

Additional Guidelines on Resolutions

Creation of New Bodies:

Many delegates want to try and create a new committee or body to deal with some of the issues before the Conference. There are two common mistakes that occur in these efforts.

First, many times a similar body already exists or there is a body that is already considering various aspects of the issue. In these cases it would not make sense to reinvent the wheel.

Second, if a new body is going to be created, the resolution must ensure that it can function. This means that the resolution must include statements on who the members of the body will be, how (and by whom) they are selected, when it will meet, how it will be funded, etc.

Mandates:

When thinking about authorizing or mandating some body to do something, make sure that body actually has the authority to do it, or make sure that there is not some other body that does have such a mandate. For instance, asking the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to lead the development effort in Guinea-Bissau would not be part of UNHCR's mandate, which is limited to helping refugees, returnees, stateless persons, and, in some cases, internally displaced persons (IDPs); development functions would come under the purview of UNDP or one of the other UN development agencies. This does not preclude trying to address such an issue, but UN bodies, and, to an even greater extent, Member States are very sensitive about expanding the mandate of a UN body. Further, in many cases it would require a Charter amendment.

Example:

- (from a resolution on "alternatives to sanctions") *Strongly supports* the International Criminal Court (ICC) to have more oversight on the matter; – The ICC has jurisdiction only over certain crimes committed by individuals (genocide,

crimes against humanity and war crimes); only the Security Council can establish sanctions.

Further, the UN cannot mandate anything to bodies outside of the UN; the Security Council's resolutions are binding on Member States. The GA can "*Request*", "*Urge*", "*Encourage*", etc., but it cannot order or mandate that NGOs, the Bretton Woods Institutions, or specialized agencies (e.g. WHO, ILO, IOM, FAO) do something.

Mechanics:

There are certain mechanics that are followed in UN resolutions; some of these are the result of using British rather than American style:

- Standard resolutions are only one sentence long. The exception is when Member States have agreed on a "Conclusion" (as in the World Summit Outcome adopted in 2005), a Convention (e.g. The Convention on Torture), or a Declaration (e.g. the Ministerial Declaration adopted during the High-level Segment at ECOSOC).
- The terms "Member States" and "Governments", when referring to the members of the United Nations are capitalized.
- Certain words have British spelling, although it isn't necessary to do this in MUNFW resolutions: "favour", "neighbour", "organisation", programme, etc. The only exception would be the use of the word "programme" when referring to specific UN entities – the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP – please note, not "Environmental"), or the broader category of United Nations "funds and programmes".
- Please note, as used in the preceding bullet, commas and periods appear outside quotation marks, unlike conventional American usage. Also, UN style is to not use a comma at the end of a series – e.g. "apples, oranges and bananas", not "apples, oranges, and bananas".

- The names of UN bodies, and the term “United Nations” itself are spelled out, not abbreviated, unless the acronym for an organization is part of a formal title – e.g. “The UNHCR 2004 Process”, which was part of a resolution adopted in 2003.
- “Secretary-General” rather than “Secretary General”.
- Other common mistakes include whether to use “that” or “which” (normally “which” starts a dependent clause set off by commas); the correct use of the words “affect” and “effect”, the correct use of the words “insure”, “ensure”, and “assure”; and the correct use of the word “economical” – if something is economical it can be done for less expense; “economical” does not refer to “social, political, or economic policies”.

Citation of Resolutions:

There is a correct way to cite resolutions of the General Assembly, the Security Council and ECOSOC.

- General Assembly Resolutions are documented as A/Res/session number/number of resolution. Thus A/Res/58/153 would be resolution 153, adopted during the 58th session (2003) of the General Assembly. However, normally if a resolution is referred to in the body of a GA Resolution it is referred to as “resolution 58/153” with the word resolution spelled out. This might also be followed by the date on which the resolution was adopted.
- If a resolution has something like “L.6”, this means it was considered by a Committee, but not yet formally adopted by the General Assembly itself (“Ls” are the letter applied to draft resolutions that are being considered in a Committee).
- The Security Council refers to its resolutions as “resolution 1325 (2000) meaning resolution number 1325, adopted in the year 2000.
- ECOSOC refers to its resolutions as resolution 2007/5 meaning resolution number 5, adopted during its 2007 session.
- When referring to resolutions previously adopted by other bodies the paragraph would state the name of the other body followed by the normal pattern: General Assembly resolution 58/153, Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), or ECOSOC resolution 2007/5.

- Reports of bodies appear without the word “resolution” or the symbol “Res” with the session number or year followed by the number of the report: e.g., A/62/12, S/2000/2, or E/2007/70 for the GA, Security Council or ECOSOC respectively.

Also, citing a Press Release should not substitute for citing a resolution or official document – they are summaries, not official records, and they are not necessarily verbatim – a quote from a press release may not be the actual quote unless it is listed within quotation marks. A Press Release can be paraphrased in a speech where you could say “as the Minister of Xanatu suggested in his remarks to the General Assembly
Headings:

If you are in one of the General Assembly’s main committees (First, Second, etc.), the resolution heading should still be “The General Assembly”, not “The First Committee”. Your committee is part of the General Assembly, and it is the General Assembly plenary that must eventually adopt the resolution before it becomes official.

Preambular and Operative Paragraphs:

The MUNFW guidelines on policy statements and resolutions are clear about the difference between preambular and operative paragraphs. Nevertheless, many delegates start operative paragraphs with words ending in “ing”. Don’t! That makes the paragraph a preambular paragraph, usually expressing some sort of philosophical thought or historical background regarding the issue. Delegates sometimes mix the two concepts in operational paragraphs. For example:

“*Declares* its firm opposition to the use of any economic or financial sanctions as the measures are often ineffective; – The second part of this phrase (the underlined portion) is actually a preambular statement and should appear in the first part of the resolution as a preambular clause – something like, “*Noting* that economic or financial sanctions are often ineffective”.

Clarity:

The meaning of some paragraphs is often obscured by lack of clarity. Here are examples of paragraphs from resolutions turned in for MUNFW’s 57th Session (the spring of 2006) that need further clarification:

- *Expresses* its appreciation to both committees designated to ensure and regulate compliance with Conventions; – What committees? Although in some cases the phrase “both committees” may be clear, it wasn’t in this particular resolution. Similarly, the UN has adopted a number of Conventions – which ones are being referred to here?
- *Urges* assistance to children exposed to HIV/AIDS; – What kind of assistance (medical, financial, psychological counseling)? And who is supposed to provide the assistance?
- *Urges* the international community to mandate cooperation from Israel; – What kind of cooperation? Who within the international community is supposed to ensure this? The international community is not a “body” that can mandate anything.
- *Expresses* its full support to the report but has some recommendations in terms of security and development; – What report? What recommendations?
- *Authorizes* the United Nations to assist States in tracking the illicit trade of small arms; (or *Authorizes* the General Assembly to assist States in tracking the illicit trade of small arms;) – In each case, assuming this comes from First Committee where the topic would be discussed, you are the UN; you are the General Assembly. You don’t authorize yourself (or even worse, “*Authorize*” the First Committee) to do something. And in the case of “*Authorizing* the UN”, you would need to specify which part of the UN you were authorizing – the UN as a whole can’t do anything; bodies or organizations within the UN, such as agencies or commissions can do things.
- *Reminds* the General Assembly of the necessity to ensure fair treatment of all Member States regardless of size; – Apparently size doesn’t matter, but what is meant here by “fair treatment”? In what context? Also, the General Assembly would not remind itself of something.
- (In a Security Council resolution) *Decides* to remain actively involved in the project. – This was an attempt to paraphrase the last paragraph of most Security Council resolutions. The standard phrase is “*Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter”. This means that the SC still has the matter on its agenda, and

that the GA may not pass resolutions on the matter unless the GA did so through something along the lines of the Uniting for Peace Resolution. This is a very unusual action that has only been used twice in 60 years, so it is not one that delegates should resort to at Model UN.

Editing:

Some resolutions just need to be read more carefully to clarify the language itself. Here are some examples:

- *Commends* the aid that many nations have given to the developing world; – We might want to commend the nations that gave the aid, but we would not commend the aid itself.
- *Determined* to live in a place free from terrorism in its entire entirety; – The problem here should be self-evident, evidently.
- *Aware* that specific sanctions must be approached by relevant United Nations bodies; – We can see those bodies marching up to the sanctions as we read.
- *Recommends* that steps be taken by the UN Charter to ... – This is similar to the above problem. The UN Charter is a document; it isn't capable of walking or doing anything else. Steps could be taken according to the UN Charter, but they would have to be taken by some other entity.
- *Supports* the shift to a new kind of economic warfare; – Aside from implying that there was an old kind of economic warfare, this is not language that the UN would use; if nothing else, the concept is too vague.
- *Expresses* concern at the potential responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security; – What does this mean?
- *Affirming* the intolerable violation of human rights; – Do we really want to affirm violations of human rights, intolerable or not?
- *Encourages* States to be suspicious of any strange activities brought on by organizations; – Most States are suspicious of strange activities, but what are "strange activities" and what organizations are we referring to?

- *Strongly emphasizing* that it is important to maintain the cultural people from vanishing; – Perhaps raising the question, “Where have you gone, Will Shakespeare”.