

MUNA PROCEDURES 2025

Principles

The Model United Nations Assembly aims to involve senior secondary students in a hands-on experience of a UN-style conference, with the aim of increasing international understanding and goodwill, which is one of the objects of Rotary. The format is modelled on a session of the main deliberative organ of the United Nations, the General Assembly. However, the need to provide a satisfying experience for participants within the time available demands significant simplification and adaptation of the procedures and scope of the General Assembly. Likewise, the specific considerations applying to holding MUNA at the Museum of Democracy at Old Parliament House over 1½ days, whilst maximising participation amongst 15-20 teams make it likely that procedures will differ from those that may have applied in preliminary events in the run-up to MUNA.

The principles that are applied in making the necessary adaptations are:

1. That the Assembly should address only a limited number of the charter functions of the General Assembly¹, viz.,
 - to consider and make recommendations on the principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and arms regulation;
 - to discuss any question relating to international peace and security and to make recommendations on it; ²
 - to initiate studies and make recommendations to promote international political cooperation, the development and codification of international law, the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, and international collaboration in economic, social, cultural, educational and health fields;
 - to make recommendations for the peaceful settlement of any situation, regardless of origin, which might impair friendly relations among nations.
2. Topics and scope of debate will be limited accordingly.
3. That all delegates to the Assembly should faithfully represent the views and interests of their chosen country, rather than their own opinions;
4. That the rules of debate should, to the extent possible, ensure the maximum number of delegates participate;

¹ As detailed on http://www.un.org/ga/58/ga_background.html

² It is assumed that no debate is already the subject of a Security Council discussion, and may therefore properly be debated by the Assembly.

5. That, in the interests of ensuring the maximum possible time for substantive debate, opportunities to influence the debate by procedural motions should be strictly limited;
6. That, in an attempt to simulate the importance of real world alliances, the rules of procedure should specifically promote the active involvement of blocs in the business of the Assembly.

The Rules

The Assembly shall consist of six debating sessions, each lasting for a period of approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes. In principle, one resolution is to be debated in each session. The resolutions proposed for debate at the six sessions have been sent to you and are made available on the MUNA website.

Resolutions for debate, and the order in which they are to be debated, will be determined by a vote of delegates prior to MUNA.

It is not possible to amend resolutions. Delegations are encouraged to negotiate with each other to identify measures that could be adopted in the implementation of a resolution, or other inducements relevant to the resolution, that might encourage the support of other delegations for a particular position.

Each team must sponsor or second at least one resolution. Teams may sponsor or second the affirmative or the negative case for a resolution. A sponsoring team will be responsible for:

- determining which of its members speak to the resolution, either for or against;
- negotiating with members of their own and other blocs to build support for their case.

Any delegation retains the right to speak for or against any resolution, regardless of the view that their Bloc may have taken to a particular resolution.³

The Debating Sessions

Blocs shall be seated together and may meet during breaks or communicate by diplomatic note in order to coordinate their approach to the Assembly. Blocs may request a suspension of proceedings prior to the start of debate in order to hold a maximum 5-minute Bloc meeting. The Secretary-General will determine

³ Of course, the Secretary General will assume in such cases that due consideration has been given to the broader effects of such a move on the peaceful conduct of world affairs and the coherence and stability of the Bloc of which they are a member.

whether to accede to such requests based on the time available, and her or his decision will be final.

Warnings are to be given 30 seconds before expiry of speaking time for a three-minute speech, and 15 seconds for a one-minute speech. Speakers are to stand in their place to address the Assembly and are to address their remarks to the Secretary-General – for example “Secretary-General, the United States wishes etc.”

Designated Speakers

At the commencement of each debating session, the Secretary General will remind the Assembly of the substance of the resolution for debate. She or he will then open the debating session by calling for maximum three-minute speeches from the speakers designated for that resolution, with speaking order passing from proposer to first against, seconder, then second against.

General Debate

The floor is then opened for general debate. Any delegation which has not yet spoken to the resolution may request that the Secretary-General’s place them in the speaking order. The Secretary-General will start to accept requests to this effect after the commencement of the debating session (that is, when the Secretary General declares the session open and calls for the first Designated Speaker).

The Secretary-General has absolute discretion to determine the speaking order. Speakers will be selected in the order in which their request is received by the Secretary General, except where the Secretary General, in her or his absolute discretion, determines that a different speaking order is required in order to ensure that opportunities to participate are equitably allocated across the weekend.

As far as possible, the speaking order will alternate between speakers for and speakers against the resolution. Where insufficient time remains to accommodate all requests to speak, the Secretary-General will determine how many speakers will be permitted to speak from both sides according to the time available and will advise the Assembly.

Each speech in general debate will be limited to three minutes. In addition to their speech, each delegation participating in general debate, **as well as the seconder and second speaker against**, has the right to two replies of a maximum 1-minute duration each, which may be exercised by the delegate rising in their place and being recognised by the Secretary General or by sending a diplomatic note to the Secretary-General. A right of reply can be exercised before a team has made a two minute speech in general debate. **Priority attaching to rights of reply will be at the discretion of the Secretary-General.**

General debate ceases when a time limit is reached, according to the following schedule for each debating session (and always subject to the Secretary-General's absolute right to vary the limit for whatever reason)

Summation

Following the end of general debate, the first speaker against and the proposer in order then have the right to a three-minute summation. When completed, the motion is automatically put to the vote, and the Secretary-General will announce the result, which shall be determined by simple majority. It is permissible for delegations to abstain from voting.

Clarification of information and Points of Order

If delegates wish to clarify points of fact or omission, they can do so during their two opportunities to reply.

No points of order are allowed, except to bring to the attention of the Secretary-General any language, either spoken or contained in diplomatic notes, which is considered inappropriate for the assembly (specifically denigration or anything that might be considered an affront to the religion or traditions of another delegate), or any matter contrary to these procedures.

The Secretary-General has the right to rule against any such language or adjudicate on any procedural issue, whether the object of a point of order or not, and to impose the loss of speaking privileges in general debate for the current resolution, or make a ruling on a procedural point, at the Secretary-General's discretion. In the interests of time, these rulings are absolute, and not subject to challenge.

In the interests of maintaining focus on substance and avoiding situations where a debate may not extend to fill the session, we do not allow motions that the motion be put.

⁴ NB These times are indicative only and may be changed at any time depending on the final schedule of the Assembly

⁵ This means any delegation may speak a maximum of six minutes in each Debating Session (the Proposer and the First Speaker Against through their opening speeches and summations (six minutes in total), and other speakers in general debate through their speeches and right of reply – five minutes in total). For this reason, **the Proposer and the First Speaker Against do not have the right to speak during the general debate.**

The Secretary-General will maintain a record of who has spoken and how often, across the weekend, and will attempt to give priority to teams who have done so less often. However, it is up to the delegation to put itself forward to speak.

Determination of Resolutions and Sponsoring of Debates

The resolutions for debate, and the order in which they will be debated, will be determined prior to MUNA by a vote of delegates. Once the resolutions to be debated are determined they will be advised to you. **In this way, at the end of Friday evening, if possible, all teams will be guaranteed to speak at least once over the weekend.** Delegates will also know which resolution is to be debated in each session, and which delegations are designated speakers.

- Each team will be invited to nominate **four** of the proposed resolutions to which it wishes to sponsor or second either the affirmative case or the negative case. If a first preference is uncontested, that preference will be granted.
- In case more than one team is seeking to sponsor the same resolution, either for or against, the Secretary-General will endeavour to resolve the sponsoring opportunities based on the other preferences of teams. Decisions of the Secretary-General will be final.
- If there are outstanding opportunities to sponsor a resolution, the Secretary-General will endeavour to resolve these on the Friday evening session before MUNA.

The Secretary General will inform the Assembly of the order of debate on the Friday evening before MUNA.

Teams may negotiate between themselves to swap designated speaking positions, provided always that the Secretary-General is informed of such changes prior to the opening of the debating session concerned.

Appropriate Conduct

Coaching of students on the floor or in their interaction in bloc meetings is not allowed, not only because it is not fair to those who may not be able to benefit from coaching, but also because it overemphasises the 'winning' of the competition at the expense of the learning to be gained by students from their experience of engaging independently in an event such as this.

We recognise, however, that increased use of mobile devices of all sorts has made this very difficult to enforce, particularly for a volunteer organisation with limited resources, and have to rely on the honesty of both students and counsellors in supporting this rule.

We would also point out to delegates and counsellors that a

delegation that is being coached will not be as involved in what other delegations are saying and so is not likely to be as able to show that they are capable of thinking on their feet as one that is fully engaged in the debate. This is likely to have a negative effect on their debating performance.

Please **also note that the regulations at the Museum of Democracy at Old Parliament House allow only one laptop or tablet per team to be brought into the chamber**, and that all rules relating to the preservation of the unique heritage value of the House of Representatives chamber must be obeyed.

Some Hints

The rules are established to encourage maximum participation. Any one delegation has a limited amount of time to speak to any one resolution. Your delegation will have maximum impact if you:

1. prepare thoroughly before arriving at MUNA, and
2. coordinate with other members of your bloc during the weekend to ensure all aspects of the argument on a resolution are presented. No single delegation has time to put the entire argument - involving the whole bloc also gives you the chance to respond comprehensively to your opponents' case.

Your preparation should include developing an understanding of opposing viewpoints, so you can anticipate and address these arguments convincingly. Furthermore, your bloc should organise itself so that arguments are put in a coherent, logical fashion, while leaving sufficient flexibility for different bloc members to respond to opposing positions.

As in real life, debate is pointless if no one is willing to change their initial position. Think about what you as a delegation, or your bloc, may be able to accept as a compromise or a trade-off in order to reach a decisive vote. Think also about what your opponents may be willing to compromise on.

Remember also that even if your delegation is on the same side as another speaker, your position may be based on a different justification, or even be critical of, the other speaker. In other words, you may both support the resolution, but use your speaking opportunity to distinguish your position from other speakers.

Equally, you may support the intent of a resolution, but still argue (and vote) against its form or proposed mechanism.

Although role-playing is strongly encouraged, particularly with regard to presenting the positions and cultures of the nation you represent, it should be constructive and contribute to the success of the debate. It should not become an opportunity for individual grandstanding, particularly where that might detract from the message you wish to transmit on behalf of your country. Show some respect – it might be reciprocated.

There are, of course, real reasons for the differences that exist between national positions. However, the United Nations is founded on the belief that these differences need not inevitably result in conflict, that no culture or nation is destined to cause or seek it. It is your job to find a way to both be faithful to the interests and identity of your nations, and to build peace within the international community.

Preparation

You can never do too much. In addition to building up your general knowledge about your country, and scanning of all sorts of material (not just the web) for information on the specific issues you will debate, you should practice debating the issues within your team. Surprise each other – then work out how you would handle it if it happened at MUNA.

Generally, the Embassy or High Commission of the country you represent will be very happy to assist you in improving your understanding of their national position on the issues, and developing your general knowledge of the country. It is suggested that your team approaches the relevant Embassy or High Commission directly to seek support.

You will likely have only one opportunity to propose or second a resolution or be the first or second speaker against a resolution. These roles give you more speaking time, and the possibility to show leadership within your bloc by coordinating its approach to the debate. It is therefore important that you choose which resolutions you wish to propose, oppose or second, and prepare your tactics and speech. However, this should not mean that your speech should be pre-written for reading out to the Assembly. You must allow some flexibility if you are to work in coordination with your bloc; and a speech that is lively and makes use of opportunities of the moment will have much more impact.