

RULES OF PROCEDURE LISBOMUN 2019



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Introduction

Is this your first time doing MUN? If so, you've come to the right place! In this guide, we'll be explaining the Rules of Procedure (RoP) prevailing during this conference, as well as what you'll need to start preparing for your first conference.

Now, MUN (Model United Nations) is a simulation of the United Nations that's done at secondary and university level. Briefly, it's done with the aim of teaching participants how to express themselves effectively in a public setting, giving them a better understanding of the world (from learning about the topic being debated, to grasping the underlying concepts of diplomacy and politics) and fostering an international mindset – in short, students will largely emerge with their critical thinking and general soft skills improved. During the proceedings, students take the role of delegates from the UN's member states and behave accordingly in simulated UN committees. MUN is popular around the world, now being a long-standing tradition in many places. Naturally, all this demands much from those involved, and expects a strong level of responsibility; delegates should arrive at the conference having studied their topics well, and with a full understanding of what MUN entails.

This document will help with that second part, detailing all the rules one must know. This may seem staggering, but, really, it does end up being rather enjoyable – there's work to be done, but also plenty of fun to be had!

II. RULES OF PROCEDURE: EXPLAINED

As a rule, MUN conferences maintain order and a good climate for debate by enforcing some rules of procedure. These are largely standardised throughout the world, and based on actual UN proceedings, although some conferences may add or revoke rules in the interests of avoiding detours in debates or preventing unnecessary time wasting. For example, some conferences ask delegates to assume that the UN has unlimited resources to avoid debates devolving into questions of how to acquire the funds for certain projects and the like (...).

Most UN committees follow a cycle of debate, negotiation, decision, implementation and reporting. MUN simulations focus only on the first three phases of the cycle, as that's where UN committees are centred. Thus, anyone participating in a Model UN simulation should understand debating, negotiating and taking action.

Rules of procedure streamline who gets to speak and when, to keep things organised when there is a chaotic mass of ideas which delegates may be dying to express. It's natural to find rules of procedure to be confusing if you're just beginning, though in their proper contexts, rather than written down in a dull manner, they're very intuitive. Aim to memorise as much as you can, and then watch others during debates if you're still confused.

Furthermore, the Chair is always available to answer questions (raise a point of parliamentary procedure in these cases).

1. FLOW OF DEBATE: AN OVERVIEW

The “flow of debate” is the order in which events proceed during a MUN conference. In an MUN simulation, the debate unfolds in several different parts.

The Roll Call is the first thing you do in the committee. It’s basically when the Chair checks who’s present or not. The Chairperson (or Chair) will announce each country’s name in alphabetical order, and each delegate is to raise his/her placard and answer “present” or “present and voting”.

Difference between “Present” and “Present and Voting”:

- Present: You can vote “In favour”, “Against” or “Abstain”
- Present and Voting: You can only vote “In favour” or “Against”

It’s important to be on time for Roll Call, at the risk of you losing your voting rights.

TIP: Make sure you’re NOT late for Roll Call! It can have its consequences!

2. SETTING THE AGENDA

This is the next step of the flow of debate. When setting the agenda, we are choosing which topic (which are in the Study Guides) will be discussed in the rest of the debate.

In cases where committees have only one topic, a delegate will have to make a “Motion to open debate”. After the Agenda has been set, the debate may officially start.

In cases where committees have more than one topic, a delegate will have to make a “Motion to open debate on topic/agenda xxxx”. Other delegates will then say “Second” or “Objection” to choose if this is the topic they want to discuss; with this result, the topic will be chosen and then the debate has officially started.

3. DEBATE

A. FORMAL/GENERAL DEBATE – GENERAL SPEAKER’S LIST

The formal debate revolves around a General Speaker’s list. The Chair will ask all delegates if they’re interested in speaking about the topic decided in setting the agenda, and, if so, the delegates should raise their placards. The Chair will choose delegates to be placed on the General Speaker’s list. If none are willing to speak, the Chair may appoint someone. The speaker’s list is followed strictly. When the sessions begin, speeches focus on stating country positions and offering recommendations for action.

TIP: For your first speech in the General Speakers’ List, you can use your Position Paper as a reference, so other Delegates get an overall introduction of your Country’s policy. But remember, the speech is 90 seconds long!

The General Debate is considered the backbone of the MUN, i.e. the default type of debate.

You can only be in the General Speaker’s list once at a time. If you have already spoken and wish to be added again to the list, you must either:

- (i) Send a note to the Dais (the Chair and Rapporteur) or;

- (ii) Wait for the Chair to ask if there are any delegates that wish to be added!

It is important that people sign up to the General Speaker's list, because once the list is exhausted, it's assumed that no one has anything further to say, and the debate will automatically move into voting procedure, ending the debate. If this was the committee's last topic to debate, the conference will then end. The Chair will call for motions before the general speaker's list is exhausted ("Are there any points or motions on the floor?" – see below).

When the debate is from the General Speaker's List, there is a strict time limit to adhere to. If you finish your speech before your time limit is up, you could yield the remainder of your time in three ways:

1. Yield to another delegate – you may give the remainder of your time to another delegate. This can be useful if you have an ally who is able to back you up, give supporting arguments or is able to strengthen your speech.

2. Yield to questions – this will allow time for delegates from the committee to ask questions regarding your speech. This may work for or against you, so use this yield wisely.

3. Yield to the Chair – this serves no strategic purpose, you only forfeit the remainder of your time to the Chair.

TIP: This can only be done in the General Debate. Use it to your advantage!

B. INFORMAL DEBATE (MODERATED AND UNMODERATED CAUCUSES)

You can have an informal debate by presenting a “Motion for moderated/unmoderated caucus”. Informal debate involves discussion outside of the speaker’s list. The delegate proposing the motion must briefly explain its purpose and specify a time limit for the caucus, which mustn’t exceed 30 or 20 minutes (for moderated and unmoderated caucus, respectively). In Fig. 2 you can find the differences between a moderated and unmoderated caucus.

Moderated Caucus

In a moderated caucus, the Chair may choose more freely who gets to speak, calling delegates one-by-one for short speeches, so each one can address the committee.

The length of the moderated caucus and the speaker’s time are determined by the delegate proposing the motion (max. 30 minutes). A moderated caucus has many purposes, but its main one is to allow delegates to discuss sub-topics under the main topic for the debate. Since the topic is generally broad, it’s up to the delegates to steer the discussion in the direction they want to go and towards issues that are relevant to them. Example In the UNSC, if the topic is the UN response to the conflict in Syria, you can move for a moderated caucus to discuss sending humanitarian aid to Syria.

You can also use the Moderated Caucus to gather resolution ideas or discuss what took place in other parts of the debate.

Unmoderated Caucus

In unmoderated caucus (also called lobbying session or “unmods”), the committee breaks for a temporary recess (max. 20 minutes) so that delegates may meet with each other and discuss ideas. This is a non-moderated debate, normally used to exchange ideas, draft working papers or resolutions, gather support for a specific draft resolution. Delegates may move from their seats and talk to other delegates freely and in whatever groups they like. This is when resolutions are drafted. These will only be in order after a certain time into the debate, as the Chair will want to ensure that you have enough to discuss, and don't use this as a break.

TIP Delegates are the ones that are actually debating the topic. If it's in the interest of your country to debate a certain aspect of the topic, you should plan out your strategy and then present a motion to the Chair. You may want to gather support to a Draft Resolution you're sponsoring - see what the positions of the other countries are or make it clear to the committee what your position is. Ask yourself – what's the best way for me to achieve my objective? A moderated caucus? An unmoderated caucus (informal lobbying)? A speech in the General Speaker's List?

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4. CLOSURE OF DEBATE

Once the speaker's list is exhausted, the committee automatically moves to voting. Also, once a delegate feels that his or her country's position is clear to others, or that there are enough draft resolutions on the floor, he or she may make a motion for the closure of debate.

5. VOTING PROCEDURE

Once a motion to close the debate has been approved, the committee moves into voting procedure. The voting procedures change depending on the committee in question. A delegate can vote “yes”, “no” or abstain from voting. Abstentions are noted, but don’t count either way. The order of voting procedures is:

- 1) Draft resolutions (voted either as wholes or clause by clause);
- 2) Amendments to resolutions (where only unfriendly amendments need to be voted on, being amendments that aren’t supported by the sponsors – for more information, see our Help Guide regarding Draft Resolutions and Working Papers).

2. FLOW OF DEBATE: ANALYSIS OF SOME ASPECTS IN PARTICULAR A. QUORUM

A. QUORUM

The quorum is the number of Member States who need to be present for the Chair to open a meeting and for the GA to take decisions. For opening a GA meeting, it’s one-third of the Member States. Of course, for our purposes, we won’t be demanding that such quorum be considered, and will carry on with the debate with the delegation present. The quorum for the adoption of resolutions/decisions and elections is a simple majority of Member States.

B. WORKING PAPERS & DRAFT RESOLUTIONS

For more information regarding Working Papers and Drafts Resolutions, please see our Help Guide that specifically addresses that topic.

Working Papers

Working papers are informal documents containing a framework for the resolution. They can be created individually. They don't have to be formatted to the UN rules. The working papers may be submitted to the Chair. If you want delegates to discuss specific point in it, you can move for a moderated caucus to discuss your working paper. If the motion passes, the chair will put it up on the screen, and it can be discussed (that way, you can get good feedback and learn who agrees with you or not).

Draft Resolutions

Draft resolutions are more formal documents that must be written in the correct UN resolution format. These are the documents that will be voted on and become resolutions after the voting procedures. In order to get a draft resolution to be accepted by the Dais, you need a minimum number of supporters (minimum of 5 Member States). They can be:

- a) Sponsors – people who wrote the resolution (minimum 2 sponsors; max. 5 sponsors);
- b) Signatories – people who do not necessarily agree, yet they want to see the

resolution discussed.

The Chair then needs to agree so that the resolution can be introduced.

Being accepted by the Dais is important, since only after that can you make a motion to introduce the Draft Resolution, and have it be discussed in the debate.

TIP: Before presenting a motion to discuss your Working Paper or Draft Resolution, you must submit it to the Dais. The Chair will then see if he/she will accept the document! When you present your motion to discuss the working paper or the draft the resolution the chair will then tell you if your working paper or draft resolution has been accepted or not. If it was accepted the flow of debate continues.

Once the draft resolution has been introduced, it may be discussed, and delegates may propose amendments (changes) to the draft. If you wish to make an amendment, you need a set number of supporters for the amendment, in order to send it to the Chair, who can approve it for discussion. Each amendment must be introduced, debated and voted upon separately to become a part of the draft resolution.

C. MOTIONS

Some of the most important motions are the following:

- Motion to open debate;
- Motion to suspend the debate (for break/lunch/informal/off-record discussions);

The Dais will rule this motion out of order if it is raised prematurely.

- Motion to adjourn the debate; for an example, see UN Doc A/C.3/61/SR.49 pages 5-6.

- Motion to set the agenda “The country of [name] moves to place [topic A] first on the Agenda, followed by [topic B] and then [topic C].”
- Motion for moderated caucus; “The delegate of Ghana moves for a moderated caucus of 10 minutes, individual speaking time 30 seconds, to discuss [issue/working paper/draft resolution x].”
- Motion for unmoderated caucus; “The Russian Federation moves for unmoderated caucus for 10 minutes for the purpose of [X].”
- Motion to close the debate/move to the voting procedure “The delegate of the United States of America moves to close debate and over into voting procedure.”
- Motion to introduce working paper/draft resolution/amendment “The delegate of Angola moves to introduce Draft Resolution 1.2 to the floor.” For an example on a draft amendment that is carried, see UN Doc A/C.1/53/PV.29 (pages 14.16; see section on right of reply below for a different example in the same PV). For an example of a motion on an amendment that was adopted, see UN Doc A/61/PV.50(pages 18-20).
- Right of Reply – If a delegate feels that another delegate’s speech has offended his country, the delegate can ask chairs for a right of reply by sending a note. If the Chair recognizes it, both parties involved will be granted a chance to speak. For an example of the right of reply, when it is allowed and how a request to reply gets communicated see UN Doc A/C.1/53/PV.29(page 6).

D. POINTS

A point is something you raise when it concerns something you'd like to address yourself. Some of the most important points are the following:

- Point of order; When a delegate believes the chair has made an error in the running of the committee; violation of the rules of procedure by the Chair. The delegate should only specify the errors they believe were made in the formal committee procedure and may not address the topic being discussed. For a good example on the difference between a statement and a point of order, see UN Doc A/67/PV.27 (page 2) For an example of a point of order on a request for a vote that was not received by the Secretary of the Committee see UN Doc A/C.1/66/PV.22 (page 28)
- Point of parliamentary procedure; To clarify the RoP, flow of debate, or if you are uncertain of what is going on, etc.
- Point of clarification; A delegate wants to clarify a non-substantive point (meaning grammatical, spelling, word choice, awkward phrases) in a resolution or amendment.
- Point of information; A delegate has a substantive question for a speaker during formal debate. The speaker chooses whether to yield his or her time to points of information
- Point of personal privilege. When a delegate's ability to participate in committee is impaired, for example: you cannot hear the other delegate speaking, or you cannot see the working paper that is displayed on the screen.

Motion/Point	Initiated by...	What does it entail?	Passes...
Setting the agenda	A delegate	The formal adoption of the conference's agenda by delegates, during the opening plenary.	If a simple majority votes in favour of it.
Quorum	The Chair	The Chair may declare a meeting open when at least a third of the members are present.	Automatically.
Motion to open the Speakers' List	A delegate	Delegates can sign up to speak (this should be done in the beginning of the meetings, although the speakers' list may be opened and closed multiple times)	If a simple majority votes in favour of it.
Speeches	The Chair	The Chair calls on delegates to speak in the order in which they presented themselves willing to speak.	Automatically.
Motion to postpone the debate	A delegate raising his/her placard.	The termination of discussion and the prevention of voting.	If a majority of two thirds votes in favour of it.
Motion for closure of debate	A delegate raising his/her placard.	End of debate, with the house moving to vote on the entire resolution as it stands.	If a majority of two thirds votes in favour of it.
Motion for suspension or adjournment of a meeting	A delegate raising his/her placard.	Debate on the current agenda issue is suspended, to be continued later (for example, at the end of the first day of the conference, it may be suspended until the following day, or until another issue is finished).	If one third of the delegates vote in favour of it.
Point of Order	A delegate raising his/her placard.	A delegate may present a point of order if he or she believes that a delegate has broken one of the rules of procedure. Can't interrupt the speaker.	If the Chair deems it valid.
Point of Parliamentary Procedure	A delegate raising his/her placard.	A delegate who is unsure of how to behave in a situation may ask the Chair for clarification.	Automatically.
Point of Personal Privilege	A delegate calling it out.	A delegate is feeling disadvantaged or uncomfortable in some practical way. For example, if the speaker can't be heard or the room temperature is too low/high. May interrupt the speaker.	Automatically (if unreasonable, however, it may be considered out of order by the Chair)
Point of Information	A delegate raising his/her placard.	A delegate posing a question to the current speaker.	If the speaker agrees.
Right to reply / Follow-up	A delegate may call this out after the speaker has answered his/her question.	A delegate, after asking the speaker a question, feels that the speaker's answer justifies asking a follow-up question.	If the Chair agrees (some conferences may not allow this at all, and those that do

			may refuse due to time constraints)
Motion for moderated caucus	A delegate raising his/her placard.	Moving to a state of moderated caucus for a specified amount of time (decided by the Chair).	If one third of the delegates vote in favour of it.
Motion for unmoderated caucus	A delegate raising his/her placard.	Similar to the previous one, except the caucus is unmoderated (outside the room).	If one third of the delegates vote in favour of it.
Motion to introduce a working paper / draft resolution / amendment	A delegate raising his/her placard.	After a delegate has submitted the document in question to the Chair, he/she may present it to the house and have its inclusion be voted on.	If a simple majority votes in favour of it.
Appeal to the Chair's decision	A delegate raising his/her placard.	A delegate feels the Chair has incorrectly decided on a point/motion. He/she then speaks, and the Chair must justify their decision, which is then voted on.	If a majority of two thirds votes in favour of it.

E. VOTING

Votes can be:

- Procedural votes - for a procedural vote, the only options are "In favour" or "Against" votes; abstentions are allowed.
- Substantive votes - on substantive matters (resolutions, reports, presidential statements, amendments, and the second vote on divisions of the question), Member States may vote "In favour", "Against", "Abstain" or "Pass". Abstentions are essentially non-votes and are not included in the tally when determining the passage of a resolution; a resolution will pass with a vote of 10 in favour, five opposed, and 170 abstentions. Likewise, in consensus bodies, abstentions do not affect the passage of the final document.

Placard and roll call are the two permissible types of voting. All procedural votes must be taken by placard, apart from the Adjournment of Debate, which requires a roll call vote. The Chair will count placards of Member States when they vote on issues and announce the result of the vote. A roll call vote may only occur on substantive votes, but only if a Member State requests a roll call vote (with the exception of Adjournment of Debate, for which the roll call vote is automatic). It is the right of any Member State to request a roll call vote, and there is no vote on the motion as the motion is automatically honoured. The Chair reads the roll and each Member State casts its vote aloud when called upon; countries may pass once, but then must vote in the affirmative or negative when asked again (they may not abstain). Roll call votes typically take quite a long time, particularly in large committees – these are usually reserved for politically important resolutions/reports or for resolutions on which a very close vote is expected.

Amendments require a simple majority to pass and to be added to the Draft Resolution and Draft Resolutions require a simple majority to be discussed and a 2/3 majority to be adopted.



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