

# RiMUN2011

## Lesson IV

Writing a resolution



**RADBOUD INTERNATIONAL  
MODEL UNITED NATIONS  
CONFERENCE**



United  
Netherlands

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Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen





## LESSON IV: WRITING A RESOLUTION

Lesson four in our RiMUN delegate series will focus on resolution writing. This lesson has three aims:

- Understand the fundamentals of resolutions;
- Learn how to write an effective resolution;
- Learn how to make an effective speech on a resolution.

### Resolutions – The Fundamentals

#### 1. Essence

Purpose: Vehicles for Action: as in the real United Nations, the main vehicle of action is the resolution, a formal document in which a committee spells out the action to be taken in order to solve a particular problem.

Essential Criteria: each draft resolution should deal specifically with the topic area currently under discussion by the committee. The following criteria must be met before a draft resolution can be introduced to the committee:

- *Substance:* it must completely address the points set out in the ‘Questions a Resolution Must Answer’ section of the study guide as well as any other points that have been raised in the course of debate.
- *Format:* it must be well-written, concise, comprehensive, and free of grammatical and typographical errors. It must be typed (for photocopying purposes).
- *Signatories:* it must have the minimum number of signatories as stipulated in the Rules of Procedure. Note there are no sponsors to resolutions.
- *Approval:* it must receive the approval and signature of the Chair.
- *Original:* it must be completely original work done at the conference; no prewritten draft resolutions will be allowed, and plagiarism will not be tolerated. (You may bring your own version of a draft resolution but it may not be introduced until all of the substantial points have been discussed already.

A Word on Chair’s Approval: because *the committee can pass only one resolution on each topic*, delegates should expect to be asked to revise draft resolutions several times before they meet the Chair’s standards. While the Chair will not advocate a particular solution, it is his or her responsibility to ensure that the committee has fulfilled its responsibilities and adequately addressed the entire topic before it can be introduced as a draft resolution.

Chairs are trained to be quite discriminating in accepting draft resolutions, and delegates should not be surprised or offended if the committee staff send a proposal for a draft resolution back to the committee for revision before approving it. Therefore:

- Do not be surprised when your submitted resolution does not get approved First time round;
- Be extremely polite and cooperative with the Chair;
- Ensure you understand exactly what the Chair says you need to change;
- Be as timely and efficient as possible in making changes.

#### 2. Format

Overview: the most effective way to explain the format of a resolution is by illustration. The following represents an explanation followed by an illustration of the standard resolution format to be used.

Overall Format Preference: although not specified it is recommend to use Normal, Times New Roman, Size 12.

## **Heading:**

*Title:* the title should be in capital letters, above the main body of the resolution. The title consists of a letter (signifying the topic area being discussed) and a number (identifying the individual resolution). The committee Chair will assign the number once the resolution has been approved.

*Below Title:* on the left margin and two lines below the title should be:

- The Draft Resolution Number
- The Committee Name
- The Topic (addressed by the resolution)
- The Signatories (which will be blacked out before the resolution is copied because they are displayed as anonymous)

*Illustration:*

Draft Resolution 1.1

Committee: The General Assembly  
Topic: Disciplining RiMUN Delegates  
Signatories:

## **Body:**

*Overview:* the resolution is written in the format of a long sentence. Just as grammatical rules make a language more uniform in its usage, so is the resolution in its format.

*Beginning:* the resolution begins with “The General Assembly,” for all GA committees, and with “The Economic and Social Council,” for all ECOSOC committees. The Regional Bodies and the Security Council use their own names as the introductory line.

*Preambulatory Clauses:* these background ‘setting the scene’ clauses, each begin with a perambulatory phrase (see Appendix 1) an underlined word and ends with a comma.

*Operative Clauses:* these action clauses are numbered. These clauses all begin with present tense active verbs (see Appendix 1), which are generally stronger words than those used in the Preamble. Each clause in the operative begins with an underlined word. Each operative clause is followed by a semicolon except the last, which ends with a full stop. Any sub-operative clauses (or sub-sub-clauses, etc.) also should end with a semicolon.

*Illustration:*

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolutions 1001 (2004) of 19 April 2004, 1002 (2005) of 18 April 2005, and 1003 (2006) of 18 April 2006, which contribute to a comprehensive framework for ensuring that all delegates are disciplined appropriately for handing in working papers late, being late for committee sessions, not knowing what ‘affirmative action’ means, and leaving rooms without cleaning up their rubbish,

1. Strongly condemns any delegate who does impersonations of the Chairs, or who uses any other form of humiliation to belittle, taunt, or ridicule the Policy Advisor;
2. Encourages all participants to treat the Chairs and Policy Advisor with the utmost respect at all times.

## **3. Substance**

*Overview:* the following offers advice of how to structure and write an effective resolution. It is only guidance and should not therefore be considered the only way to write a good

resolution – given that resolutions cover a wide range of topic areas, there can never be a one-size fits all guide.

Preamble:

Purposes:

- *Set the Scene:* describe the problem being addressed, its significance and impact;
- *Past Action and Present Committees/Initiatives:* preamble clauses may contain:
  - o References to the UN Charter;
  - o Citations of past UN resolutions or treaties on the topic;
  - o Mentions of statements made by the Secretary-General or a relevant UN body or agency;
  - o Recognition of past action taken by regional or NGOs;
  - o Recognition of any committees/initiatives which are currently in force (especially if these will be used in the operative clauses);
- *Set the Purpose:* explain the purpose of the resolution;
- *Support Operative Clauses:* offer support for the operative clauses that follow; where possible, the preamble could mirror the operative clauses.

Tips:

- *Time Management:* since the focus of the committee will be on the operative clauses, do not worry too much about preamble. Your time should be heavily weighted in favour of thinking about operative clauses.
- *Format:* your primary aim should be to ensure that the format of the preamble is perfect; it would be disheartening to have a resolution rejected by the Chair for grammatical and/or formatting issues in the preamble.
- *Substance:* as far as substance is concerned, do ensure that any committees you will use in the operatives are mentioned (including how and when they were set up) and where possible set the scene in such a way that is biased towards your particular solutions.
- *Length:* no more than one page.

Operative Clauses:

Purpose:

*Action-Plans:* identify actions and recommendations the body will undertake to address the issue.

Tips:

- *Research:* the following is a guide to structure your research:
  - o **Past Actions:** research all past actions taken by your committee in the UN, by the UN generally, and by outside organizations with regard to the topic at hand. It is vital that you do not duplicate the work already done.
  - o **Present Committees:** research any committees or initiatives presently in force; these can be used or amended in the operative clauses to suit your needs.
  - o **‘Questions a Resolution Must Answer’:** at a minimum the resolution should address in some form all the issues listed in the ‘Questions a Resolution Must Answer’ section of the Study Guide. Therefore, use the issues as a framework to structure your substantive research
- *Structure:* structure is the fundamental weapon in your MUN armoury. It is what will set you apart from the crowd both in speeches and resolutions. As regards resolutions, consider yourself a salesman who needs to pitch the resolution to other delegates – the most effective way to do so is to have an effective structure, and sometimes a catchy slogan:
  - o **General:** the resolution should have an overarching structure. Rather than simply writing a bunch of isolated clauses, ensure that clauses flow logically

on from one another. One tactic is to emphasize the need for an ‘integrated approach’:

*Example (Terrorism/Non-State Paramilitary Groups)*

1. Emphasises the need for an integrated approach to combating terrorism and non-state paramilitary groups, to consist of three phases:

- a. Tackling the motivation behind terrorist and non-state paramilitary attacks, including resource-conflict, political alienation, and ideological violence;
- b. Addressing the means by which terrorist and non-state paramilitary groups are sustained, including but not limited to funding, arms, and organised crime;
- c. Addressing the issue of ultimate law enforcement at both the international and regional level;

- **Specific Clauses:** each specific clause should have a clear purpose; a good resolution should represent a technical solution to the issue. In this regard, the resolution should present specific, concrete proposals to deal with the issue at hand.

- *Substance:*

- **The X Factor – Creativity:** ultimately, good resolutions come down to creativity. There is ultimately only so much advice in abstract that can be given on how to write an effective resolution since a large part of its success will be the result of whether you have creatively come up with effective solutions –research is the key to success.
- **Avoid Being Too Extreme:** when drafting a resolution, keep in mind that a realistic world view is essential to a solution that can be effectively implemented in the global arena:
  - **Workable Solutions:** the resolution should be the product of a workable compromise among the nations party to a dispute (in an antagonistic political situation) or among the competing viewpoints on how an issue should be resolved (in a cooperative problem-solving situation). This means all involved parties should agree.
  - **Relative Power:** the compromise reached must take into account the relative power of the parties to the dispute. Any resolution dealing the situation in Israel/Palestine, for example, is meaningless if it does not meet with the approval of both Israel and the Arab community.
- **Committees/Initiatives:**
  - **New Committees/Initiatives:** it can be useful to set up a new initiative
  - to solve a particular aspect of the problem. In this regard, you should take into account the following points:
    - **Beware Existing Initiatives:** ensure that no existing initiative exists that carries out the same functions as yours – someone in committee will probably pick this up and use it against you, either in negotiation or debate.
    - **Composition of Initiative:** always specify who will be involved, when (if relevant) it will meet, and what it will discuss/do.
    - **Types of Initiative:** initiatives or committees can be created for variety of functions including (but not limited to) discussion forums, publicity awareness campaigns, monitoring bodies, regulatory bodies, or general implementation bodies.
    - **Structure:** ensure that the clause is written in a structured manner, making use of sub-operative clauses for clarity; be as concise as possible – an overly-long clause will be confusing and ineffective.

- Name: give the initiative a catchy name if possible – it will make it easier to sell to the committee and refer to during debate.

*Example (HIV/AIDS)*

1. Requests the formation of a new body called the UNFART (United Nations Federation on AIDS Regulations and Testing) to regulate the testing of new AIDS/HIV vaccines in all member states by:
  - a. Laying out strict ethical criteria to which companies must conform, which explain that patients who are being used for the testing of new HIV/AIDS vaccines must be fully told the risks, dangers and consequences of the tests;
  - b. Laying out strict medical criteria to which companies must conform, which explain that relevant medical facilities must be available in the area where the HIV/AIDS trials are being carried out and that at least 2 professional doctors are present to decide whether it is safe to test the vaccine on a human;
- Improve existing Committees/Initiatives: it can be useful to improve, reorganize or add functions to existing committees to solve a particular aspect of the problem. In this regard, you should take into account the following points:
  - Beware Overburdening: ensure that you do not give the committee too much to deal with – someone in the committee could attack your proposal for being impractical.
  - Types of Initiative: your proposal could have a number of purposes including (but not limited to) reorganizing the committee to make it more focused on particular areas or adding functions to the existing mandate.
  - Same Points As Above: all the above points are also relevant to the use of existing committees.

*Example (HIV/AIDS)*

1. Calls for the reorganisation of UNAIDS by dividing it into various specialised groups determined by factors such as age, gender, and specific cases (e.g. drug users), which would:
  - a. Set about conducting specific publicity campaigns aimed at each of the aforementioned target groups in all countries world-wide to educate and inform the people of the dangers, causes and preventative measures for HIV/AIDS via all forms of technology available including mass media;
  - b. Set up mobile advice and testing clinics which would be able to move around countries offering psychiatric and practical advice on HIV/AIDS as well as provide free and confidential HIV/AIDS tests;
  - c. Provide information on alternative future decisions regarding the results of the tests, have on-hand doctors to help people with the disease, provide children who have been orphaned as a result of HIV/AIDS and families of sufferers with counselling in all member states primarily in developing countries where HIV/AIDS is most prevalent;
  - d. Set up HIV/AIDS preventative measure clinics which would be able to provide syringe exchange programmes, safe syringe disposal, drug rehabilitation programmes and family planning programmes to educate the public on any forms of protection from catching HIV/AIDS available to

them in that particular member state and on the risks, dangers, causes and consequences of HIV/AIDS;

- **Bells and Whistles:** the following final touches should also be taken into account:

- National/Regional Policies: your country may have a national policy or be part of a regional policy on which an international policy could be based - if so mention it as it will show where the resolution came from (i.e. your country):

*Example (Terrorism/Non-State Paramilitary Groups):* the following clause was in a joint resolution, largely co-written by delegates from South Africa and China:

1. Further Emphasizes the importance of regional bodies to conduct the following activities similar to the Shanghai Coalition Organization (SCO):
  - a. Strengthen conflict prevention capacities by:
    - i. identifying, monitoring and regularly assessing developments in regions of risk;
    - ii. fostering trust between Member States in conflict;
    - iii. developing “quick-win” conflict reconciliation strategies;
  - b. Aiding in the mediation between states and paramilitary organizations, within their border through the following means:
    - i. Working as a third party in negotiations with non-state actors;
    - ii. Inviting special representatives of the secretary general and other special envoys to take part in the negotiations;
    - iii. Encouraging the appointment of the Special Representatives of the Secretary General (SRSG) to take a greater role in overseeing conflicts resolution involving paramilitary groups;
  - c. Encouraging the promotion of policy measures to foster good governance and the protection of human rights in order to strengthen weakened or collapsed governance mechanisms by, for example, aiding the funding, formation and education to participate in elections;
- Regional/National Focus-Areas: whilst answering the ‘Questions a Resolution Must Answer’ section to the study guide, remember to keep in mind your country position. It is important to have clauses that tackle the problem, at least to some extent, from the perspective of your country:

*Example (Terrorism/Non-State Paramilitary Groups):* the South African delegation believed that there was a direct link between poverty and terrorism – it is also typical for African nations to continually focus on the need for development as the basic foundation to solving many of its problems. The following is a clause from the resolution, largely co-written by South Africa and China:

1. Requests the formation of a new development agency, the United Nations Development Against Terrorism Agency (UNDATA) consisting of representatives from all Member States as well as interested nongovernmental organizations and pressure groups, which would:

- a. Discuss methods to tackle the root causes of terrorism including feelings of exclusion, political oppression, lack of opportunities, and extreme poverty;
  - b. Discuss methods to dissuade disaffected groups from choosing terrorism as a tactic for achieving their aims;
  - c. Submit findings to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to aid its work on the Millennium Development Goals by identifying the relevant areas of development which would most benefit nations in their fight against terrorism;
- Length: the operative part of the resolution should be no longer than 2 pages (2.5 pages max.). In this regard, remember that the resolution may be merged with other resolutions– ensure that clauses can be extracted without too much damage and that they are clear in and of themselves. Be clear, to the point, accurate and specific.

### **Resolutions (and also Working Papers) – Debate**

The 3 Golden Rules: rhetoric is useful when trying to sell your resolution/working paper, whether in unmoderated caucus or formal debate; further, it will be appropriate to do less-substantive focus-shifting or priority-defining speeches at times. However, to look really impressive, you must following the 3 golden rules:

1. *Engage in Debate:* be responsive to other delegates speeches;
2. *Be Substantive:* always have a point to your speech, whether it is a criticism of the resolution, offering a potential solution, or responding to the criticism of another delegate. To do so relies on your knowledge-base, which is dependent on the level of research you have carried out.
3. *Be Constructive:* in order to set yourself apart from the rest of the delegates, the key is to always be constructive. This means that even when attacking a resolution, always try and offer an alternative idea to solve the problem or a way of amending the resolution to improve. Only as an extreme last resort should you attack a resolution without offering any progressive improvements – remember, you want to make allies, not enemies.

Structure: the structure of speeches on resolutions/working papers will differ dependent on the context. The following is just a guideline of how certain scenarios could be addressed (and applies equally to working papers):

*Explanatory (Opening) Speech Supporting Any Resolution:* if it is your resolution, you may have a slogan which accurately advertises what the resolution does. Remember in this regard, you are a salesman always trying to sell the resolution to the committee. The aim of the speech will be explanatory:

*Example: ‘South Africa is proud to offer its full support to this resolution as representing the culmination of negotiations between a multitude of nations. The resolution is premised on taking an integrated approach to the problem of terrorism: it tackles the means, the motivation, and the men behind terrorism:*

*First, the means...*

*Second, the motivation...*

*Third, the men...*

*South Africa calls upon this committee to unite in tackling the means, the motivation, and the men behind terrorism’.*

*General Speeches on Any Resolutions:* for all other speeches on resolution, the most effective tactic is to adopt a two/three point structure (dependent on time). Identify

two/three themes of the resolution and explain how your country feels in relation to each theme. Several types of speech are possible (there are many more, the following are just exemplary):

*Example 1 (Good-Bad Structure): one tactic is to state what is good under each theme, followed by a criticism of what needs to be addressed (in such a way as to call on the committee to offer their views on your areas of concern):*

*'South Africa, whilst broadly supporting the main message of this resolution, believes that there are two/three points that need to be addressed:*

*First, the issue of definition of terrorism: [state what is good, then state what needs to be addressed];*

*Second, the issue of enforcement: [state what is good, then state what needs to be addressed]... etc.*

*Example 2 (Bad-Improvement Structure): another tactic is to state what is bad under each theme, followed by a suggestion for an improvement (this is constructive). Remember it is ok to agree with previous delegates concerns and call on the committee to discuss their views on potential solutions:*

*'South Africa, whilst broadly supporting the main message of this resolution, believes that there are two/three points that need to be addressed:*

*First, the issue of definition of terrorism: [state what is bad, then state how it could be improved];*

*Second, the issue of enforcement: [state what is bad, then state what needs to be addressed]... etc.*

NB: you could obviously do a mixture of the above speeches, on the first point saying what is good and then offering criticism for discussion, on the second point saying what is bad and then offering an improvement.

*Example 3 (Response to Criticism Structure): perhaps previous speeches have raised*

*several criticisms of the resolution and you feel that such criticism is unjustified.*

*'South Africa has listened to the committee and, whilst welcoming all criticism of the resolution, would like to address the concerns of some of the delegates in this room:*

*First, Uganda raised the issue of definition of terrorism...*

*Second, Kenya raised the issue of enforcement...*

*South Africa urges all delegates still concerned about these issues to submit amendments so that these can be debated as alternatives and we can find multilateral solutions to what is, in essence, a multilateral problem'*

*Example 4 (Substantive-Point Structure): of course, structure is not always possible – sometimes a smaller speech explaining one particular point in detail will suffice.*

General Tips: the following offers a few ideas for speeches which can be made when trying to support or criticize resolutions, make amendments, or ask and answer questions (the following applies equally to working papers although remember that such papers cannot be amended):

*Tips for Supporting Resolutions (when under attack):*

- Address the Criticism: one option, if possible, is to give a 'response to criticism' structured speech (see example 3 above). This will show you are engaging in debate in a substantive sense and trying allay concerns of other delegations. Remember, you may not have all the answers to all criticisms so it is perfectly fine to solve some problems but state that other concerns of delegates are well-founded and should be solved in unmoderated caucus through a multilaterally-negotiated amendmentsolution.

- If Under Severe Attack: several strategies are available to try and get the committee back on board, in favor of at least amending your resolution rather than being overtly destructive:
  - o Focus on Need to Repair: explain that resolutions are not made perfect, they are made as drafts – we as a committee must work together not in attacking the resolution, but in repairing it through amendments.
  - o Focus on Need to be Constructive: explain disappointment at the destructiveness of some delegates; call upon the committee to unite in being constructive and progressive. At this point, maybe offer/recognize a new/already raised criticism of the resolution but offer a substantive solution to the problem i.e. practice what you preach.
  - o Focus on Structure/Framework of Resolution: argue that while the resolution is not perfect, it provides the framework or foundations for a good resolution – amendment is necessary but that does not mean the resolution is redundant.
  - o Point to Key Parties Who Support the Resolution: ensure they definitely support the resolution before doing so e.g. Israel and Palestine supporting a resolution on Israel would be a big selling point.

*Tips for Criticizing Resolutions (when necessary for your country's position or to give constructive criticism):* whenever you get a first look at a resolution, the following is a guide of what you should be on the look-out for in terms of offering constructive criticism:

- Omissions: is there anything missing from the resolution?
- Practicalities: is the resolution realistic in the solution it offers?
- Sufficiency: does the resolution take sufficient action in the clauses where it states it is taking action i.e. are the solutions the most effective and sufficient to solve the problems at hand?
- Duplication: does the resolution repeat any past efforts or set up initiatives/committees that already exist?
- Support: does the resolution have the support of key parties to the topic area concerned (find out through speeches/notes); if not, why not?
- Detail: is the resolution detailed enough e.g. do new bodies have clear mandates and composition?

*Amendments:* remember that amendments can be made at any point during MUN sessions. It is important to use all the tools of MUN at all times:

- Notes: pass notes to key countries, beginning to draft an amendment as well as to gain support;
- Unmoderated Caucus: draft amendments and obtain sufficient support for submittal;
- Moderated Caucus: if there is a lot of criticism on a resolution, especially as regards particular areas, call for a moderated caucus to discuss those areas with the purpose of seeing how countries envisage solving the concerns raised.

*Tips for Asking Questions*

- Offer a Substantive Point
- Be Clear
- Be Concise: limit your question to one point and don't make it too long.

*Tips for Answering Questions (cf. future session on impromptu speeches):*

- Remain Calm and Relax
- Be Structured and to the Point: try to keep your answers on point. If you know the answer and can address the delegate's concern, then go for it. If you have multiple points to make, structure your speech as normal. A structured on-the-spot answer to a question can look extremely powerful!
- Feel Free to Agree with the Delegate's Concerns: if the delegate asking the question raises a useful point or one which you had not thought of regarding the resolution, do

not feel obliged to solve the issue on the spot. It is perfectly acceptable to explain that the delegate raises a good point, one which we should talk about in negotiations to solve – however, always stress that their concerns are not fatal to the resolution, but can be solved through negotiation and amendments – emphasise your willingness to be cooperative and constructive.

- Commitments: if a delegate asks you for a specific commitment as regards details that are more specific than those in the resolution, which you are unsure whether to agree to, feel free to state that you are not prepared to make any specific commitments beyond those outlined in the resolution and emphasise that the resolution is still a draft, so making such commitments is impractical at the present time. However, be open to further discussions.

REMEMBER: RESEARCH WILL ALWAYS BE THE KEY TO SUCCESS

### *Appendix 1: Introductory Words for Resolution Clauses*

#### **Preambulatory Phrases**

Affirming	Deeply disturbed	Having considered	Observing
Alarmed by	Deeply regretting	Having considered further	Realizing
Approving	Desiring	Having devoted attention	Reaffirming
Aware of	Emphasizing	Having examined	Recalling
Believing	Expecting	Having heard	Recognizing
Bearing in mind	Expressing its appreciation	Having received	Referring
Cognizant of	Expressing its satisfaction	Having studied	Seeking
Confident	Fulfilling	Keeping in mind	Taking into account
Contemplating	Fully aware	Noting further	Taking note
Convinced	Fully believing	Noting with regret	Viewing with appreciation
Declaring	Further deploring	Noting with satisfaction	Welcoming
Deeply concerned	Further recalling	Noting with deep concern	
Deeply conscious	Guided by	Noting further	
Deeply convinced	Having adopted	Noting with approval	

#### **Operative Clauses**

Accepts	Deplores	Further reminds	Strongly condemns
Affirms	Draws attention	Further recommends	Supports
Approves	Emphasizes	Further requests	Takes note of
Authorizes	Encourages	Further resolves	Trusts
Calls for	Endorses	Has resolved	Urges
Calls upon	Expresses its appreciation	Regrets	
Confirms	Expresses its hope	Requests	
Considers	Further invites	Resolves	
Declares accordingly	Further proclaims	Solemnly affirms	