



Position Paper Guide



National Model United Nations

nmun.org

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Position Paper Overview

What is a Position Paper?

A position paper is what its name suggests: a paper in which a Member State or Observer sets out its position on a set of topics. For National Model United Nations (NMUN), delegates are asked to submit a position paper on the topics that are outlined in their Committee Background Guide. Although position papers are short – only two pages – they are a critical part of preparing for a NMUN conference.

As opposed to a working paper or a resolution, which are written during the conference and reflect the work and thoughts of several Member States and Observers working together, a position paper is written prior to a conference and reflects the position and actions of a single Member State or Observer. For each topic, the position paper should provide a succinct policy statement representing the relevant views of your assigned Member State or Observer. You should establish what the key issues are for each topic and identify and address international and regional conventions, treaties, declarations, resolutions, and other precedents that are relevant to the topic, as well as what your Member State or Observer has done to address the topic thus far. You should also include recommendations for action to be taken by your committee in addressing the topic moving forward.

Your position paper must be comprised of entirely original writing. NMUN will not tolerate plagiarism, which includes copying directly from the Committee Background Guides provided to delegates. Violation of this policy may result in dismissal from the conference. In addition, although documentation issued by the United Nations is considered within the public domain, NMUN does not allow the verbatim reproduction of these documents.

What is the NMUN Position Paper Process?

As you prepare for the conference, you will research the topics that are discussed in your committee's Background Guide. You will use your research to write your position paper discussing each of the topics, and within each topic, you will: describe its context, explain its international and national precedents, and give specific proposals on how to address the topic going forward. Your position paper should incorporate each of these elements while clearly explaining the work of the international community and the positions of your Member State or Observer. All delegations, whether representing a Member State or Observer, will prepare position papers and are equally considered for position paper awards. You should submit only one position paper per committee, covering all topics before your committee – for example, even if you have two delegates on the General Assembly First Committee representing Mexico, you will submit a single position paper for Mexico on the General Assembly First Committee.

All position papers for each Member State or Observer should be submitted by one person, preferably a faculty advisor or head delegate, using the position paper submission process outlined on the webpage for your NMUN conference. The NMUN Secretariat – your committee Directors and Assistant Directors – will read your position papers to learn about your delegation's positions and to select Position Paper Awards. The NMUN Secretariat will determine Position Paper Awards for each committee in accordance with NMUN's Awards Policies and the NMUN Position Paper Guidelines. Delegations receiving Position Paper Awards will be recognized within each committee at the end of the conference.

After the position paper deadline passes, NMUN will post all submitted position papers online so you may read the proposals of your fellow delegates in advance of the conference. This allows you to start learning about the positions of other Member States and Observers in your committee, and you can identify delegations with which you may wish to work at the conference.

Position Paper Guidelines

NMUN has set standards for the format of position papers. Position papers submitted for NMUN should adhere to the following:

- Length must not exceed two pages; any position papers over two pages will have only the first two pages considered.
- Margins: 1 inch or 2.54 cm for the whole paper.
- Font: Arial, 10 pt.
- Justify the text of your paragraphs so both the right and left sides have straight edges.
- Centered on the first line of the first page, type **Delegation from Member State/Observer Name**.
- Centered on the second line of the first page, type ***Position Paper for the [Committee]***.
- Do not include the name of your university or sponsoring organization anywhere in the position paper.

Example header on the first page:

Delegation from Mexico
Position Paper for the Commission on the Status of Women

- Include a short introductory paragraph at the beginning of your position paper that introduces the topics on your committee's agenda and your Member State's or Observer's commitment to addressing these topics. (See the example position papers at the end of this guide for an illustration of the introductory paragraph.)
- For the remainder of the paper, address the topics before your committee in the order in which they appear within your Committee Background Guide. Label each topic, with the name of the topic bolded and centered.

Example topic title:

1. Women's Empowerment and the Link to Sustainable Development

- For each topic, address the global/regional context of the topic (including relevant statistics and information); what the international/regional community and your Member State or Observer have previously done to address the topic; and provide both broad and specific actions that your committee and the international community can take to address the topic going forward (while also acting in line with your Member State's or Observer's positions and policies).
- Avoid the use of national symbols (flags, headers, etc.), which are inappropriate for NMUN position papers.
- Submit your position paper in PDF format. The filename should follow the naming convention of committee name and your assignment (example: GA1_Cuba).
- Unlike in most academic papers, you should not include citations in your position paper. This is because the position paper is written as though it is a policy statement from a foreign ministry. Accordingly, please avoid using footnotes, endnotes, or in-text parenthetical citations in your position paper. Although formal citations are not used, quotation marks should still appear around direct quotes and informal acknowledgement of any sources quoted is expected.

Researching Your Position Paper

Getting to Know Your Committee and Your Topics

Your Committee

All delegates should have a thorough understanding of their respective committee. Delegates need to understand the history; governance, structure, and membership; mandate, functions, and powers; and recent sessions and current priorities of the committee. Excellent resources for learning more about your committee include the Committee Overview section of the Committee Background Guide; your committee's website; other UN resources, including the UN System Chart; and books and scholarly articles. Important past decisions or resolutions of your committee often shed important light on its powers, the types of actions it takes, and the methods by which it acts. In addition, you may consider contacting the headquarters of your committee and requesting specific information on your topics.

In order to accurately and effectively simulate the committee and understand your role within it, a clear understanding of the mandate of the body, or what your committee was established to accomplish and what it realistically can do, is essential. This will also make the work of the committee easier, as the work of the committee will be naturally limited in scope according to the mandate. Delegates must ensure that they have a thorough understanding of the following:

- Foundational documents of the committee (the resolution(s) that established the body, as well as its foundational governing document, such as a charter or treaty);
- Evolution and changes in the mandate over time;
- Other key international documents that underpin the mandate.

Your Committee's Topics

In addition, all delegates should understand all the topics on their respective committee's agenda. Researching the topics before your committee allows you to learn about the key points of each topic; what has been done internationally, nationally, regionally, and locally to address the topics; and what should be done going forward on each topic (which you can understand from reading about proposals that others have suggested in relation to a topic and by forming your own innovative solutions to the issues at hand).

The Committee Background Guide should serve as a starting point for your research. When reading your committee's Background Guide, note the key points for each topic. Asking yourself the following questions can also be beneficial as you read those materials:

- What essential questions are being raised in each topic?
- What important documents are essential to your research?
- What actions have various international bodies taken in the past regarding these issues?
- In your opinion as a diplomat, why are these issues important?
- Why do you believe these issues remain unresolved?
- What actions are currently being taken and/or what committees or entities exist to address these issues?
- What should be done from the perspective of your Member State or Observer to resolve these issues?

Each Background Guide has an annotated bibliography and a bibliography, which list many important resources in relation to your topic that you can use in researching each topic further. In addition, look to research your topics using other reputable sources to understand the key issues within each topic, what has been done to address each topic, and effective proposals that may be beneficial in addressing each topic in the future. Effective resources include the following:

- Your committee's website, to see how your committee has discussed each topic at hand in its own work:
 - What resolutions/reports has it published on the topic?
 - What conferences or events has it held to address the topic?
 - What are recent news items on the committee's website in relation to the topic?
- Websites and other resources from other UN bodies that may have addressed each topic; for example, topics related to population may have been addressed by the Commission on Population and Development and the UN Population Fund (as well as other UN bodies), while topics related to gender equality may have been addressed by UN Women, the Commission on the Status of Women, and the General Assembly Third Committee (as well as other UN bodies);
- The [UN News Centre](#), which publishes information regarding recent UN efforts on different topics, allowing you to search for key words regarding your topic to find relevant articles on recent UN events or publications;
- The UN's [Meetings Coverage and Press Releases](#) website, which provides UN press releases and information regarding UN meetings;
- Research into how other intergovernmental organizations, regional or local organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have addressed the topic and what they propose as effective strategies to approach the topic going forward;
- Books, reports, and scholarly articles on the topic from reputable sources (often professors, scientists, NGOs, or think tanks); librarians can provide invaluable assistance with your research;
- Research into how your topic may be addressed on the international, regional, and local levels of the international community.

Researching a topic is a complex process that calls for determining what various bodies within and related to the UN system have done previously to address the matter, what is currently in place, and what is planned for the future. It is also important to examine successes and failures, and to attempt to determine why those approaches have succeeded or failed and what we can learn from such situations.

Many topics on the UN agenda are extremely vast and complex, and there are several topics that can be discussed in more than one organ within the UN system. Therefore, it is important to understand how the topics on your committee's agenda are discussed specifically in your committee. Look to the mandate of your committee, which will give you an idea of the tone and type of work done within it. This will help you effectively determine approaches in your position paper and in your work in committee that realistically match what your committee can do in relation to each topic.

Getting to Know Your Member State's or Observer's Positions

In addition to researching what your committee can do and has done regarding your topics generally, you will also want to research the Member State or Observer that you are representing, as well as the specific positions of your Member State or Observer on the topics that your committee is addressing.

Researching Your Member State or Observer Generally

If you have been assigned a Member State or an Observer State, you may wish to begin by researching its political structure, economic conditions, religion(s), history, and culture. Since all of these factors shape a state's foreign policy, familiarity with these areas will assist you in forming a consistent foreign policy. The following are additional categories to research as you become familiar with your Member State:

- Population and demographics;
- Geography;
- Ethnic and religious minorities;
- Development;
- Healthcare;
- Educational access;
- Division of wealth and poverty;
- Environmental policies;
- Freedom of the press;
- Key domestic policies;
- Key foreign policies;
- Your state's allies and Member States it may not regularly work with (for various reasons).

If you are representing an NGO, researching an NGO is very similar to researching a state. If you have been assigned an NGO, you may wish to begin by researching its history, mission, structure, funding, values, purposes, and goals. Since all of these factors shape the way an NGO will interact with states, familiarity with these areas will assist you in forming a consistent approach to the issues at hand and a consistent style of interaction.

Researching Your Member State's or Observer's Positions on Your Topics

The majority of your preparation time for the conference will be spent researching your committee's topics and your country's position on those topics. Once your delegation is assigned a country, your faculty advisor or head delegate will decide which students (no more than two per committee) will be on each of the assigned committees. Carefully consult the committee matrix so you do not prepare for a committee of which your assigned country is not a member.

In your research, look for resources that share what your Member State or Observer has already done in relation to the topic, what it proposes to be done on the topic, and/or its national policies on issues related to the topic. If there is not a lot of information available, you may need to infer how your Member State or Observer would approach a given topic based on what you have learned about your Member State generally. The following are helpful strategies in researching your Member State's or Observer's positions:

- Search for speeches made by representatives of your Member State or Observer on the topic and important resolutions discussed and adopted in your committee that were supported or not supported by your Member State or Observer;
- Check voting records via [UN Digital Library](#) or [Member States on the Record](#) (a valuable resource managed by the UN) to see whether your Member State supported the latest resolutions on a specific item;
- Research national laws and discussions on each topic within your Member State or Observer;

- Look at reports published by regional organizations, NGOs, and think tanks about your Member State or Observer in relation to the issues at hand.

Part of the benefit of Model UN is learning and advocating the interests of a Member State or Observer assigned to you, even if you do not necessarily agree with its positions. This is the reality of the work of professional diplomats, who advocate what is in the best interests of their government. It is what makes Model UN different from a simulation of a congress or parliament where the individuals are members, rather than Member States. This approach will form the basis of the position paper all delegates must write, which outlines your Member State's or Observer's policies toward the agenda topics. Preparing for committee session at NMUN also includes identifying blocs of states that may share the same perspectives or priorities and may collaborate with you in committee sessions (this is also an important task for NGOs). For these reasons and others, it is important to thoroughly research your delegation's positions on your committee's topics.

Writing Your Position Paper

Structuring Your Position Paper

When writing your position paper, you can use your position paper structure to effectively share your ideas. Importantly, the structure of your position paper can make it easier for your reader to understand your Member State's positions on your committee's topics. Each position paper should begin with a brief introduction, and the position paper will then be split into topical sections, one for each topic on your committee's agenda. The following provides information about structuring your position paper.

Introduction

Within the **introduction** of your position paper, you will provide a very simple overall introduction to the topics that your committee is discussing and your Member State's or Observer's interest in discussing those topics at the upcoming conference. This introduction needs to be only 2-3 sentences long. In this introduction, tell us 1) the topics that your committee is discussing and 2) your Member State's or Observer's feelings on discussing these topics and participating in the committee's work at the conference.

Example:

The following topics are before the General Assembly Second Committee: Promoting Access to Renewable and Sustainable Energy for Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development; Financing for Development; and World Commodity Trends and Prospects. Lao People's Democratic Republic believes that these topics have significance within the international community and looks forward to discussing them at the upcoming meeting of the Second Committee.

Topics

Following your position paper's introduction, the remainder of your position paper will discuss the **topics on your committee's agenda in the order that they are presented in your committee's Background Guide**. At the beginning of each topic, you will list the full title of the topic as found in the Background Guide, bolded and centered. Following this, you will address the topic, looking to give context on the topic (why it is important to discuss), what the international community and your specific Member State or Observer have done to address the topic, and what your Member State or Observer proposes to do in addressing the topic going forward.

As you write your position paper, **consider using multiple paragraphs within each topic**. This allows you to provide information in an easy-to-read, well-organized format. For example, you could have three paragraphs for each topic: the first paragraph for each topic establishing the context and importance of the topic, the second paragraph for each topic discussing what the international community and your Member State or Observer have done on your topic, and the third paragraph for each topic giving specific recommendations in addressing the topic going forward. When using multiple paragraphs within a topic, there is no need to indent the beginning of each paragraph. Leave a blank line between paragraphs.

Establish the Importance of the Topic (Give the Topic's Context)

At the beginning of each topic, you can briefly set the stage for that topic and tell us what the current global situation is in relation to your topic. What is the "problem" in relation to the topic that needs to be addressed? What is the current state of this topic globally, regionally, and/or locally? Consider providing statistics on the topic, listing some of the real issues that global citizens face in relation to the topic, and telling the reader why it is important to address it. This will help your reader understand why the topic is significant and will provide good context for the rest of your discussion on it.

Example:

Within the global population, a majority of the 1 billion individuals living in extreme poverty are women. Women often have unequal access to employment – in 2013, 72% of men were employed, compared to 47.1% of women – and women are paid 60% to 75% of what men are paid, although women in developing countries often work longer hours and in more vulnerable jobs than men. In addition, women are more likely to engage in informal and unpaid care positions. Conversely, the further involvement of women in the labor force not only improves the economic situations of women, but also the individual economies of Member States and the global economy as a whole. Accordingly, while much has been done to increase the participation of women in the labor force in recent years, it is important to continue to address equal and equitable access to employment for women to promote economic development and further improve the status of women worldwide.

Tell Us about the International and National Precedents

Once you've established the importance of each topic, then tell us about the international and national precedents in relation to each topic. In Model UN, "precedents" constitute what has been done before to discuss a topic. How has the international community addressed this topic thus far? What are key international documents, conferences, conventions, resolutions, treaties, etc. that the UN, regional organizations, and/or your committee have created on the topic, and what are key efforts previously undertaken to address this topic internationally? In addition, what has your Member State or Observer done to address this topic? You can provide specific examples of programs, documents, laws, civil society and NGO work, and other efforts that your specific Member State or Observer has made in relation to this issue.

Example:

As noted by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) during its recent session, Member States and the United Nations (UN) have looked to improve gender equality and address poverty in recent years, including during the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, the UN Millennium Summit in New York in 2000, and the post-2015 development agenda planning process that culminated in the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015. Furthermore, at its recent 60th session in 2016, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) discussed the topic of "Women's empowerment and its link to sustainable development;" Mexico participated in these discussions. Nationally, in 2002, Mexico hosted the UN International Conference on Financing for Development and continues to affirm its support of the financial strategies within the *Monterrey Consensus*. Mexico has implemented many social and governmental programs to address gender equality and poverty reduction. One example of Mexico's successful financial strategies for empowering women citizens, microcredit loans, was first discussed at the International Women's Congress held in Mexico City in 1975; within the last decade, the government has supplied 1.3 million microcredit loans, allowing Mexico to address SDG 1 on eradicating poverty.

Propose Solutions and Recommendations

While each aspect of your position paper is important, proposing solutions to the topic is perhaps the most significant, as it allows you to show that your delegation has researched the topics and can offer thoughtful and creative solutions to address the topic going forward. Prior to the conference, this will also allow your fellow delegates, as well as your Committee Director and Assistant Director, to preview some of the ideas that you have for talking about the topic and what you may be interested in accomplishing during the conference.

In this section of your topic, the solutions that you propose can be both general and specific. Some solutions may be more general to encourage overall directions where additional action can occur in line with your Member State's or Observer's positions and/or to point out larger areas that need to be further

addressed. In many solutions, however, look to provide specific details by describing the who, what, where, when, and why to make it something that could feasibly be put into action. You can look at what has been successful in your own Member State or region, or in another Member State or region, and use those ideas to spark thoughts on solutions to propose going forward. You don't have to give us every single detail at this point – you will flesh things out more fully in writing your working papers with fellow delegations at the conference! However, look to give specific details that help your Committee Staff and fellow delegates understand your ideas, what you would like to happen, and how your creative ideas will solve potential issues and address the topic going forward.

As you propose solutions, focus on solutions within the committee's mandate which are also realistic for the committee to carry out in the near future. The mandate specifies what your committee has the power to do and not do, whom it can tell what to do and whom it cannot, what it can discuss, and in what ways it can work. For example, a subsidiary body of ECOSOC could not tell ECOSOC to form a new committee, but it would be able to suggest that ECOSOC consider action; similarly, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean could not tell the Security Council to write a report on the topic of peace and security in the Middle East and North Africa, but it would instead work within its own mandate to discuss topics related to economic development in Latin America and the Caribbean. You can find your committee's mandate in its founding documents and/or on its website. As you propose solutions, also check to make sure they are in line with your Member State's or Observer's policies (as much as you are able to determine).

When proposing solutions, also consider where there are existing entities that you can work with rather than creating a new committee or organization for each recommendation – whenever creating something new, you have to consider how it will be created, who will oversee it, how it will be financed, etc. Through research, you can often find an existing committee or organization that you can propose to work with for your new campaign, fund, and so on, rather than creating a new entity.

Example:

The United Kingdom believes that crisis prevention and recovery situations must include gender equality and the participation of women to be fully effective in addressing conflict. The United Kingdom urges Member States to continue aid during times of conflict and to specifically provide aid that will directly help by financing gender equality in areas of conflict. Member States should work together with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to explicitly address the conditions of women in conflict; this should be done at the regional, national, and local levels. Member States who have committed to providing international development assistance, such as Official Development Assistance (ODA), should remain committed to providing aid, and Member States should support the efforts of UN entities such as UN Women in order to assure that the assistance given appropriately addresses empowerment and gender equality. In addition, the United Kingdom supports the creation of an UN Programme on Financing for Gender Equality During Times of Conflict. This program will focus on financing opportunities for women in order to increase empowerment and will be facilitated through existing UN Women efforts. Women's participation in the settling of national and international conflict directly decreases the occurrences and effects of conflict, and the United Kingdom believes that gender-specific financing that explicitly offers aid for the empowerment of women will advance gender equality and ultimately increase Member States' abilities to address conflict.

Effective Strategies and Helpful Tips for Writing Your Position Paper

The following are additional strategies and tips that you can employ as you write your position paper:

- Use topic sentences at the beginning of each paragraph to provide information to your reader about what you will be discussing within that paragraph and to transition from paragraph to paragraph. A topic sentence summarizes the key idea or ideas that will be discussed within that paragraph. At the end of each paragraph, also look to provide conclusion sentences; it is particularly effective to include a conclusion sentence at the end of each topic to summarize the

position of your Member State or Observer on the topic and to emphasize the continuing need for the international community to address the topic.

- Whenever using an acronym, give its full name in your first mention, and then immediately afterwards include the acronym in parentheses. For all subsequent references, simply use the acronym. For example, the first mention of the Economic and Social Council in your position paper would be “the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)”, and then your subsequent references throughout your position paper would simply be “ECOSOC”.
- Look to use the third person, instead of the first person, throughout your position paper. For example, rather than saying, “We believe that it is important to address this topic,” say, “Germany believes that it is important to address this topic.”
- When citing UN resolutions in your position paper, list the UN entity that produced the resolution, the resolution number, and the year that it is from, rather than simply providing the document code. For example, cite A/RES/70/1 as “General Assembly resolution 70/1 (2015)” or E/RES/2008/8 as “Economic and Social Council resolution 2008/8.”
- If a UN document code doesn’t include “RES” (A/RES/70/1) it may be a report (E/2015/7). Check the document’s front page to see what type it is. Cite reports as “ECOSOC report 2015/7,” etc.
- In general, use the term “Member States” (with each word capitalized) rather than “countries” or “nations,” since in most cases you’ll specifically be referring to countries who are UN Member States. (Exceptions include terms like “developing countries” and “least developed countries.”)
- When mentioning important international or regional precedents, such as major conventions, declarations, and treaties, please italicize the titles of these documents and provide the year of adoption – *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (1979). Titles of reports should also be italicized – *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015*. When mentioning the names of UN organizations, you do not need to use italics or quotation marks – the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the World Health Organization (WHO).
- If you are interested in citing a short quote as a part of your position paper, please be sure to include the quote in quotation marks and provide contextual information on the quote within the larger sentence where you give the quote. For example: “United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated at the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ‘The new agenda is a promise by leaders to all people everywhere.’” Use quotes sparingly - tell the reader your Member State’s or Observer’s positions in your own words.
- Aside from any short quotes, ensure that your position paper is completely in your own words. When summarizing an idea from another source, think about what the main points are in that source and then express those main points using your own words. Once you have summarized something, read over it again and compare it to the original source to make sure that you do not use any of the same main words or phrases as the original source. All wording within your position paper that is the same as the original source should be in quotation marks.
- In your research, you can search for examples of successful programs that have been conducted in your Member State or around the world, and in your proposals and recommendations, you can suggest a new program or campaign based upon the previously successful programs. For example, you may find a program that your Member State or another Member State enacted that was successful in addressing the topic and could serve as a model for a new effort in addressing the topic in another Member State, regionally, or internationally.
- Look to fill all or most of the two pages you have for your position paper (while being careful to not go over two pages). If your position paper is only one-and-a-half pages, that means that you have an unused half-page in which you could further share what your Member State has done on the topic and what it wants to do in the future! Using all or most of the space allowed for your position paper gives you the opportunity to fully represent the views of your Member State and address the topics in detail.

Position Paper Awards

Position papers are a critical part of delegate preparation. They require delegates to illustrate their knowledge of the agenda topics at hand, affirm the positions their country takes on these topics, and recommend courses of action to effectively address contemporary global problems. For Conference Staff, position papers provide an effective indication of which issues capture delegates' interest, and they help Directors and Assistant Directors design a strategy for the facilitation of committee debate. In addition, position papers often identify which delegates are best prepared for the conference and are most likely to take a strong leadership role in committee sessions.

NMUN grants separate Position Paper Awards in recognition of outstanding pre-conference preparation. While NMUN emphasizes the educational significance of delegate participation, the organization also looks to recognize delegates who have put exceptional work into their preparation for the conference, as seen through the position papers. To be considered for a Position Paper Award, delegations must have met the submission deadline. Position Paper Awards are announced during the last committee session of the conference.

The following criteria are used by the conference staff to evaluate position papers:

- Overall quality of writing, proper formatting, grammar, etc.;
- Citation of relevant international, regional, and national resolutions / documents;
- General consistency with bloc / geopolitical positions and constraints;
- Consistency with the constraints of the UN;
- Analysis of issues and the use of original research, rather than reiteration of the Committee Background Guide.

Submitting Position Papers and Example

Once all position papers are complete for your delegation, one person, preferably the faculty advisor or head delegate, should submit all papers from your delegation. Submit one form per Member State or Observer assignment; accordingly, if your school is representing two different countries, you will submit two forms, one for each country. Position papers must be submitted using the submission form; they will not be accepted via email.

- Submission deadlines are posted on each conference's Position Paper page ([NY](#), [DC](#), [other](#)). To be considered for awards, they must be received no later than 11:59 pm (Eastern Time) on the date posted. If any of your delegates have not finished their papers by the deadline, submit all that are ready. Papers received after the deadline will continue to be posted online - as time permits.
- Position papers must be submitted in PDF format. The filename should follow the naming convention of committee name and your assignment (example: GA1_Cuba).
- A position paper should be submitted for each assigned committee; do not submit papers for committees not assigned to your Member State or Observer. If you have two delegates representing a country within a committee (for example, if there are two delegates representing Norway in CSW), you will submit one position paper jointly representing the position of your country assignment, rather than submitting separate position papers from each individual delegate.
- If you are arranging a Mission Briefing, we encourage you to submit a copy of your position papers to the permanent mission of your assigned country or to your NGO's headquarters, along with an explanation of the conference.
- If you have any questions regarding position papers or the submission process, please email your conference's Deputy Secretary-General (DSG). Their email address is available on the Position Paper page ([NY](#), [DC](#), [other](#)).

Position Paper Example

On the following pages there's a properly formatted position paper example that illustrates the Position Paper Guidelines and addresses the importance of each topic (establishing its context); the international and national precedents for each topic; and proposals and recommendations to address the topic going forward.

Delegation from the Republic of Poland
Position Paper for the Human Rights Council

The topics before the Human Rights Council (HRC) are Access to Safe Drinking Water as a Fundamental Human Right and Preventing Discrimination and Violence Against Persons with Disabilities. The Republic of Poland recognizes the need for strong international cooperation to monitor and implement access to vital human rights, and it looks forward to discussing these topics at the upcoming conference.

1. Access to Safe Drinking Water as a Fundamental Human Right

According to the United Nations (UN) World Health Organization (WHO), over 1 billion people throughout the world lack access to clean drinking water. WHO and the UN Children's Fund's (UNICEF) Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) for Water Supply and Sanitation has stated that the water that 1.8 billion people drink exhibits fecal contamination. The deprivation of the fundamental right to safe drinking water particularly afflicts the most marginalized members of global society, including women, displaced persons, persons with disabilities, the impoverished, and children. Those without access to safe drinking water often also suffer from economic and social disadvantages, including medical conditions, lack of access to education, and lack of employment. The Republic of Poland is dedicated to aiding Member States and to improving infrastructure for the promotion and protection of the right to safe drinking water.

Access to safe drinking water as a basic human right has been discussed extensively on the international level. While the foundational *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) of 1948 does not explicitly discuss water, it established "the right to life, liberty and security of persons" and the right to "a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being" of individuals. In 1977, the *Mar del Plata Action Plan* from the UN Water Conference held in Argentina first recognized water as a human right. In 2010, the UN General Assembly (GA) acknowledged the human right to water in resolution 64/292, which also discussed the connection between access to safe drinking water and the achievement of all other human rights. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation. Poland supports HRC resolution 15/9, which stressed the importance of Member State support of human rights programs pertaining to access to safe drinking water. Poland also applauds the adoption of HRC resolution 18/1, which called for transparency, diligent analysis, and prioritized action for populations most in need. Poland upholds the continued work of the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, as well as the UN Inter-Agency Mechanism on all Freshwater Related Issues, Including Sanitation (UN-Water). Regionally, the European Union (EU) has emphasized that effective water management is important for all EU countries. Nationally, Poland is proud of the work within its own borders and throughout the world by its government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Poland is a country considered to have less available in-country water resources than many other European countries; however, 99% of urban citizens and nearly 97% of rural citizens have access to an improved drinking water source. In Poland, a minister has been appointed to consider issues related to water management, and in June 2015, Poland hosted a National Water Forum to discuss access to water in Poland, which encouraged the sharing of ideas through public consultations towards updated Water Management Plans. At the UN Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015, Andrzej Duda, the President of Poland, emphasized the continued need of the international community to address access to water.

Poland stresses the need for Member States to lead and coordinate efforts to help developing countries. As such, Poland recommends the international implementation of measures proposed by the Special Rapporteur. These proposals would require legislative and social changes within individual Member States and should contain legal consequences for discriminatory practices in water distribution and access in regards to a person's ethnicity, nationality, gender, or social status. Other considerations should include support such as food aid, medical assistance, and access to water sources. Furthermore, additional changes should include increased support by NGOs, national governments, and the international community for community infrastructures such as plumbing fixtures and water connections. It is important that voluntary financial support is made available to assist Member States in improving drinking water infrastructure in order to ensure that all have access to it. As such practices are implemented, more communities will obtain a higher standard of living through access to safe drinking water, and the human rights of global citizens can be more fully realized.

2. Preventing Discrimination and Violence against Persons with Disabilities

Approximately 1 billion people have a disability, and 80% of persons with disabilities are from developing countries. Despite the UN's efforts for more than 60 years to improve the lives of persons with disabilities, many still face violence, discrimination, social exclusion, increased poverty, and a myriad of other human rights concerns. One in five women has a disability, and women can experience discrimination due to both their gender and their disability and are often more affected by gender-based violence (GBV) and conflict situations. Adults and children with disabilities are significantly more likely to experience violence. Poland is deeply concerned and hopes that all efforts can be taken to prevent discrimination and violence against persons with disabilities.

There are many important international documents related to the topic of preventing discrimination and violence against persons with disabilities, including the 1975 *Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons*, the 1979 *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW), the 1989 *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, and the 2006 *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD). Since 1992, the UN has celebrated the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December of each year. In addition, the SDGs explicitly mention disability 11 times, including in SDGs 4, 8, 10, 11, and 17; Poland agrees with the statement of the Secretariat for the CRPD, UN Enable, that the SDGs hold "a deep promise for persons with disabilities." The HRC has engaged in important efforts to address specific issues related to discrimination against persons with disabilities, including HRC resolution 19/11, which discusses the utilization of aid in ensuring that persons with disabilities are directly benefited, and HRC resolution 19/36, which reaffirms the right of persons with disabilities to participate in political processes. Poland has actively supported individuals with disabilities. Within Poland, a Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled Persons was appointed to supervise the Vocational and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons program. In 1997, Poland adopted a *Charter of Rights for Persons with Disabilities*. Poland continues to ensure that national legislation drafted since CRPD is in direct accordance with the framework established, including through the protection and promotion of the human rights of persons with disabilities. Poland has also established an Expert Committee on People with Disabilities, which monitors and promotes the exercise of rights of persons with disabilities.

To combat discrimination and violence against persons with disabilities, the Republic of Poland proposes change on local, national, and international levels. Poland recommends the formulation of international policies that will further promote the human rights of persons with disabilities. Through international standards, the global community can better protect the rights of these persons without distinction regarding state of origin or economic status. Poland recommends that educational institutions provide access to learning tools that will enhance the experience of children with disabilities in school and more fully enable children with disabilities to attend school. This will help prevent victimization and discrimination through improved opportunities to gain academic and vocational skills. Furthermore, Poland urges each Member State to adopt a national strategy or action plan that will secure the rights of people with disabilities. Such action plans could include a focus on promoting independent living, supporting families with children who have disabilities, and making support available for persons with disabilities so they can actively participate in the work of their communities. Member States should also include disability in policies and funding and ensure that persons with disabilities, including women, can engage in decision-making on local, national, and regional levels. Through established national visions and objectives, Member States can guide general attitudes towards non-violence and equality. It is important that Member States work together with civil society, such as with NGOs, in addressing the needs of persons with disabilities. Finally, Poland emphasizes that Member States and the international community must actively include persons with disabilities within efforts to meet the SDGs so that the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* is realized for all members of the global community. The Republic of Poland recognizes the important opportunity to empower persons with disabilities through international efforts, and it believes that increased efforts will further prevent discrimination and violence against persons with disabilities worldwide.