as a delegate for the first time, you will encounter a lot of new terms and jargon. This section is meant to help familiarise you with what to expect when you sign up for your first conference, organised chronologically.

Registering For A Conference

Registration

Most conferences will have a website that allows you to register. You will be able to register through their own registration form. Doing the registration, you might come across some unfamiliar terms. Possible terms are explained below.

Secretariat

The secretariat refers to the organising team of the conference.

Councils

Councils refer to the specific UN body you chose to participate in. These will be clearer when you get to the [Types of Model UN Councils](#) section. Councils will specify the topics that will be discussed during the conference, so you should choose based on which topics you are interested in.

Country Matrix

Each conference has a country matrix that shows what countries are available for a specific council. Usually, it will be linked under a “resources” section. The country matrix often comes in the form of a spreadsheet. Find the sheet that has the name of the council you signed up for, and choose a country you wish to represent amongst the list. Some conferences allow you to choose 2-3 preferences for which country you wish to represent, as your first choice might have already been taken. You are not guaranteed to receive the country you signed up for. You should keep an eye out for it in your email.



Payment

Payment needs to be made before you are given an allocation for your council and country. Most conferences will send you an email after your registration with the bank account details on how to do so.

Delegate

A delegate refers to the participant of the conference.

Delegation

Most registration forms have a question in which they ask for a “delegation code” or if you are part of a “delegation”. Delegation refers to large groups of participants that are sent by institutions. If you are participating individually, this will not matter to you. Even if you are under an education institution, you do not have to register under a delegation.

Double Delegation

Double delegation is slightly different from delegation. Some conferences might have councils that are “double delegation”, which implies that each country is represented by a pair. If you wish to register for a double delegation council, you will need to find someone to participate with you, and both of you will be representing the country together.

Pre-Conference Affairs

After you have successfully registered for your first conference, you will become a delegate. Delegates will be required to perform certain tasks before the conference in order to have an enjoyable experience at the event itself.

Research Reports

Most, if not all councils come with research reports, also known as topic guides or study guides. The chairs of the council you sign up for will be the authors of the research report. The idea is to give all delegates sufficient information to facilitate a good quality of debate during the conference itself.

Research reports will contain a summary of the important points of the topic at hand within a council. These are not exhaustive, that is to say that you should do your own research for the conference itself; reading the research report is the bare minimum you should do to prepare.

Position Papers

Delegates are often required to submit a position paper in order to qualify for awards. Position papers are brief documents that delegates must submit to their chairs before the



conference, in order to encourage a deeper level of research. Many conferences offer position paper awards as well.

The specific requirements of a position paper will be specified by the chairs, but roughly you will need to put in your country's stance and a few key issues.

Pre-Lobbying

Sometimes, delegates contact each other before the conference to discuss working together. There is no requirement to lobby before the conference, and if you feel more comfortable only speaking to delegates during the conference it is up to you, as this is a fully optional part of the Model UN community.

Research

Delegates are strongly encouraged to research deeply about their country's stance, and other relevant information that will be useful during debate during the conference itself. It is not a formal requirement, although it is a good idea to do some level of research before attending a conference.

During the Conference

Registration/Checking-In

On the first day of the conference delegates should register/check in to receive their lanyards, goodie bags, and to take attendance at the council.

Lanyard

A lanyard is the thing you hang around your neck, it usually contains important information like the schedule, your delegation, your country/stakeholder, and your name.

Opening Ceremony

The first event at a Model UN conference is the opening ceremony. Usually there will be a few speeches, and delegates are given important briefings regarding the conference. After the opening ceremony, delegates will be brought to their council venues.

Council Sessions

Council sessions are the most important part of the Model UN conference. It is where debate occurs, resolutions are submitted, and awards decided. More information regarding what happens during a council can be found below.



Socials

Many conferences will have non-academic social events, which are a good opportunity for delegates to network and make friendships.

Awards

Model UN conferences tend to give the best delegates of a council awards. Awards are presented at the closing ceremony of a conference. The categories of awards usually are for 'Best Delegate', 'Outstanding Delegate', 'Honourable Mention', and 'Verbal Commendation'. A verbal commendation award is typically not accompanied by a physical prize or certificate.

Closing Ceremony

The closing ceremony is the last event of a Model UN conference, where awards are given before delegates are dismissed and the conference adjourned.

During Council

Placard

A placard is a card with your country's name on it. During council sessions, when a vote is required or you wish to give a speech, you raise your placard to help others identify which country you are representing.

Chair

Chairs can be seen as the moderators of the council. They act to help facilitate discussion, provide feedback and assist in steering debate to the right direction. Chairs can sometimes also be referred to as the *Dias*, which constitutes both the chair and the co-chair. The chairs are also the ones who write the research reports, and will decide the awards for the council.

Rules of Procedure

A common phrase that you would hear is the term ROP (pronounced by each alphabet R-O-P). There are two common types of ROP in Malaysia - Harvard Model United Nations (HMUN) and The Hague International Model United Nations (THIMUN). Both of these will be introduced and explained in other modules, but your chairs will usually explain it in the beginning of the conference, or the secretariat might organize specific ROP workshops for you to participate in prior to the conference.

Admins/Notepassers

Admins help to resolve logistical issues in a council. Their main role is passing notes (hence the name notepassers). In MUN, you are not allowed to *crosstalk*, which means



you are not allowed to speak to others during a formal session when others are speaking. If you wish to communicate with other delegates, you should send notes to them. You do not have to stand up and pass it to them; raise your hand and the admin will help you send it. Admins can also help with any WiFi issues you might face during the conference, or if you need an extension cord to charge your laptop.

Decorum

Decorum refers to formality. When there has been a breach of proper MUN behaviour, such as the use of an informal or vulgar term, or excessive crosstalking, the chairs will say “decorum” as a method to remind delegates that they should be mindful of their behaviour and the formality requirements of the conference.

Quorum

Quorum is usually used alongside words like simple majority and two-thirds majority. This is because a quorum refers to one-third of the council, which is also the necessary number of delegates to be present for the chair to start the council.

Why Do We Do MUN?

Learning New Skills

Model UN allows you to develop soft skills that most schools do not provide, such as public speaking, lobbying, making your presence known, and leadership skills. Many of these soft skills will be transferable into your studies, extracurriculars and jobs in the future.

Meeting New People

Attending a Model UN conference also allows you to network with like-minded people. It is a good platform to meet a diverse group of students from different institutions, backgrounds and locations.

Becoming Politically Conscious

Model UN allows you to think critically on international affairs as it forces you to consider various country's perspectives. In certain conferences, you might even end up representing a country with a stance you do not necessarily believe in, helping you to broaden your political view. MUN is a good way to encourage yourself to learn more about the world and broaden your horizons.



A MUN Career

As you collect awards at the delegate level, you can create a good track record for your portfolio. There are many different conferences available to you in a given year. For more information you can check out the MUN calendar published by MYADP. Besides that, there are many MUNs happening at the international level that you can join to meet people from other countries.

However, there is more to Model UN beyond being a delegate - you can become a chair, to chair conferences, give awards and write research reports. Alternatively, you can volunteer to become an admin to help run a conference and learn the ins and outs of event planning.

The people who organise conferences are the secretariat. Eventually, with enough experience you can join established secretariats to run Model Un conferences, or even help set up a conference within your own institution. You can join the academic side of things, where you help select chairs, choose which councils to run and help edit research reports. Or, you could join the organisation side of things, which is to plan the conference itself - organising logistics, event planning, and so on.

With sufficient experience, you can also give back to the community through joining MYADP, raising a new generation of MUNers.

Types of Model UN Councils

General Assemblies

The general assembly is the only body in which all UN member states are represented. Its primary function is to make recommendations that countries can ratify, in the form of resolutions. The UN General Assembly (UNGA) is unable to enforce its resolutions or compel states to act in a certain way.

In the context of Model UN, most basic councils will have rules of procedure similar to that of a UN General Assembly council, and most conferences will have UNGA councils. However, since the UNGA consists of six main committees, namely (1) Disarmament and International Security (DISEC), (2) Economic and Financial (ECOFIN), (3) Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural (SOCHUM), (4) Special Political and Decolonization (SPECPOL), (5) Administrative and Budgetary, and (6) Legal. Therefore, if you see any of these councils, know that it is a UNGA council.

Subsidiary Organs And Specialised Agencies

Specialised agencies refer to organisations with special mandates and power that focuses on a specific area - such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) that deals with labour issues, or



the World Health Organisation that addresses global health problems. They exist as autonomous organisations that work alongside the United Nations, and are usually set up by the general assemblies.

Specialised agencies and subsidiary organs of the UN typically have specific mandates and powers. They exist to solve specific issues, after all. Therefore, delegates should be prepared to take a closer look at any founding documents to better get an idea of what solutions can be proposed in a resolution.

United Nations Security Council

The United Nations Security Council, or UNSC is primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. As opposed to general assemblies or specialised agencies, there are only 15 member states in the UNSC at any given time. 5 of these member states are known as 'permanent members', or P5 member states. These are: The People's Republic of China; The Russian Federation; The United States; The French Republic; and The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Every UNSC council should have the P5 member states.

The nonpermanent member states of the UNSC are chosen to achieve equitable representation by region which means that at five members come from Africa or Asia, one from Eastern Europe, two from Latin America, and two from Western Europe or other areas. Five of the 10 non permanent member states are elected each year by the UNGA to serve two-year terms, which means that every year five nonpermanent member states retire from the UNSC.

This means that the country matrix for a UNSC council will change every year not necessarily according to which countries have clear positions on a given topic, but according to which countries are due to be on the UNSC. Furthermore, given the small number of portfolios in the UNSC, UNSC councils tend to be double-delegate councils, consisting of two delegates each.

International Court Of Justice

The International Court of Justice is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. It arbitrates international disputes, and provides binding decisions. The court can also give advisory opinions at the request of the General Assembly or the Security Council. Delegates who sign up for the ICJ will be representing not countries, but particular justices who will have to remain officially impartial despite their country of origin. Besides that, the nature of the outcome documents will drastically change; instead of a resolution the ICJ passes rulings where justices can provide reasons as to why a particular opinion has legal basis, and dissenting opinions if they do not agree.



Regional Organisations

Regional organisations may exist completely outside of the UN. These are established for various reasons, but mainly for economic purposes, although some might address regional social issues. Due to the difference in establishment, there are varying degrees of intervention that each regional organisation can take. The ones that you would often see in Model UN are Association of Southeast Asian States (ASEAN) and the European Union (EU).

Parliaments

Parliaments allow you to represent a specific member of parliament and simulates a parliament session of a specific country. Often you will see Dewan Rakyat, but other parliaments like the House of Commons or the US Senate can also be organised.

Usually the rules of procedure for parliaments slightly differ from usual rules of procedure. Secretariats or chairs will specify this prior to your conference experience. However, the core concept is still the same - in which you are expected to discuss and write a resolution, or in this case, a bill, on a specific issue.

Youth Assemblies

Youth assemblies are councils in which you represent yourself and share your own opinion. It is necessary to understand that youth assemblies differ from a debate, but rather a dialectic that allows for the sharing of opinions and challenges your perspective.

Historical Councils

Historical councils are councils that are set in a specific historical timeframe. This means that any event that happened between the time the council is set and the present day has not occurred yet. Historical councils provide the opportunity for delegates to “re-write history” with the benefit of hindsight. In addition to considering the strengths of what was done in the past, it is also necessary to evaluate the flaws and limitations of their policies and how you could improve upon them.

Crisis Councils

Crisis councils are the most dynamic form of Model UN councils. In addition to usual HMUN ROP, you will be provided with the ability to write directives and be provided crisis updates. Think of it as an international relations game of Dungeons and Dragons. Directives refer to actions that your country decides to take, and crisis updates are the events that occur as a result of the directives that have been sent by the council. Crisis councils allow you to experience firsthand the consequences of your actions and decisions in the council. By making the right decisions, the council will move closer and closer to the resolution of the crisis.



Basic Rules of Procedure

The term ROP has been used loosely throughout this chapter. There will be specific chapters that will serve to explain them in-depth. However, in general, ROP can be summarised into two parts. Both these parts are supposed to work in hand. Speeches allow you to share and criticise ideas, whereas resolutions allow the consolidations of the arguments made.

Giving Speeches

Although it is not true that Model UN is purely about giving speeches - there is a need to be able to do so. Speeches are usually given through a *General Speakers List*, which is where you will get to share your ideas to the council in a formal setting. In different ROPs, there will be more specific situations that you can give speeches in.

Writing Resolutions

Part of Model UN is about problem solving and the consolidation of ideas. This is very difficult to achieve during a formal speech setting. Hence, there are specific times known as *lobbying*, in which you can freely interact with delegates and work together with them in putting your ideas into a document, which will eventually be converted into a resolution.