



# FLOW OF DEBATE

## A) MUN PREPARATION

It is sometimes helpful to think of a MUN conference as if it was a play in which delegates are the actors and secretariat members are the directors. The storyline of a stage show is similar to what MUNers call the "flow of debate" –the order in which events proceed during a MUN conference. Just like scenes in a theatrical performance, debate unfolds in several different parts. The following shows the various stages of debate that take place during a MUN simulation. Being familiar with how the action will proceed, from the first "scene" to the last, is an important way to prepare yourself for a MUN conference.

## B) ROLL CALL

The Chairperson will announce each country's name. After delegates hear their country, they should answer "present" or "present and voting" (no abstention possible when voting on a resolution).

## C) SETTING THE AGENDA

When MUN committees have more than one topic available, the body must set the agenda to begin working on one of these issues. At this time a delegate typically makes a motion, stating "The country of [name] moves to place [topic A] first on the agenda, followed by [topic B] and then [topic C]." Once the motion has been made, three delegations must speak in favor of the motion, and three other delegations will speak against it. These speeches should alternate between those in favor and those opposed. Once these six speeches have been given, a vote is taken.

Setting the agenda requires a simple majority vote.

## D) DEBATE: AN OVERVIEW

### Formal Debate:

Formal debate revolves around the **general speakers list (GSL)**. The Chair begins by asking all delegates interested in addressing the other members to raise their placards. The Chair then chooses delegates to be placed on the speakers list. A country may only be on the speakers list once, but delegates may add their country to the end of the list after their speech.

1. When the session begins, speeches focus on stating country positions and offering recommendations for action.
2. After blocs have met, speeches focus on describing bloc positions to the entire body.
3. Delegates now make statements describing their draft resolutions to the committee.
4. Delegates try to garner more support through formal speeches and invite others to offer their ideas.
5. Delegates make statements supporting or disagreeing with specific draft resolutions.

### Informal Debate:

Informal debate involves discussion outside of the general speakers list. During **moderated caucuses**, the Chair calls on delegates one-by-one so that each can address the committee in short speeches. During **unmoderated caucuses**, the committee breaks for a temporary recess so that delegates may meet with each other and discuss ideas.

1. After several countries state their positions, the committee breaks for caucuses to develop common ground.
2. Writing begins as countries work together to compose draft resolutions.
3. Countries and groups meet to gather support for specific draft resolutions.
4. Delegates finalize draft resolutions.
5. Draft-resolution sponsors build greater support for their resolution and look to incorporate others' ideas

## D 1) Formal Debate aka GSL

Debating along the general speakers list is the default debating mode of Model UN. Countries can be added to the list when asked by the chair. The speeches are then delivered in the established order.

## D 2) Informal Debate aka Caucusing

Caucusing is an important part of Model UN because it provides an opportunity for delegates to collaborate, negotiate and formulate draft resolutions.

**Moderated caucus:** Chair calls on delegates one at a time and each speaker briefly addresses the committee on a common topic.

**Unmoderated caucus:** Committee breaks for a temporary recess from formal proceedings so that delegates can work together in small groups.

In a moderated caucus, speakers are usually able to convey one or two key points to the entire committee or share new ideas that have developed through the course of debate.

To hold a caucus, a delegate must make a **motion** and the committee must pass the motion. A delegate sometimes chooses to make a motion for a moderated caucus if his or her name is close to the end of the speakers list. By speaking in a moderated caucus, delegates are able to address the committee much earlier.

In some cases, more than half of committee time is used for unmoderated caucusing. Many delegates feel this is the easiest way for them to collaborate and start to formulate draft resolutions.

## E) CLOSE OF DEBATE

Once the speakers list is exhausted, the committee automatically moves into voting procedures. Also, once a delegate feels that his or her country's position is clear to

others and that there are enough draft resolutions on the floor, he or she may make a motion to proceed into voting procedure by moving for the closure of debate.

## F) VOTING PROCEDURES

During a MUN debate, multiple votes are taken. Delegates can vote e.g. upon motions, amendments or resolutions. In order to vote upon amendments and resolutions, the committee needs to close the debate and move into voting procedure.

### F 1) Substantive and Procedural Votes

**Substantive votes:** Has to do with topic of debate. Abstentions are in order.

**Procedural votes:** Has to do with the flow of debate. Abstentions are not in order.

### F 2) Voting Resolutions

#### **Moving into voting:**

Once all draft resolutions have been presented, all amendments have been made, and the delegates or the chairs feels that the committee is ready to move into voting, a delegate will make a motion to move into voting procedure.

Requires:

- 2 speakers pro, 2 speakers con
- 2/3 majority
- *The committee can also automatically move into voting if the General Speaker's List is exhausted.*

In voting procedure: no speaking, no notes, no entering / leaving room, no use of electronic devices

#### **Amendments:**

Amendments are made to add or delete certain clauses to/from a resolution. Any unfriendly amendments made by non-sponsors to draft resolutions are first voted upon. Friendly amendments made by all the sponsors always automatically pass.

## **Voting draft resolutions:**

The chair will name different draft resolutions (typically in the order they were submitted or presented) and the committee will vote for resolutions to either pass or not pass.

**Abstention:** delegate does not vote either yes or no for the draft resolution, and it is typically used as a diplomatic way of not supporting a draft resolution.

**Simple Majority:** More than 50% of the committee is required for a draft resolution to pass. Abstentions are not counted in the simple majority calculations.

**Resolutions:** Draft resolutions that pass are then called Resolutions.

In most circumstances, the vote will be conducted by show of placards. However, delegates can also motion for the following:

**Roll Call Vote:** A roll call vote is automatic once any delegate makes that motion, and the Chair will call on each country individually in alphabetical order to vote yes, no, abstain, yes with rights, no with rights, or pass. Those who passed will get a second round of roll call vote but can only vote yes or no.

**Adoption by Acclamation:** Delegates can motion to adopt the resolution by acclamation. If there is no objection to the resolution, it automatically passes.

**Division of the Question:** This is used when there are controversial operative clauses within a draft resolution that may cause an otherwise good resolution to fail. A delegate will make this motion with the specific clauses to divide out. Delegates will vote on whether to divide the clauses out as proposed. If that is successful, they will vote on the draft resolution without the clauses that were taken out.

## **F 3) Voting in the Security Council**

The Security Council has several differences in its voting procedures:

**Nine Vote to Pass:** The Security Council requires at least nine affirmative votes (and no veto votes) for a draft resolution to pass.

**Veto Power:** All Security Council members still have voting rights, but the five Permanent Members – China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States – have veto power. A negative vote by any of these five members automatically prevents the draft resolution from passing.

Sources: United Nations Association of the USA, ILMUNC Rules of Procedure, Montessori MUN, NMUN Rules of Procedure, SGMUN Rules of Procedure