

## **POSITION PAPERS MODEL UN PREPARATION GUIDE**

Many conferences require that each delegation submit a position paper—an essay detailing your country's policies on the topics being discussed in your committee. Writing a position paper will help you organize your ideas so that you can share your country's position with the rest of the committee. If you conduct extensive research, a position paper should be easy to write.

Most conferences that require position papers ask for them about one month before the conference so that staff members can read them and get a feel for the direction debate will take. If the conference you are attending does not require a position paper, you should still consider writing one to help you organize your research and prepare your speeches. Many delegates use their position papers as their opening remarks.

### **HOW TO WRITE A POSITION PAPER**

Writing a position paper might appear to be a daunting task, especially for new delegates. But with enough research, you will find that writing a position paper will be easy and useful.

Position papers are usually one to one-and-a-half pages in length. Your position paper should include a brief introduction followed by a comprehensive breakdown of your country's position on the topics that are being discussed by the committee. A good position paper will not only provide facts but also make proposals for resolutions.

Many conferences will ask for specific details in a position paper, so be sure to include all the required information. Most conferences will provide delegates a background guide to the issue. Usually, the background guide will contain questions to consider. Make sure that your position paper answers these questions.

### **A GOOD POSITION PAPER WILL INCLUDE:**

- A brief introduction to your country and its history concerning the topic and committee;
- How the issue affects your country;
- Your country's policies with respect to the issue and your country's justification for these policies;
- Quotes from your country's leaders about the issue;
- Statistics to back up your country's position on the issue;
- Actions taken by your government with regard to the issue;
- Conventions and resolutions that your country has signed or ratified;

- UN actions that your country supported or opposed;
- What your country believes should be done to address the issue;
- What your country would like to accomplish in the committee's resolution; and
- How the positions of other countries affect your country's position.

### POSITION PAPER TIPS

- **Keep it simple.** To communicate strongly and effectively, avoid flowery wording and stick to uncomplicated language and sentence structure.
- **Make it official.** Try to use the seal of your country or create an "official" letterhead for your position paper. The more realistic it looks, the more others will want to read it.
- **Get organized.** Give each separate idea or proposal its own paragraph. Make sure each paragraph starts with a topic sentence.
- **Cite your sources.** Use footnotes or endnotes to show where you found your facts and statistics. If you are unfamiliar with bibliographic form, look up the Modern Language Association (MLA) guidelines at your school's library.
- **Read and reread.** Leave time to edit your position paper. Ask yourself if the organization of the paper makes sense and double-check your spelling and grammar.
- **Speech! Speech!** Do you plan to make an opening statement at your conference? A good position paper makes a great introductory speech. During debate, a good position paper will also help you to stick to your country's policies.
- **Let the bullets fly.** Try not to let your proposals become lost in a sea of information. For speechmaking, create a bulleted list of your proposals along with your most important facts and statistics so that you will not lose time looking for them during debate.

*Committee:* United Nations Institute for  
Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)

*Topic:* Reducing the illicit arms trade in Africa

*Delegate:* María Angélica Sánchez Vásquez

*Delegation:* Federal Democratic Republic of  
Ethiopia



Good morning honorable chair, delegates, and observers present. On behalf of President Taye Atske Selassie, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia appreciates being a part of this committee.

As part of his New Agenda for Peace, the United Nations Secretary-General highlights the significant challenges posed by the diversion, proliferation, and misuse of weapons, including small arms and light weapons (SALW) and ammunition. However, the current reality is truly worrying. The African Union and the Small Arms Survey show that in Africa 80 percent of weapons are not registered, and illegal trafficking of these continues. In addition, recent models and types of weapons are observed to indicate the emergence of new sources of illicit small arms, which contribute to armed conflicts and violence, including gender-based violence, and threaten peace, security, stability, and sustainable development around the world. (*Small Arms Survey*, 2019)

Since 2020, the government of Ethiopia has implemented and created laws that reinforce the control of firearms to stop the violent ethnic, civil, and military conflicts to which this material comes from illegal trafficking. The new regulations seek to maintain peace and security in the country, prohibiting imports, exports, possession, storing, using, displaying, transporting, manufacturing, repairing, and alteration of firearms without a license. (Reuters, 2020)

Thus, achieving that the authorities registered, and seized nearly 500 weapons and 46,000 pieces of ammunition, found in Sudan and neighboring countries, this shows a significant advance for the Ethiopian government to stop illegal firearms trafficking, Ethiopia, as a party to these global and regional commitments, adopted a proclamation to provide for firearm administration and control. The new legislation fills the loopholes in the legal framework to administer and control firearms and enables enforcement of international commitments concerning illicit firearm control.

Since the beginning of this problem, the Ethiopian government has been implementing a rapid action plan to counter this situation. The following solutions may prove to be viable, as Ethiopia is one of the most affected countries and is a major trafficking route for these illegal firearms:

1) Implementation of Marking, Record-Keeping, and Tracing Systems for Weapons and Ammunition: Unique serial numbers digitalized in national and regional databases would enable authorities to monitor the movement of firearms more effectively. These measures would facilitate the identification of sources of diversion into illegal markets or subversive groups.

2) Collection and Destruction of Illicit Weapons through Voluntary Surrender Programs: To maximize participation, these initiatives should be accompanied by incentives such as financial compensation, vocational training, and reintegration support to encourage individuals to surrender firearms without fear of legal repercussions.

At the same time, arms-exporting states must take all necessary measures to avoid adding to the already huge quantities of illicit arms currently circulating in Africa. While it is important for all states – including those that seldom export arms or ammunition – to have an arms transfer control system, those with a substantial role in the manufacture, export, transit, import, and brokering of arms, require comprehensive systems that are responsive both to technological developments and the changing dynamics of the international arms market. This delegation appreciates the attention given to this committee and looks forward to working together with other delegations to reach a resolution.

#### References

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