

Newbies Guidebook

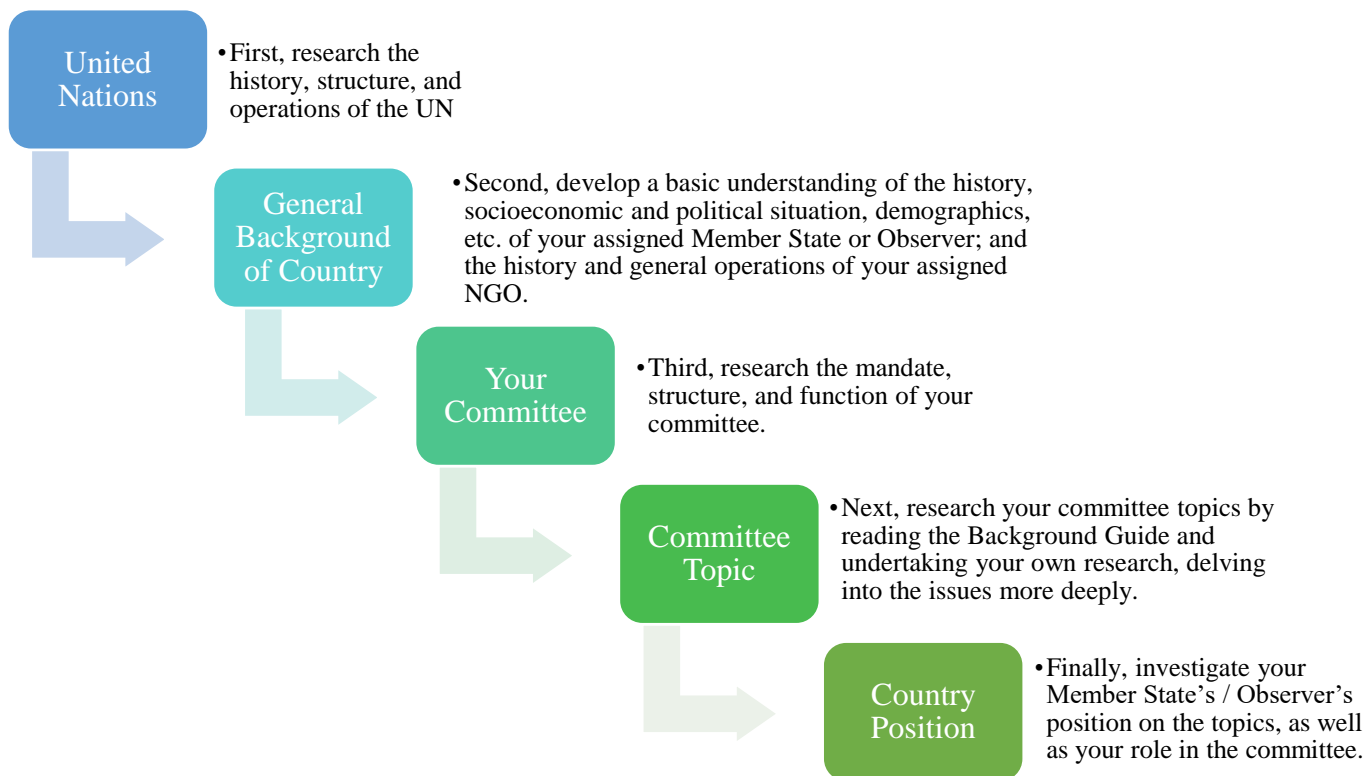


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1. Before the Debate

The quality of the weekly debate (or any MUN debate for that matter) is largely contingent on the preparation of the delegates. The key to being successful at an SGMUN debate is thorough and comprehensive preparation. We recommend that you become familiar with the following five areas of study:



1.1. Starting Your Research

At conferences as well as the weekly debates, we provide Background Guides which should be viewed only as a starting point to begin your research. Individual research is crucial, and we recommend extensive use of academic literature, scholarly journals, newspaper articles, and official documents or other literature provided by bodies associated with the UN. Access to many UN documents and resolutions is available through the UN treaty database, college or law school libraries, or the following websites:

United Nations	The UN website enables delegates to access individual committee sites, links to specific issues on the UN's agenda and related information and data, links to missions of Member States to the UN, etc.
United Nations Handbook	The UN Handbook, published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of New Zealand, is one of the most comprehensive sources of information on the aim, structure, and membership of the organs of the UN. Delegates are recommended to use the handbook as a regular reference for all entities within the UN system.
The PGA Handbook: A practical guide to the UN GA	This publication is another example of a Member State-initiated project aimed at providing comprehensive information on the UN. Focused on the General Assembly, it provides overviews of working methods, structures, and protocols related to the body.



UN Bibliographic Information System (UNBISNET)	This source lists all UN documents archived by the UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library and includes landmark UN documents, resolutions of UN bodies, meeting and voting records, and press releases. It allows delegates to research by organ or by main issues, providing an accessible gateway to the work of the UN, agenda items, and individual Member States' roles.
UN Global Issues	This section of the UN website offers a topic-by-topic research gateway, with information available on dozens of "global issues" that transcend both state borders and, usually, individual UN agencies or bodies.
UN Research Guides and Resources	The UN Research website is a great starting point for delegate research. Particularly helpful is the UN Documentation Research Guide, which will enable delegates to find any UN document easily.

In addition to these universal databases, many committee sites feature their own document collections and/or databases. Delegates are highly encouraged to research documents through a combination of the tools above.

1.1.1. Your Role in Committee

In order to accurately and effectively simulate the body and understand your role within it, a clear understanding of the mandate of the body is essential. This will also make the work of the committee easier, as it will be naturally limited in scope according to the mandate. Delegates must ensure that they have a comprehensive understanding of the following:

- Foundational documents (the resolution(s) that established the body, and its foundational governing document, such as a charter or treaty);
- Evolution and changes in mandate over time; and
- Other key international documents that underpin the committee's mandate.

Member States

Each committee is made up of a specific number of Member States. These are the full members of the body. All Member States may sponsor working papers and have full voting rights within the committee. Member States act through their representatives within a body's meetings in order to discuss the matters on the agenda and make progress toward solving them on a cooperative international level. The majority of delegates will be serving as representatives of their state's government or political participants, as recognized by the UN. These delegates are expected to understand the foreign policies of their individual governments and to act within those policies during the conference. The most critical part of having a successful delegate experience at the SGMUN debates is active participation in committee sessions. This includes utilizing the rules of procedure, speaking in formal debate, and most importantly, contributing during caucuses debate sessions through activities including networking, drafting working papers, identifying common positions, and building consensus through negotiation.

Observers

Observers are states, non-Member States, entities, and organizations that fully participate in negotiations but may not vote on substantive matters, such as the approval of resolutions, or sponsor proposals (but can fully contribute to the development or proposals and act as signatories). Observers, including NGOs, are expected to fully participate in the work of the committee by utilizing the rules of procedure, speaking in formal debate, contributing to working papers, and building consensus.



Observer delegations maintain the following privileges in each committee to which they are assigned:

- The right to make any procedural motion;
- The right to vote on all procedural motions;
- The right to actively contribute to working papers; and



- The right to act as a signatory on working papers.

1.2. Researching Your Member State

If you have been assigned a Member State, you may wish to begin by researching its political structure, economic conditions, religion(s), history, culture, etc. Since all of these factors shape a state's foreign policy, familiarity with these areas will assist you in forming a consistent foreign policy.

Research the problems within your state regarding ethnic and religious minorities, suppression of dissent, division of wealth, freedom of the press, development, health care, education, poverty, the environment, human rights, etc. Also, do not overlook the more nuanced aspects of your state's domestic and foreign policies.

You may want to make notes of key facts and figures which you can then specifically refer to during your speeches to underline your point. You should be able to make it clear, how your country is more susceptible to certain international issues, or how your country has tackled these issues on a domestic level in the past.

1.3. Researching Committee Topics

The majority of your preparation time for the debate will be spent researching your committee topics and your country's position on those topics. Each delegate should understand all the topics on their committee's agenda (at conferences, there is rarely only one topic on the agenda. At weekly debates, this is not the case.). The first resource to consult is the Background Guide; however, this guide should not be the sole source of research. Search for speeches made by your country on the topic and important resolutions discussed and adopted in your committee.

Many topics on the UN agenda are vast and complex, and there are several topics that can be discussed in more than one organ within the UN system. Therefore, it is important to understand how the topics on your committee's agenda are discussed specifically in that committee. Look to the mandate of your committee, which will give you an idea of the tone and type of work done within your committee.

Researching a topic is a multifaceted process, which calls for determining what various bodies within and related to the UN system have done previously to address the matter, what is currently in place, and what is planned for the future. It is also important to examine successes and failures, and to attempt to determine why those approaches have succeeded or failed.



While reading the Background Guide, you could develop answers to the following basic questions:

- When considering each topic, what essential questions are being raised?
- In your opinion as a diplomat, why are these issues important?
- Why do you believe these issues remain unresolved? For what reasons specifically?
- What important documents are essential to your research?
- What actions have various international bodies taken in the past regarding these issues?
- What actions are these bodies currently taking, or what committees exist to address them?
- What should be done from the perspective of your Member State to resolve the issues?



1.4. Your Delegation's Position on the Topics

Preparing for committee session at SGMUN also includes identifying blocs of states that may share the same perspectives and priorities and which may collaborate with you in committee sessions.



You should try to answer the following questions:

- Are there other Member States or Observers that share your view?
- What Member States or Observers are opposed to your view?
- Which Member States are in the same voting bloc as your assigned state?
- Is your assigned state affiliated with any regional organizations?

2. During the Debate

The most important aspect of participating as a delegate at SGMUN is assuming the role of a foreign diplomat and/or expert. During preparation and at the conference, delegates may disagree personally with the policy of the Member State or Observer they are representing, but delegates' personal opinions are entirely inapplicable during the course of the simulation.

Delegates should also exhibit the ability to negotiate and compromise, demonstrate leadership, and to influence by gaining the professional respect of fellow delegates. Delegates should use these skills both within their working groups and externally, paying special attention to creating engaging debate by working with delegates of all backgrounds

2.1. Speaking during Debates

Aside from the opportunity to practice your public speaking and negotiation skills, there are some rules to follow during debate. While these are laid out in the Rules of Procedure (usually referred to the ROPs), we will reiterate some of them here again. However, we do still encourage you to read the ROPs to gain a fuller understanding of the debate.

Most importantly, as you are representing a country, use of personal pronouns (I, me etc.) are not in order. Instead, you could refer to yourself as we, the delegation of ... etc.

2.1.1 Opening statement

The opening statement is the first speech you will deliver in a debate. The purpose of it is to introduce the topic from your country's perspective, state your position and you might also add some strategies on how to tackle it already. A clear structure is recommended but not required.

The opening speech always begin with the phrase "*honourable chairs, esteemed fellow delegates, ...*". You might then begin with providing a brief history on the issue as it relates to your country and how it is currently affecting it. Provide your country's position on the issue, explaining your country stance on the affected sphere, such as economic and security concerns, or political and religious ideologies. You might also add your country's position related to other members states, such as the major powers or countries in your regional block. You can also discuss past actions taken by the UN, member states and NGOs to address the issue, and then talk about the role NGOs and/or regional organizations have in addressing the issue. Another helpful statement is whether your country is willing to negotiate on the matter.

In general data can be very helpful and add strength to your claims and positions, but they are not necessary.



2.1.2. Public Speaking Tips & Tricks

- **Prepare:** Decide how you feel most comfortable delivering your speech. You may write down some keywords or even have a text prepared for your opening statement. In time, you may feel comfortable speaking without any written notes at all. If you plan to use a word or phrase that is unfamiliar to you, make sure you learn its meaning and how to pronounce it properly.
- **Consider your audience:** Make your speech appropriate to the age and experience-level of the other delegates at the conference. Remember that the beginning of the speech should captivate your audience and make them want to hear more.
- **Eliminate unnecessary "filler" words:** Fillers are words and phrases such as "umm," "well," "sort of," and "like". These words take away from the message you are trying to convey. Some additional fillers to avoid are "so," "you know," "I think," "just," and "uh."
- **Use meaningful pauses:** Leaving a moment of silence between sentences can be a powerful public speaking tool. Pausing after an important point or before answering a question will help to hold the audience's attention. A pause can also give you time to formulate your next statement.
- **Breathe:** Try to breathe from your diaphragm – the organ below your lungs that controls your respiration. You are breathing properly if you can see your abdomen rising and falling with each breath. Try to inhale and exhale completely.
- **Pace yourself:** Don't talk too fast or too slow. Remember that most speakers have a tendency to talk too quickly.
- **Choose a powerful posture:** Be aware of your posture when you speak. Slouching, tilting your head and crossing your arms or legs will take away from your message. Stand up straight, relax your shoulders, plant your feet firmly and keep your knees unlocked to help you communicate confidence.
- **Project your presence:** Speaking in a low to medium volume can help to project authority, but make sure that you are speaking loud enough to be easily heard. Focus on speaking with enthusiasm and energy.
- **Gesture:** It is worthwhile to use your face, hands, arms and body to help you communicate as long as your motions do not distract the audience from your speech.
- **Connect with your audience:** Glance at your notes rather than reading them so that you can make eye contact with the other delegates. It is often helpful to speak directly to individual members of the audience.
- **Get to the point:** Speak concisely so that your audience does not lose your main arguments among less-important details. Try not to speak in circles. Instead, go straight to your most important point.
- **Be positive:** Rather than criticizing another point of view, critique it in a constructive way. Always provide alternatives and be sure to back up your arguments.

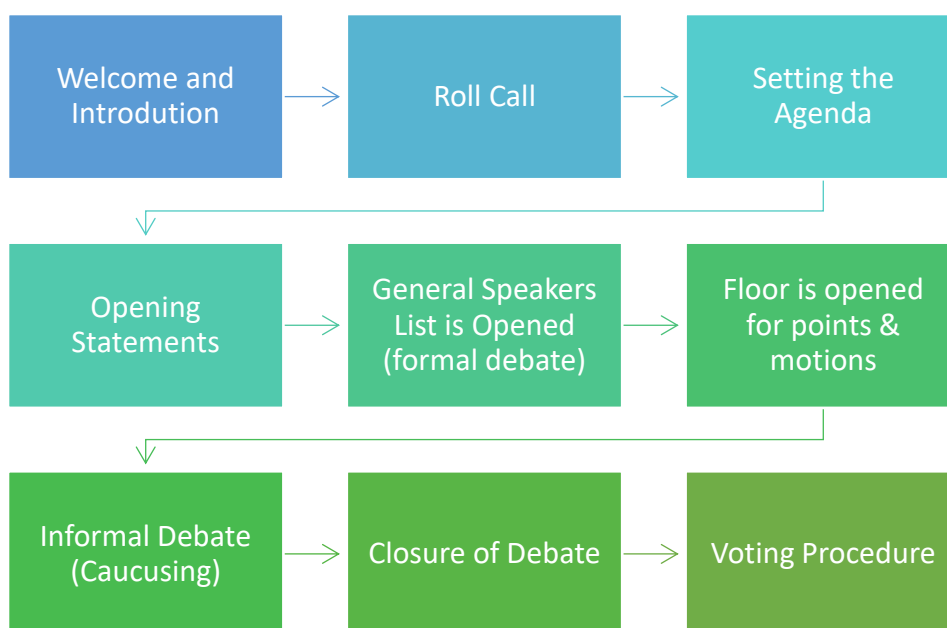
2.1.3 Tips for effective caucusing:

- **Enter the caucus with a plan in mind:** Formulate ideas on what your country would like to see included in a resolution. Decide which clauses you are willing to negotiate on and which you are not.
- **Find delegates in your regional bloc:** This is the easiest way to seek out allies. However, if you find that the group you are working with is not meeting your needs, do not be afraid to switch groups.
- **Provide ideas:** Tell others what your country is hoping to achieve. If you do not agree with an idea, do not hesitate to say that it is against your country's policy.



- **Negotiate:** While it is often necessary to give up something that you want, make sure that you are not giving up anything too important.
- **Listen:** By listening to what others are saying you will be able to build on other people's ideas and add more to the discussion. Listening also shows respect for each delegate in your group.
- **Do not interrupt:** Allow other delegates to finish their thoughts rather than interrupting others in the middle of a sentence. It sometimes helps to write down your idea so that you can bring it up when the delegate is finished speaking.
- **Record ideas:** Start to formulate a resolution in writing. Rather than waiting until the last minute, begin recording fellow delegates' ideas right away.
- **Be resourceful:** By providing fellow delegates with resolution text, maps or information as they need it, you will show that you are valuable to the group.
- **Have one-on-one conversations:** Speaking with an individual or in a small group is the best way to find out a delegate's position on an issue. Larger groups are better suited to brainstorming.
- **Stay calm:** In caucuses, delegates can sometimes "lose their cool." Staying calm will not only help your group be more effective, but will be noticed by the conference staff. Always keep your voice at a normal level. If you see that you are becoming upset or raising your voice, excuse yourself from the group for a few minutes.
- **Use time effectively:** Make sure you have enough time to hear everyone's ideas so that you can discuss them during formal debate. Try not to waste time arguing over small details that do not seriously affect the draft resolution.
- **Show respect:** Never give orders or tell other delegates what they should or should not do. Be polite and treat all your fellow delegates with respect.
- **Provide constructive critique:** Rather than negatively criticizing another delegate, focus on providing constructive critique. If you dislike an idea, try to offer an alternative. Critique ideas, not people.

2.2. Flow of the Debate





Please note that the voting procedure is rather complex and is only relevant once the first debate block is finished, which usually takes 3 to 4 sessions (starters debate will not end with a voting procedure). As voting procedure can get complicated and confusing, it warrants its own document.

Welcome and Introduction	The Chair will welcome all the delegates to the debate and make some general remarks.
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).
Setting the Agenda	If the 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 makes a motion, stating " <i>The country of [name] moves to place [topic A] first on the agenda, followed by [topic B]</i> ". Once the motion has been made, the chair will ask if there are any seconds or objections. If there are both, speeches will be made for and against. Then, a vote will be taken by simple majority.
Opening Statements	<p>In alphabetical order, delegates will be asked to give an opening statement which typically last between 45s and 90s, depending on what the body decide on.</p> <p>You must begin your opening statement with the statement "<i>honourable chairs, esteemed fellow delegates</i>". During your opening statement, you should make your country's position clear and stress the urgency of the topic for your country. If your country has provided an effective solution, mention it. Here is where you can mention any facts or figures you have found during your research. You could also mention what you think needs to be addressed during the debate. The other delegates should get a first impression of where your country stands and what it would like to achieve during the coming sessions. As Formal Debate has not begun yet, there is no yielding during opening statements.</p>
Formal Debate	<p>Formal debate revolves around the general speakers list (GSL). The Chair begins by asking all delegates interested in addressing the other members to raise the placards. The Chair then chooses delegates to be placed on the GSL. Once you have finished your speech, you must <i>yield the floor back to the chair</i>. If you have more than 10s remaining, you can <i>yield the floor to another delegate</i> or to <i>the floor for questions</i>.</p> <p>(Possible) Flow of Formal Debate:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) When the session begins, speeches focus on stating country positions and offering recommendations for action.2) Blocs can meet and then in speeches describing the bloc positions to the entire body.3) Delegates make statements describing their draft resolution 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 resolution.
Points and Motions	When the chair opens the floor to points or motions, delegates can raise their placards and motion for a type of caucus to move the debate forward. After a delegate makes a motion, the committee must pass it. This is done in the order of most to least destructive. Points can be raised throughout the debate at various points in time.



Make sure to check out the **Chapter 2.3** for a brief overview of points and motions. For more detailed explanations, read the ROPs.

Informal Debate

Informal debate involves discussion outside of the GSL, i.e. in the context of an unmoderated caucus, moderated caucus, or a consultation of the whole. 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. In the other forms of informal debate, 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.

(Possible) Flow of Informal Debate:

- 1) After several countries state their positions, the committee breaks for caucuses to develop common ground. This can begin by creating a consensus on which areas should be discussed and in which order.
- 2) Writing begins as countries work together to compose draft resolutions. This slowly develops as the committee moves from topic to topic.
- 3) Countries meet to gather support for specific draft resolutions or clauses. It is easier to debate on specific clauses once there is a general consensus on the main idea.
- 4) Delegates finalize their working papers to form a draft resolution.
- 5) Draft resolution sponsors build greater support for their resolution and look to incorporate others' ideas.

Closure 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.



2.3. Motions and Points

(These are abbreviated versions of the possible points and motions available in the ROPs. These tables are meant to guide you through weekly debates rather than conferences)

2.3.1. Motions Table

“The delegate of [country name] motions for a [motion name]”

Motion	Purpose	Debate	Vote
Moment of Silence	Commemoration and honouring of a certain event. Must be done before the begin of formal session.	None	None
Set the Agenda	Setting the order of the topics	2 pro / con	Simple majority
Set the Speakers' Time	Set or change speaker's time limit	None	Simple majority
Moderated Caucus	Moderate debate on specific topic. Requires topic title, total time, and individual speaking time.	None	Simple majority
Unmoderated Caucus	Free debate with no moderation by the chairs and no topic limit. Only requires total time of caucus	None	Simple majority
Consultation of the Whole	Informal discussion moderated by the delegates. Requires total time but no a topic.	None	Simple majority
Extension of the Caucus	Extending the previous caucus / consultation of the whole	None	Simple majority
Closure of Debate	Move into voting procedure immediately	2 pro / 2 con	2/3 majority
Suspension of the Meeting	Temporary stopping of the meeting for short breaks	None	Simple majority
Adjournment of the Meeting	Ending of the committees work until the next year	None	Simple majority
Introduce working paper / draft resolution	Delegate wants to introduce (i.e. reading it to the committee and making it an official document) a working paper/draft resolution	None	Simple majority

2.3.2. Points Table

Point	Purpose	Debate	Vote
Point of Information	Questions from a delegate to another regarding a speech they just made. This can be only be done if the speech is held during formal debate and once the delegate has finished their speech.	None	None
Point of Parliamentary Inquiry	Question to the chair regarding the rules of procedure. This can be raised at any point as long as it is not interrupting another delegate of the chair.	None	None
Point of Order	Correct an error in procedure	None	None
Point of Personal Privilege	Personal concerns of a delegate addressed to the chair. Can be raised at any time.	None	None
Appeal of the Chair	Challenge a decision of the chair	None	2/3 majority
Right of Reply	Sovereignty of a delegate's country questioned by another delegate. This is only possible during formal session.	None	None



2.4. Tips and Tricks for Caucusing

- **Enter the caucus with a plan in mind:** Formulate ideas on what your country would like to see included in a resolution. Decide which clauses you are willing to negotiate on and which you are not.
- **Find delegates in your regional bloc:** This is the easiest way to seek out allies. However, if you find that the group you are working with is not meeting your needs, do not be afraid to switch groups.
- **Provide ideas:** Tell others what your country is hoping to achieve. If you do not agree with an idea, do not hesitate to say that it is against your country's policy.
- **Negotiate:** While it is often necessary to give up something that you want, make sure that you are not giving up anything too important.
- **Listen:** By listening to what others are saying you will be able to build on other people's ideas and add more to the discussion. Listening also shows respect for each delegate in your group.
- **Do not interrupt:** Allow other delegates to finish their thoughts rather than interrupting others in the middle of a sentence. It sometimes helps to write down your idea so that you can bring it up when the delegate is finished speaking.
- **Record ideas:** Start to formulate a resolution in writing. Rather than waiting until the last minute, begin recording fellow delegates' ideas right away.
- **Be resourceful:** By providing fellow delegates with resolution text, maps or information as they need it, you will show that you are valuable to the group.
- **Have one-on-one conversations:** Speaking with an individual or in a small group is the best way to find out a delegate's position on an issue. Larger groups are better suited to brainstorming.
- **Stay calm:** In caucuses, delegates can sometimes "lose their cool." Staying calm will not only help your group be more effective but will be noticed by the conference staff. Always keep your voice at a normal level. If you see that you are becoming upset or raising your voice, excuse yourself from the group for a few minutes.
- **Use time effectively:** Make sure you have enough time to hear everyone's ideas so that you can discuss them during formal debate. Try not to waste time arguing over small details that do not seriously affect the draft resolution.
- **Show respect:** Never give orders or tell other delegates what they should or should not do. Be polite and treat all your fellow delegates with respect.
- **Provide constructive critique:** Rather than negatively criticizing another delegate, focus on providing constructive critique. If you dislike an idea, try to offer an alternative. Critique ideas, not people.
- **Establish connections with other delegates:** Although it can be tempting to call a fellow delegate "Pakistan," "Brazil" or "Sweden", you can form a better connection with a delegate by learning his or her name and where he or she comes from. Ask the delegate about his or her ideas and impressions of the debate. Showing interest in your fellow delegates at the beginning of the conference will help you gain more support later on and can help you to form lasting friendships.



3. Annex

3.1. Glossary

Abstention	<p>An option for Member States during substantive votes. Member States may abstain only if they are “Present” during formal roll call. To abstain means a State is formally counted, but does not vote in favor of or against a substantive motion. Abstentions do not affect the result of voting, as the final total only considers votes for and against the motion.</p> <p>Example: A draft resolution that received 30 votes in favor, 10 votes against, and 40 abstentions would pass because the votes in favor outnumber the votes against.</p>
Adjournment of Debate	Ends debate on a topic, and on all draft resolutions for that topic, without voting on any proposed draft resolutions. A motion for reconsideration can reopen debate on this topic.
Adjournment of the Meeting	Ends the meeting until the next conference.
Appeal of the Chair	A motion to challenge the decision of the Chair on a specific SGMUN rule.
Chair	Person who is in charge of leading the committee’s formal debate in accordance with the SGMUN Rules of Procedure.
Deputy Secretary-General (DSG)	Member of the SGMUN Secretariat. Chief substantive officer of the conference.
Draft Resolution	A working paper that has been accepted by the Chair and is discussed and voted on by the committee.
Explanation of Vote	Allows a sponsor of a draft resolution to explain why they voted against the draft resolution, after it had been amended or changed by a division of the question.
Friendly Amendments	Amendments proposed by ALL the sponsors of a draft resolution. Once approved by the Chair, these amendments are automatically incorporated into the draft resolution.
General Assembly	The main deliberative organ of the UN system, comprised of all Member States of the UN.
Majority Vote	A threshold at which many motions pass. A motion passes with a simple majority vote if more people vote yes than vote no (in the case of substantive votes, ignoring abstentions). Tie votes fail.
Member State	A country that is a Member of the United Nations, having been granted membership by the General Assembly based upon the Security Council’s recommendation.
Motion	<p>A request to do something during formal debate; motions are voted on by the committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Procedural motions: all Member States and Observers of the committee vote. - Substantive motions: only Member States vote.
Observer	Non-Member State or organization granted status to participate in deliberations. Observers may not sponsor resolutions or vote on substantive matters, but they may act as a signatory and must vote on procedural matters.
Operative Clause	Information is given about what action the body believes should be taken.
Point of Order	Delegates can correct an error in procedure and refers to an SGMUN-specific rule which the Chair have missed.
Preambular Clause	Sets up the historical context and cites relevant international law or policies for a resolution, which justifies future action.



Present	Attendance status that establishes a delegate as present in the committee, with the opportunity to abstain during substantive votes.
Present and Voting	Attendance status that establishes a delegation as present in the committee without the opportunity to abstain during substantive votes; delegations must vote “yes” or “no.”
Procedural Vote	A vote that takes place on a motion before the body; all delegates present must vote.
Proposal	In the SGMUN Rules of Procedure, “proposal” means any working paper, draft resolution, an amendment thereto, or a portion of a draft resolution divided out by motion.
Quorum	A minimum of one-third of the members of the body, based on the total number of Member States attending the first session.
Right of Reply	Response to comments that have disparaged the sovereign integrity of a delegate’s state.
Secretariat	The Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General (DSG), and Under-Secretary-General (USG) are collectively referred to as the Secretariat.
Secretary-General	Member of the SGMUN Secretariat. Chief logistics officer of the conference.
Signatories	Member States or Observers who are interested in bringing a working paper forward for consideration. A combination of sponsors and signatories equal to 20% of the committee’s initial rollcall.
Sponsors	Member States who created the content of a working paper and will be most responsible for ensuring that it will be voted on as a draft resolution. A combination of sponsors and signatories equal to 20% of the committee’s initial rollcall. There must be at least one sponsor.
Substantive Vote	Votes taken during voting procedure to accept a draft resolution, an unfriendly amendment, and/or the annex to a draft resolution (division of the question).
Suspension of the Meeting	Ending the debate for a brief period of time. This is different from entering a caucus as it is used when the committee takes a break (during conferences) or reconvenes at the next weekly debate.