The structure of committee debate

Committee time at ACMUN is separated into formal debate and caucus, moderated and unmoderated (and unofficial).

**Formal Debate - Speakers’ List**
During formal debate the parliamentary rules of procedure are enforced by the moderator. Delegates can deliver speeches, comment on others’ speeches, ask and answer questions on amendments, resolutions or the policy of a country in general. Delegates speak by signing up on the Speakers’ List.

It is strongly advised that you familiarize yourselves with the ACMUN Rules of Procedure prior to the conference; they are available online. The rules follow the general Harvard MUN style, but with some ACMUN adjustments.

In formal debate delegates speak in the order they appear on the Speakers’ List and, as the list might be quite long, it is a good idea to add your name as soon as the opportunity arises. You should not worry about whether or not you have something to say; by the time that you get the chance to actually speak you will have found something important to say. In addition, it might be a good idea to ask the dais staff to add your country again as soon as you finish with your speech, so as to maximize your speaking opportunities. Another way to maximize speaking time would be to ask other delegates to yield their remaining speaking time to you.

- **Speeches**

  Please note that when you plan your upcoming speech, you do not need to write it down word for word. Often pre-written speeches like that lack spontaneity and enthusiasm, and might have the opposite effect of what you are aiming for. Instead write down key points and arguments, but you might also be forced to think on your feet and change your speech just prior to your turn, due to the context of other speakers’ speeches. There is a wide range of things that you can deal with during your speech, such as introducing new ideas, elaborating on the already introduced ones, supporting and defending allied positions or attacking opposing positions. It is advised that the speech is a mix combination of the message you wish to convey, and what the committee is currently debating and focusing on.

- **Delivery of speeches**

  One of the most common fears of MUN newcomers is that of speaking in front of an audience. Do not be afraid to speak in front of your committee; everyone is more or less nervous and it becomes easier the more you speak and the better you get to know the other delegates. It is important that you try to give the impression of being confident; if you appear to be confident other delegates are more likely to be persuaded by your arguments. Through extensive research and preparation prior to the conference, you can ensure that you at least know what you are talking about, thus you will automatically appear more confident.

- **Yields**
Yields can only be applied to substantive speeches (Speakers’ List), and there are four different kinds. There can only be one yield per speech. These four different types of yields are explained separately below.

- **Yield to questions**
  
  If a delegate yields to questions, it means that the delegate is ready to answer any questions that other delegates might have in relation to his or her speech, and any misconceptions that might have arisen from it. The Moderator will then randomly select delegates to answer questions. It is a common problem that delegates hesitate to yield the floor to questions out of the fear of what questions other delegates might pose. Few delegates realize that there is one great advantage in the rules related to the questions that makes it a favorable option for you. Delegates that ask questions are not allowed to engage in dialogue with you, neither are they allowed to have follow-up questions. Once again, if you do yield to questions make sure that you appear confident when you answer the question. If you are the one posing the question, be as specific as possible.

- **Yield to another delegate**
  
  If a delegate yields to another delegate, it means that the delegate gives his or her remaining time to another delegate of his choice. This is very useful if an ally knows a particular idea very well or is able to express it better than the yielding delegate. Yielding the floor to another delegate is also a way of improving the relationship between the yielding delegate and the other delegate; it diversifies the speech and creates an image of being a team player – something that can be an advantage. However, make sure that there is a significant amount of time left for your ally to speak. Do not yield to another delegate when your speaking time expires!

- **Yield to comments**
  
  If a delegate yields to comments, he or she agrees that other delegates can make comments on the speech. Comments are 30 seconds long, and are a form of substantive speech. Comments should only refer to the previous speech, and delegates are not allowed to comment on things that have not been included in the preceding speech. If a delegate begins introducing his or her own ideas, a Point of Order should immediately be called.

- **Yield to the chair**
  
  If a delegate yields to the chair, the Moderator proceeds to the next speaker, unless there is a motion or a point on the floor. The only purpose of yielding the chair is to avoid other delegates commenting on the speech just delivered. Therefore, yielding to the chair is not the best choice since it will appear as if the delegate is trying to hide something or is afraid of criticism. If a delegate wishes to avoid comments and/or questions, it is a better idea to yield to another delegate.
Caucus - Moderated and unmoderated (and unofficial)
Formal debate is used to communicate ideas to other delegates, while the caucus is a time to negotiate.

Moderated Caucus
A moderated caucus essentially means that the Speakers’ List is suspended, thereby making it possible for delegates who are far down on the list to speak, deal with urgent or specific issues, such as the financial proposals of a resolution. A moderated caucus is a great way for the delegates to exchange and review ideas quickly, without being totally bound by the formal debate style. A moderated caucus is essentially a mix between formal and informal debate, whereby the debate involved more dialogue but is still structured by the Moderator. A motion to move into a moderated caucus must include purpose, time limit and speech duration.

Unmoderated Caucus
An unmoderated caucus means that the parliamentary rules of procedure are suspended, making it possible for delegates to move around the committee room, negotiate and collaborate on resolutions, amendments and working papers. A motion to move into unmoderated caucus must include purpose, and time limit. When a motion for an unmoderated caucus has passed, the delegates divide themselves into blocs and alliances according to their countries’ policy on the topic under discussion. The different blocs meet in different areas of the room, and it is probably the most important part of the working paper, resolution and amendment writing. It might be hard at first to participate in the discussion, but as you get to know people better it will become easier. It should be noted, however, that discussion in blocs does not entail the exclusion from an informal discussion of delegates who wish to participate in the discussion but are not members of the specific bloc.

• Reasons to move to an unmoderated caucus:
  - Contact other people
    It is strongly recommended that delegates use the unmoderated caucus not only to talk with his or her own bloc, but also with delegates that belong to other blocs. It can be very helpful to get an idea of the positions of other blocs. As the debate develops this will aid delegates in forming stronger alliances with other delegates that might not necessarily be in their bloc, but share the same goals and policies on the topic in question.
  - Review ideas
    It is a good idea for individual alliances to start reviewing past ideas that have been bought up in the debate, and decided whether or not they wish to support or attack them.
  - Establish a consensus
    Unmoderated caucus is normally where consensus is established. It is
important for the delegates and their blocs to come to an agreement that is as acceptable to everyone as possible. During the unmoderated caucus it is advised that delegates first focus on the major disagreements among them, before they start on minor disagreements. Minor disagreements can always be dealt with later.

- **Form working papers and resolutions**

  When the three steps above have been accomplished, then the delegates in blocs and coalitions can begin writing together working papers and resolutions.

**Unofficial Caucus**

The Moderator does not declare these caucuses. Some delegates get together and take care of resolution and working paper writing outside committee time; this might be before and after the sessions, during meals or in the prep rooms during official debate time (however, it is advised that not too much time is spent away from the formal debate, as the delegates might miss important parts of the debate). These unofficial caucuses can be very important, as it often means that the key players can get together and discuss resolutions and policies without the stress that official caucuses are often associated with. In addition, the unofficial caucuses add to the reality of the simulation.

**The Stages of a Committee**

**The Five Stages of Each Committee are:**

- Setting the agenda
- Working Papers
- Resolutions
Agenda
The first job of the committee on Friday afternoon is to set the agenda, which means deciding whether to debate Topic Area A or B first. Once decided, the chair will open a Speakers’ List and delegates will sign up to speak; delegates should embrace this as an opportunity to present their country's policy and explain what they deem the ultimate purpose of the committee. After some time, it is most common that a delegate will make a motion to move into moderated or unmoderated caucus, which provides the delegates with a more informal setting where they can exchange ideas and make alliances with one another. During the first unmoderated caucus it is normal that people gather in blocs, as the members' policies are often alike or comprised of the same aims and ideas. However, once again, this does not mean that the countries should not work with delegations outside their blocs. Broader discussions during unmoderated caucuses are strongly encouraged. Remember that the philosophy of the Anatolia College MUN is based on the principle of consensus for the creation of resolutions on the agenda topics. Compromise is the ultimate purpose of committee debate.

Working Papers
Working papers will begin to be produced on Friday afternoon, and they are the first step towards resolutions.

Working papers present in written format ideas that have originated from the debate in the committee. They are not finished proposals but suggestions that can be developed and merged into resolutions. Working papers are created by delegates, are usually one-page long and should be relatively formal, although not necessarily in a resolution format. It is essential that they do include concrete proposals on how to resolve the conflict/issue in the committee. To ease the process, however, delegates should write the name of the committee and the countries that wrote the paper on top of the working paper.

The working papers will be the basis for the resolutions. They often lead to substantial and valuable discussion, and are finally merged into resolutions after enjoying greater support by the committee. It is thus evident that the working papers constitute a vital step in the ACMUN committee process. Please, note that the Directors of the Committee must approve all working papers (as well as resolutions and amendments) before they can be copied and handed out. Nevertheless, working papers do not require any signatures.

Sample of a working paper (there is no official format; it is up to the delegates to outline it the way they find most effective)

Committee: Legal Committee
Topic Area B: Proper Treatment of Captured Combatants in Violent Conflict
Countries: San Marino, Tuvalu, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Belgium
1. Definition
   a. Non-state actors
   b. Lawful combatants
   c. Unlawful combatants

2. Rights that should be granted to captured combatants
   a. Innocent until proven guilty
   b. Right to legal counsel
   c. Right to fair trial
   d. Insurance of access to evidence
   e. Protected from physical and mental torture, inhumane treatment and

3. Who should have access to captured combatants, and what should happen if this access is denied:
   a. The International Red Cross
      i. Failed access --> sanctions/suspension from the U.N.
   b. U.N. Observers
      i. Same as clause 3.a/i

4. Trials and Tribunes
   a. Establishment of an international and neutral tribunal (sub-court to the ICJ)
      i. Jurisdiction
         1. Legal advice governments on treatment of POWs and other combatants as defined in clause 1.a-c
         2. Distinguish between lawful and unlawful combatants
      ii. Appointment of Judges
      iii. Measures to enforce sentence/decisions
   b. Domestic military tribunal
      i. Right to counsel
      ii. Change in the law of evidence
      iii. Question of a fair trial

Resolutions
Resolutions must be written in the proper format, answer and take into consideration the questions posed by the directors and deputy directors in the study guides and should attempt to draw together the interests of as many nations as possible, thus constituting realistic and comprehensive resolutions. In addition, a resolution should reflect negotiation, debate and original proposals done through committee work. As mentioned above, the Directors of the Committee must approve all resolutions before they can be copied and handed out, and, if the above criteria are not met, they will not be approved.
Resolutions require 10 signatures (with the exception of the Security Council).

**Things to keep in mind, while writing a resolution**

- Awareness and recognition of the problem/issue at hand
- Awareness of the actual power and influence of the committee
- The importance of consensus is if the resolutions are to have any impact
  Note, however, that a delegate should stay on policy and not support something that his/her country would not have done in reality.
- The resolutions must address all issues referred to in the “Questions that a Resolution Must Answer” section of the Study Guide.
- Conciseness – ensure that every clause and phrase have a purpose.
- Do not use fancy words just for the sake of it; a well-written resolution is something that is easy to read and understand.

**Heading**

- The title of the resolution should be in capital letters and centered above the main body of the resolution. Each resolution will be given a number by the dais staff.

- Two lines below the heading, the committee’s name and topic should be stated. Please note that there are no sponsors of a resolution.

**Body**

- Resolutions are written as one long formal sentence.
- At ACMUN all resolutions start with the committee name, while the first word in the rest of the resolution’s clauses are underlined.
- The Preambulatory Clauses are written by the ACMUN moderators, and describe the problem being addressed, recall past actions and explain the purpose of the resolutions. The first word of each clause is italicized, and the clause ends with a comma.
- The Operative Clauses are numbered and state the action taken by the committee. The first word of each clause is underlined. All clauses are expressed in present tense, with active verbs. Please note, that a semicolon follows each clause except for the last one, which finishes with a period.
Sample of a Resolution
The resolution voted by the Security Council on the situation between Ethiopia and Eritrea on 30 January 2007 (number 1741(2007)), but in ACMUN format, is quoted below:

Resolution B

Security Council
Crisis Topic: The question of the current situation between Ethiopia and Eritrea

The Security Council,

Reaffirming all its previous resolutions and statements pertaining to the situation between Ethiopia and Eritrea (hereinafter referred to as “the parties”) and the requirements contained therein, including in particular resolutions 1320 (2000), 1430 (2002), 1466 (2003), 1640 (2005), 1681 (2006) and 1710 (2006),

Stressing its unwavering commitment to the peace process, and to the full and expeditious implementation of the Algiers Agreements, and the importance of prompt implementation of the decision of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (S/2002/423) as a basis for peaceful and cooperative relations between the parties,

Reaffirming the integrity of the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) as provided for in the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities of 18 June 2000 (S/2000/601) and recalling the objectives of its establishment and the commitment of the parties to respect the TSZ,

Commending the efforts made by the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) and its military and civilian personnel to accomplish its duties, despite the difficult circumstances,
Stressing further that the full demarcation of the border between the two parties is vital to lasting peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea as well as in the region, recalling that both parties have agreed to accept the delimitation and demarcation determinations of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC) as final and binding, commending the efforts of the EEBC to resume demarcation, and expressing its regret that the EEBC, for reasons beyond its control as explained in the Annexes of the report of the Secretary-General of 22 January 2007 (S/2007/33), has so far been unable to complete demarcation of the boundary as planned,

Expressing its full support for the work of the EEBC and acknowledging the Statement of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC) of 27 November 2006,

Having considered the Special report of the Secretary-General of 15 December 2006 (S/2006/992) and the options on the future of UNMEE contained therein, and taking note of the report of the Secretary-General of 22 January 2007 (S/2007/33),

Recalling paragraph 7 of resolution 1710 (2006),

1. Decides to extend the mandate of UNMEE for a period of six months, until 31 July 2007;

2. Approves the reconfiguration of UNMEE’s military component, from the current 2300 to 1700 military personnel, including 230 military observers, in accordance with option I, as described in paragraphs 24 and 25 of the Special report of the Secretary-General (S/2006/992), decides to maintain the current mandate and maximum authorized force levels, as stipulated in Resolution 1320 (2000) and further adjusted in Resolutions 1430 (2002) and 1681 (2006), and stresses the need to preserve sufficient military capacity for UNMEE to implement its mandate;

3. Reiterates its demand expressed in paragraph 5 of resolution 1640 (2005) that Ethiopia accept fully and without delay the final and binding decision of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission and take immediately concrete steps to enable, without preconditions, the Commission to demarcate the border completely and promptly;

4. Demands that Eritrea immediately withdraw its troops and equipment from the Temporary Security Zone;

5. Reiterates its demand expressed in paragraph 1 of resolution 1640 (2005) that Eritrea reverse, without further delay or preconditions, all restrictions on UNMEE’s movement and operations, noting that these include the movement and operations of the acting SRSG, and provide UNMEE with the access, assistance, support and protection required for the performance of its duties;

6. Reiterates its call expressed in paragraph 2 of resolution 1640 (2005) that the parties show maximum restraint and refrain from any threat or use of force against each other;

7. Regrets the lack of progress on demarcation, calls upon both parties to cooperate fully with the EEBC, stresses that the parties have primary responsibility for the implementation of the Algiers Agreements, and calls again upon the parties
to implement completely and without further delay or preconditions the decision of the EEBC and to take concrete steps to resume and complete the demarcation process;

8. Demands that the parties provide UNMEE with the necessary access, assistance, support and protection required for the performance of its duties, including its mandated task to assist the EEBC in the expeditious and orderly implementation of the Delimitation Decision, in accordance with Resolutions 1430 (2002) and 1466 (2003) and demands that any restrictions be lifted immediately;

9. Calls upon the Secretary-General and the international community to engage with Eritrea and Ethiopia to help them to normalize their relations, to promote stability between the parties, and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace in the region;

10. Expresses its willingness to reconsider any changes to UNMEE in light of subsequent progress toward demarcation, and its readiness to take further decisions to ensure that UNMEE will be able to facilitate demarcation as progress becomes possible;

11. Calls on Member States to provide contributions to the Trust Fund, established pursuant to Resolution 1177 (1998) and referred to in Article 4 (17) of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed by the Governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea on 12 December 2000, in order to support the demarcation process;

12. Expresses its deep appreciation for the contribution and dedication of the troop-contributing countries to the work of UNMEE;

13. Requests the Secretary-General to include in his next progress report due by the end of April 2007, details of the progress made towards the implementation of this Resolution and the implementation of the EEBC decision;

14. Decides to remain actively seized of the matter.

Amendments
Just as a delegate at the United Nations in New York cannot prepare everything ahead of time, neither can delegates at ACMUN. Amendments make it possible for delegates to alter parts of a resolution without rejecting it entirely. This creates strong resolutions with strong consensus; however, delegates are encouraged to only produce substantive amendments for the committee in order for the committee not to waste time on parliamentary procedures. Please, be aware that no friendly amendments can be made at ACMUN, so a resolution cannot be amended without a vote.

Voting procedures
At ACMUN resolutions are not voted on throughout the debate but when the debate has been closed. Once the debate has been closed, the committee automatically moves into voting procedures, which follows the general format unless there is a motion for a roll call vote or division of the question.
Once the voting has ended, and more than one resolution have been passed, the committee will vote on the final resolution for each topic area; this follows the same format as above. Unless there is a motion for reconsideration of a resolution that was rejected with a narrow margin, after the final resolution per topic area is decided upon, the committee moves directly to the discussion of the second topic area.

Again, it is strongly encouraged that all delegates read and are well acquainted with the ACMUN rules of procedures; less time will then be spent on procedures and more on debate! And remember that knowledge is power.

COMMUNICATION IN THE COMMITTEE

Mastering the art of communication is essential in international diplomacy, and many conflicts that could have been avoided have arisen from lack of listening skills and misunderstandings. In order to make the conference as successful as possible, the
following section will outline the means and ways that the art of communication can be improved. The next section focuses on negotiation.

ACMUN is an educational simulation that not only teaches students about the United Nations, international relations and global issues, but also helps students develop public speaking and negotiation skills. In order to produce a successful resolution the delegates are required to negotiate with one another to reach consensus. The next section just briefly outlines the usefulness of forming coalitions, and how they can be used as efficiently as possible.

**Coalition**

A coalition is a strong unified group of delegates who share the same goals and are able to work together, and follow one specific strategy, while also following their countries’ policy. A delegate wants to appear open to other delegates, which means he/she should not necessarily only focus on having a good relationship with a few delegations. Meanwhile, a bloc may or may not be unified, some may wish to participate in the resolution drafting while others may look outside their own traditional bloc on the issue. The advantages of being in a coalition are that the work can be shared amongst delegates, and that the group can benefit from developing their ideas together. This process strengthens the coalition and can make it a powerful factor in committee decisions.

- All members of a coalition might be loosely allied with a member of another coalition, which means that they might yield time to the delegate in question, and sign and vote for resolutions in coherence with that delegate. During caucus it is a great idea to use these alliances to broadening the support base for the individual and the coalition overall.
- A key factor in succeeding as a coalition during the formal debates is to coordinate the delivery of speeches. If a number of speakers focus on specific issues, the coalition will to a certain extent be able to steer the committee in a certain direction.
- It is important that delegates monitor the opposition in order to be able to effectively oppose their arguments and ideas. It is important that each coalition is aware of other coalitions, the members comprising them and their ideas about the issue under discussion. If a member of an opposing coalition is on the Speakers’ List, it can be a good idea for the coalition to get the next speaker to yield time to a country of the coalition, so that the arguments of the opposing coalition can be rebutted.