



B I M U N / S I N U B 2 0 2 6 · Bonn, the UN City of Germany

POSITION PAPER

Research and Writing Guide



D E L E G A T E G U I D E

Your country, your voice:
How to research and write
your position paper

C O N F E R E N C E

BIMUN / SINUB 2026

O R G A N I S E D B Y

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1. WHAT IS A POSITION PAPER?

A position paper is a short policy statement in which you explain, as the diplomat of your assigned country, how your country sees the committee topic and what it wants the committee to do. It is the one document you write alone and before the conference; speeches, working papers and resolutions all come later and are written together with other delegations.

Your paper answers three questions:

1. **What is the issue** and why does it matter to the international community? And **where does your country stand**, and why does it care about this topic?
2. **What has already been done** – by the UN, regional organisations and your own country?
3. **What should happen next** – which concrete solutions does your country want in the resolution?

You speak for your government, not for yourself. Advocate and defend the assigned country's interests even when they personally disagree. Your own opinion stays at home for the weekend.

2. BEFORE YOU WRITE: RESEARCH

Most of your preparation time goes into research, not writing. Work through three layers in this order:

1. **Understand the topic.**
 - a. Read the committee's Study Guide first.
 - b. Note the key documents: treaties, UN resolutions, declarations, international and regional conventions.
2. **Understand your country.** Get a quick picture of its ...
 - a. **Political system:** government structure, political parties, leadership (key figures, head of state, head of government, and other significant leaders)
 - b. **Economic conditions:** economic system, key industries, trade partners, agreements, and policies, significant import/export commodities
 - c. **Religious practice:** major religions, religious freedom
 - d. **History:** historical context, colonial past
 - e. **Cultural background:** cultural norms and values, language
 - f. **Allies and rivals:** alliances and organisations it belongs to.
 - g. **Further information**
 - i. **Population:** size, growth, age structure, urban vs. rural
 - ii. **Geography:** climate, natural resources, impact on economy and policy
 - iii. **Minorities:** main ethnic and religious groups, minority rights
 - iv. **Development:** infrastructure, technology, Human Development Index (HDI)
 - v. **Healthcare:** health system, main health issues, access
 - vi. **Education:** school system, literacy rate, access
 - vii. **Wealth distribution:** income inequality

- viii. **Environment:** environmental policy, sustainability, climate agreements
 - ix. **Press freedom:** media freedom and censorship, e.g. World Press Freedom Index (RSF)
 - x. **Domestic policy:** main political issues at home
 - xi. **Foreign policy:** goals, international organisations, treaties signed or ratified
 - xii. **Allies and rivals:** key partners and opponents, military alliances (e.g. NATO)
3. **Find your country's actual position on the topic**
- a. What has it said, signed, voted for and done at home? If you find little, deduce a likely position from its general foreign policy and its allies. Ask yourself: why would this country care about the topic?
 - b. Identify states with similar perspectives or priorities, so that you can form coalitions and collaborations during the conference.

3. STRUCTURE OF THE PAPER

Every position paper has the same three parts. Write them as continuous paragraphs, without headings in the paper itself.

1. Introduction – the policy statement

Clearly articulate your country's stance on the topic, including significant issues and relevant international frameworks.

- What is the issue, globally?
- Why is it important for the international community?
- What is your country's stance, and why is it interested in the topic?
- Which international frameworks already exist? (What has the international community signed to tackle the issue?)

2. Analysis – what actions have been taken by your country

- **Your country:** What has the country done to address the issue, including national laws, policies and initiatives; agreements it has joined; why it matters for this topic.
- **The international community:** actions taken so far, what they achieved, and where they fall short.
- Optional but strong: a short quote from a relevant official (e.g. the UN Secretary-General or a minister of your country) and examples of national best practice.

3. Proposed Solutions – what your country wants

This is the most important part: it becomes your agenda for the debate.

- Suggest/Recommend future actions/proposals that the committee could take to address the issue/ to solve the issue, reflecting your country's policy priorities and diplomatic goals.
 - Concrete solutions the committee could put into a resolution.
 - Group them into a few main points that need to be discussed to actually solve the issue (e.g. financing, monitoring, capacity building,...)
 - Make them fit your country's priorities and diplomatic goals.

- Explain how each can realistically be implemented.
- Name the UN bodies, regional organisations and NGOs that should be involved.

Useful phrases: “The delegation of X acknowledges the importance of ...”, “X advocates for ...”, “This can be achieved through ...”, “This will contribute to ...”, “X calls upon Member States to ...”.

4. WRITING TIPS AND FORMAT

How to write it

- **Third person only:** “Brazil believes ...”, never “I” or “we”.
- **Stay diplomatic.** Never present your country negatively (“our country is poor”, “we need money”). Frame needs as priorities or partnerships instead.
- **Spell out acronyms the first time:** “the International Maritime Organization (IMO)”, then “IMO”.
- **Cite documents with name and year:** *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea* (1982); General Assembly resolution 70/1 (2015).
- **No footnotes or bibliography.** It is a political statement, not an academic paper.
- **Write it yourself.** Summarise in your own words; copying text from UN documents or other papers is plagiarism.
- Use formal English and fill the page – it shows how well you prepared.
- **Policy vs. solution.** Keep these apart.
- **No AI:** Do not use AI tools to write your position paper or your speeches. MUN is about researching your country yourself, building your own arguments, and finding your own voice as a diplomat. Without that work, you might also struggle to defend your positions and react spontaneously in the debate.

Format

- Length: 1 page
- Font: Arial, 10 pt, justified, standard margins
- Header, bold and centred: **Delegation:** country · **Committee:** name · **Topic:** title
- Your country’s flag or emblem in the header is fine; your school or university name is not
- Submit as a PDF before the deadline

Research Tools – Where to look

Start with official sources, then move to secondary ones.

- **Foreign ministry website** of your country
 - Always your first stop; check the subpages on major topics.
- **Embassy websites**
 - Your country’s embassy, and also the one in the country where the relevant organisation is based.

- **Statements and speeches at the UN**
 - [UN Digital Library \(speeches\)](#) or [UN Documents](#). Look up speeches by your country's representatives on the topic. Then identify the key resolutions in your committee and check whether your Member State supported or opposed them.
 - This tells you your country's stance and how it argues.
- **Review voting records**
 - UN Digital Library or *Member States on the Record*: how did your country vote on recent resolutions in your committee?
 - The voting behaviour reveals patterns and the principles behind your country's decisions.
- **Investigating national laws, parliamentary debates and official statements**
 - Read relevant national laws, legislative debates and official statements on the topic.
 - They show your country's domestic priorities and how these carry over to the international stage.
- **Analyse reports from regional organisations, NGOs, think tanks, and the CIA World Factbook for country basics.**
 - These reports often contain in-depth analyses of your country's positions.
 - They add a broader perspective and show regional or global influences on its policy.
- **Media and academic papers:** useful for context, but not as your main evidence.

Tips for the UN Digital Library

- Open a speech and go to the **meeting record**.
- Search for each person who might have spoken for your country: the president, the ambassador, the Permanent Representative to the UN, or other members of the delegation.
- Your country may have attended only as an **observer** and be missing from the attendance list yet still have spoken. The record then names the speaker.
- You can also search by topic instead of by country.

5. POSITION PAPER AWARDS

A strong position paper shows that you know your topic, your committee and your country, and that you prepared with commitment. That deserves recognition, so we give individual Position Paper Awards in every committee. Your papers also help the chairs and the Secretariat plan the debates.

The number of awards depends on the size of the committee: smaller committees get fewer, larger ones more. All awards are announced at the Closing Ceremony.

Only papers submitted on time are considered. The chairs judge them on:

- correct format, following this guide
- quality of writing and grammar
- depth of analysis and own research
- use of relevant international, regional and national documents
- consistency with international law and your country's real-world position