



MUN Conference Prep

2024-2025



What is a conference?

At a conference, you represent a country and discuss a specific topic with 25–30 other students from different schools (the group of students, or delegates, is called a committee). Everyone represents a different country. There are three different kinds of speeches, all of which build up to writing a mock solution (a resolution) for the issue with other countries who share similar views.

We all meet up for breaks and lunch.

To be prepared to discuss your topic, you need to do research!

How do I start my research?

1. Know your committee topic and country.
2. Read the background guide! This gives a summary of the specific parts of your committee issue that you need to be prepared to discuss. It also has guiding questions for your research.

- Go to lagunabeachmun.com
- Select the menu icon
- Choose “LBIMUN 2025”
- Choose “Committees” and scroll until you see your topic
- Click on the button for your topic, and it’ll take you to the background guide.
- Also read docs.google.com/document/d/1VWGL2WfgzU4a_zdMMRVxIaIilXe_h2y2-SgB6s9CH7WE/edit

Quick Research Overview

Look into these things:

1. **Background of the issue** (you can just rely on the background guide instead of researching this unless you want to find more statistics to use in your speeches)
2. **Previous UN action** (this isn't super important, so just briefly look into how effective/involved the UN has been on your topic)
3. **Country policy** (your country's laws, programs, budget, voting history, speeches, action/lack of action, etc. on the issue)
4. **Solutions** (must align with country policy; can be previously implemented or new and creative)

*See the next two slides for more information on solutions.

Solutions

- **NGOs**

- Stands for non-governmental organizations (basically nonprofits)
- Ex: Red Cross, Doctors Without Borders
- SUPER IMPORTANT in solutions; countries partner with them to reach more people with solutions
- Have 3–5 up your sleeve for different solutions (ex: the NGOs you research should not all be focused on providing education to underprivileged kids).

- **UN Branches**

- The UN has a lot of different offices and partners, like the UNHCR, UN Women, ECOSOC, UNESCO, UNEP, UNODC, WHO, etc. These are great to include as partners with your solutions! For example, if you're in the UNHCR (refugees) committee, partnering with UNODC (drugs and crime) to minimize the amount of drugs coming across the national border could be a good idea.

Solutions

- **Acronyms**

- This is more advanced, but it helps you break down information for your audience.
- Ex: The HUG plan (each letter stands for a different part of the plan—H for Humanitarian aid, U for Universal education, G for General access to food).
- Laguna only likes acronyms that are RELEVANT.

- **Come up with your own ideas! Make sure to include the following.**

- Overall purpose, overall plan, leaders, partnerships, timeline, funding, and predicted or current impact
- Detail is everything!
- Solutions MUST follow your country's policies.

Misc. Research Tips

- Briefly research your country's allies and enemies so you have an idea of who you might want to work with before you go into the conference.
- Research how actively your country votes and participates in the U.N. (present vs. present and voting) and the general place of your country in the world (if you were the United States, your solutions could include you sharing your resources with the UN, but if you're a smaller country with fewer resources, your speech and solutions might ask other countries for help). You want to represent your nation as accurately as possible.

Good Research Sources

- *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*
 - They won't let you read unless you put in your email, but they're free!
 - Brief, simple articles
- CIA World Factbook
 - Each country's page has general facts as well as a list of its industries their up-to-date information.
 - More of a starting point—you'll get names of programs and other things you can research further.
- UN Website (un.org)
 - Just type words associated with your topic into the search bar! You might have to scroll through some stuff, but the site is really reliable.

General Overview of an MUN Committee

- Opening Speeches
 - 1:30 minute speech on your country's views and solutions for the topic.
 - Everyone does one (it's not required, but you have to give a speech to get an award).
- Comments
 - 30 seconds each, 1–2 after each opening speech
 - (1) say something nice about the speech, (2) agree/disagree with something the speaker said, and (3) add a solution or new discussion point
- Unmoderated Caucuses (Unmods)/Informal Consultations
 - Walk around the room and informally talk to a group of delegates about your country's views and solutions
- Moderated Caucuses (Mods)/Formal Consultation
 - Short speech (30 seconds–1 minute) on a subtopic of the committee issue
- Resolutions
 - Ultimate goal of a conference—a detailed list of your group's solutions
 - Work on them during unmoderated caucuses with a group of other delegates who have solutions your country agrees with
 - Present at end of committee—other delegates can ask questions

Opening Speeches

- A 1:30 speech
- Basically a simplified version of your position paper/research
- You need a hook! Statistics, scenarios, etc. are great. LAGUNA HAS A NO POP-CULTURE REFERENCE POLICY.
- Include:
 - Background & past UN action (keep it brief; everyone read the background guide already)
 - Country policy/beliefs
 - Solutions (this and country policy are the bulk of your speech)
 - Highlight one or two key points.
- Look at examples of successful speeches; don't try to cram too much in.
- The most interesting speakers (and award winners) have their speeches memorized, move around while they talk, and project their voice well.

General vs. Substantive Debate

- **General Debate:** speeches that briefly summarize the issue and share your country's main stance on the problem (you can briefly introduce solutions but do not mention specifics, like NGOs)
- **Substantive Debate:** speeches that address specific solutions and go into detail
- This does **NOT** mean you are writing two opening speeches. Your **opening speech** is part of **GENERAL** debate.
- Once you start working with people in unmods and sharing solutions, the committee will move into substantive debate where (I think) you just share solutions through comments and mods. You might be able to give a preview of exactly what's in your group's resolutions, and other delegates can propose amendments to the resolution's policies.
- Los Al resource:
docs.google.com/document/d/1-9FqCUVfGHq07a6kyNyRWo2_GGtRZ4VbbPe2IhJRFL4/edit

Detailed Committee Procedures

- **Attendance**: the chairs call countries alphabetically. When they get to you, either say “present” (P) or “present and voting” (PV) Most people will say PV—the only difference is that you can only say yes or no when voting on resolutions. P can say yes, say no, or abstain.
- **Placard**: the chairs will give you a placard with your country’s name on it as they take attendance. Raise it quickly whenever you want to speak.
- **Motion to open debate**: Your chairs will ask for this motion to start speeches. This is a formality; it doesn’t do anything, so don’t get confused.
- **Motion to open the speaker’s list**: This is when you can give an opening speech (see previous slide). Raise your placard to be added to the list; when it’s your turn, you’ll give your **opening speech** (see previous slide).

Detailed Committee Procedures

- **Comments:** After each speech there are 1–2 comments of 30 seconds each. In a comment, congratulate the speaker on a good speech, say one of their points your country agrees or disagrees with, and throw in a solution your country has.
 - Example: “The U.S. commends Brazil on a well-thought out speech and is interested in Brazil’s plan to set up medical clinics at the border. The U.S. would also like to propose that the Red Cross staff the clinics and that the UN fund advanced surgical equipment to provide the best care possible to refugees.”
 - Award winners fill up the full 30 seconds when they speak.
- Also, if you have extra time after you finish your speech or comment, say, “I yield the rest of my time to the chair” or “thank you.”
- **Are there any points or motions at this time?:** after every speech and its comments, the chairs will ask if there are any points or motions at this time. If you want to make a motion for a moderated or unmoderated caucus (wait until 4 or 5 speakers have gone), this is the time to do it! Just raise your placard.

Detailed Committee Procedures

- **Moderated Caucuses/Mods**: a discussion with a set speaking time on a specific subtopic of the larger committee issue; basically a mini Speaker's List
 - Example of how to propose one: (Committee topic is food insecurity) “France motions for a 5-minute moderated caucus with a 30-second speaking time on the topic of free lunch in schools.”
- **Unmoderated Caucuses/Unmods**: delegates can move around the classroom and speak to each other to discuss their country's views
 - Ex: “France motions for a 10-minute unmoderated caucus.”

*During unmods, YOU NEED TO TALK TO OTHER COUNTRIES. This is the only time you have to form resolution groups and write resolutions (see next slide).

*All motions pass with a simple majority vote.

- When there is a scheduled snack break or lunch in committee, the chair will ask for a **motion to suspend debate** and a **motion to reopen debate** and a **motion to reopen the speaker's list** after the break. Again, these are formalities.

Detailed Committee Procedures

- **Resolutions:** the ultimate goal of a conference! You, as a delegate, are trying to combine your solutions with other delegates' ideas to solve the committee issue.
- **Formal Debate:** after everyone finishes their resolutions, $\frac{1}{3}$ of your resolution group will go up in front of the committee to read your resolution and answer questions from other delegates.
- **Voting:** After formal, there will be a motion to move into voting bloc. One person will argue why you should move into voting and another person will argue against it (another formality).
- You may only vote yes or no if you said "Present and voting" at the beginning of committee. If you say "Present," you can vote yes, abstain, or say no.
- **Motion to close debate** (formality)
- **Awards time!**

Frequently-Used Phrases

- **“Decorum, delegates!”**: what the chair says if they want to get everyone quiet
- **“I’m going to rule that dilatory”**: what the chair says if they want to postpone your motion until later
- **“Point of inquiry”**: what YOU say when you have a question related to committee proceedings
 - Do NOT ask to use the bathroom; just go.

Important Tips

- PLEASE SPEAK A LITTLE BIT IN COMMITTEE.
 - Especially in unmods; everyone is chatting, so you can't really hide during them. People will be really welcoming to you, so don't worry about going up to a group. :)
 - If you don't make speeches or comments, your chairs will nicely target you and say, "The chair would smile upon a comment from France," and they will keep saying that until you say something. Even if you are not totally confident, just share your country's opinion.
- Try not to say "I", "me", or "we" when making speeches.
 - Refer to yourself as a delegate/country ONLY and throw around the name of your country when presenting to the entire room.
 - Confidence is key!
 - It's fine to learn people's names and be informal when working in your resolution group.
- Your first conference(s) will be a learning experience; THAT IS NORMAL AND OKAY.
- Schools with intense MUN programs
 - Santa Margarita, Huntington Beach, Edison, OCSA, Mira Costa

Resolution Format

Heading

Preambulatory Clauses

Operative Clauses

General Assembly Third Committee

Sponsors: United States, Austria and Italy

Signatories: Greece, Tajikistan, Japan, Canada, Mali, the Netherlands and Gabon

Topic: "Strengthening UN coordination of humanitarian assistance in complex emergencies"

The General Assembly,

Reminding all nations of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which recognizes the inherent dignity, equality and inalienable rights of all global citizens, **[use commas to separate preambulatory clauses]**

Reaffirming its Resolution 33/1996 of 25 July 1996, which encourages Governments to work with UN bodies aimed at improving the coordination and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance,

Noting with satisfaction the past efforts of various relevant UN bodies and nongovernmental organizations,

Stressing the fact that the United Nations faces significant financial obstacles and is in need of reform, particularly in the humanitarian realm,

1. Encourages all relevant agencies of the United Nations to collaborate more closely with countries at the grassroots level to enhance the carrying out of relief efforts; **[use semicolons to separate operative clauses]**
2. Urges member states to comply with the goals of the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs to streamline efforts of humanitarian aid;
3. Requests that all nations develop rapid deployment forces to better enhance the coordination of relief efforts of humanitarian assistance in complex emergencies;
4. Calls for the development of a United Nations Trust Fund that encourages voluntary donations from the private transnational sector to aid in funding the implementation of rapid deployment forces;
5. Stresses the continuing need for impartial and objective information on the political, economic and social situations and events of all countries;
6. Calls upon states to respond quickly and generously to consolidated appeals for humanitarian assistance; and
7. Requests the expansion of preventive actions and assurance of post-conflict assistance through reconstruction and development. **[end resolutions with a period]**

Resolutions Explained

*You can also learn how to write a resolution from other people in your committee who have attended conferences before!

Heading

- Four lines: committee (UN branch), topic, sponsors (countries in the resolution group), and signatories (other countries sign your resolution because they are interested in hearing more about it; you don't have to vote yes if you are asked to sign something).
- Title for the resolution

Preambulatory Clauses

- Outline the issues you are addressing in your resolution.
- Start with an italicized or underlined -ing verb.
- Ex: *Recognizing* that third-world countries have financial obstacles that prevent the funding of schools,
- Short but detailed
- 3-5
- Separate with commas

Resolutions Explained

Operative Clauses

- Your solutions to the issues in your preambulatory clauses
- Start with italicized or underlined present tense verbs.
- Can have points and sub-points (in Google Docs, it goes numbers-letters-numerals)
- Numbered
- Be thorough but concise!
- ex: *Calls upon* the UN to provide temporary aid to countries that do not have funds to establish schools; (sub-points: specific branches of the UN, time, money, NGOs, etc.)
- All sub-points should also start with present tense verbs.
- Separate with semicolons

Put together, preamb and operatives are meant to say something like this:
Recognizing that food insecurity is a global problem (preamb), the UN *calls upon* countries to increase agriculture budgets (operative).

Possible Awards

- Research: for a position paper (Laguna gives 1 per committee)
- Commendation: 3rd place
- Outstanding: 2nd place
- Best Delegate: 1st place (only one per committee)

*There are fewer award opportunities the further you get into the school year and with smaller committees (typically, 25–30% of your committee receives awards).

*You can win a committee award AND a research award (but only if you submit and earn a good score on a position paper).

How Do I Win an Award?

- Sit towards the front of the room and speak a lot, but don't be an obnoxious know-it-all.
- Memorize your opening speech; don't take notes up with you.
- Make solid comments and fill up your speaking time.
- Make and win one or more motions for a moderated caucus.
- Lead your unmod group—include everybody and direct the discussion to make it productive.
- Ask questions about other groups' resolutions.
- Do not curse, yell, or laugh loudly.
- Be calm and courteous at all times.
- Pay attention when others are speaking—do not EVER be on your phone.
- Do not make up information about your country; someone will call you on it.
- BE A NICE, SUPPORTIVE, AND DIPLOMATIC DELEGATE.

Other Resources to Prepare Yourself

- Best Delegate
 - Walks you through MUN procedures at a beginner level
 - YouTube channel, Instagram, website, etc.
- Tahlia or someone else who attended a conference (Grace, Terry, Estella, etc.)

What Do I Bring?

- Wear business attire (blouse, blazer, LOW closed-toed shoes, skirt, slacks, etc.). NO UNIFORMS OR TENNIS SHOES.
- A bookbag, tote bag, or backpack
- Fully charged laptop (if you can, avoid your Rosary one)
- Your phone (on silent)
- Copies of your position paper and speech (and moderated caucus suggestions if you go that far)
- Water
- Snack
- A few dollars (sometimes the host school collects donations for a fundraiser or has snacks to buy)
- Post-Its or index cards (SUPER helpful if you want to pass a note to another country or write notes for a speech)
- Pencils & pens
- Blank or lined paper & a folder to put it in



HAVE FUN!

You'll do great!

