

SEVEN-STEP STRATEGY FOR MODEL UN RESEARCH

1. Familiarize yourself with the the country that you are representing

A number of standard sources found in documents collections are available for providing the current information they need. *Europa World Year Book* (J106 E85 latest in Gov Docs Reference; earlier in Green Stacks) is a particularly good source, providing an overview of the country's government, recent history, and economy as well as current statistical information. Alternatives to this source include the United States State Department's *Background Notes*, (Gov Docs S1.123:) and Statesman's Year Book (JA51 S7 Gov Docs Reference--latest only). Two publication series of the the Economist [Magazine's] Intelligence Unit are also helpful: the annual *Country Profile* and quarterly *Country Report* series (search Socrates for information on titles available in Stanford libraries). The *Country Profiles* provide a very current overview of domestic political and economic policies for over 160 countries. Finally, the United States Department of the Army *Area Handbook Series*, (Gov Docs D101.22:) provides an exhaustive source of background information on the social, cultural, historical, political and economic context in individual countries. However, their publication pattern (only five to ten countries per year) reduces their usefulness for all Model UN participants.

2. Gather Background Information on the United Nations Organization

Successful participation at a Model UN session requires a baseline understanding of the United Nations organization itself, including its structure and rules of procedures. Some very good sources for obtaining this information include the latest editions of two regularly-updated UN Department of Public Information publications: *Everyone's United Nations: A Handbook on the Work of the United Nations* (Gov Docs United Nations DPI/hdbk) and *Basic Facts about the United Nations* (Gov Docs United Nations DPI/991/). An excellent source for current information on the organization's structure and membership is an annual publication of the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the *United Nations Handbook* (JX1977 A37 U5 Green Library Stacks; latest in Gov Docs Reference). The rules of procedure for each organ are published separately in the masthead series. However, the latest version for each organ is conveniently reproduced in the *Chronology and Fact Book of the United Nations: 1941-1991*. (JX1977 A1 C5 Green Library Stacks; latest in General Reference)

3. Gather Background Information on the Assigned Issues

At the same time that Model UN participants immerse themselves in the foreign policy stance of their assigned country, they need to acquaint themselves with the international issue areas--and the status of discussions at the UN in these areas--that are on the agenda of their Model UN Session. The United Nations

Association--USA has published on an annual basis *A Global Agenda: Issues before the General Assembly* (JX1977 A1 I79 Gov Docs Reference) which includes a good subject index and references to UN documents related to all issues on the upcoming agenda for the United Nations General Assembly. The *United Nations Yearbook* (JX1977 A37 U65 Gov Docs Reference) provides more detailed information and indexing for the entire UN organization than is found in *A Global Agenda*, including selected full-text resolutions and voting records. Another generally underutilized source of background information is the annual *Annotated Preliminary List of Items to be Included in the Provisional Agenda of the Regular Session of the General Assembly*. This document is shelved in the Government Documents UN collection under the symbol number "A/sess.number/100". The document includes the official preliminary agenda with corresponding background information on the history of the issue within the UN and references to related reports, resolutions, and meeting records.

For very current information, newspapers such as the *New York Times*, *The Times* (London), *Le Monde* and *Le Monde Diplomatique* include significant coverage of United Nations activities as do magazines such as the *United Nations Chronicle* and the *Economist*. And up to date information about activities of the UN organizations is available by [searching the United Nations Press Release database](#).

4. **Review Speeches at the UN by the Country's Representatives**

Speeches and statements in discussions in meetings of the principal organs of the United Nations (General Assembly, Economic and Social Council, Security Council, Trusteeship Council)--and their subsidiary standing and ad hoc committees-- are key sources for establishing the international policy position of UN member nations. To find references to statements by representatives of a particular country, search the web-based [AccessUN](#) database, inserting the country name into the "author" field. (please note that the *AccessUN* database is a subscription service available to members of the Stanford community)

5. **Review Policy Statements from the Country's Political Leadership**

There are other useful sources for locating official statements of policy from foreign countries. Perhaps most important are **letters** written by heads of state and foreign ministers to the Secretary-General on issues of mutual interest. To find references to these letters, search the web-based [AccessUN](#) database, inserting the country name into the "country" field.

A popular source for finding statements of official national policy is the Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Reports series which includes English-language translations of foreign news broadcasts, press releases, newspaper articles, including official government statements. The *FBIS Daily Reports CD-ROM* is accessible at the Government Documents International/Foreign CD-ROM Workstation. *World News Connection* is a web-based version of a **subset of the**

sources covered by the FBIS cdrom. *World News Connection* is available on workstations in the Jonsson Library as well as the Hoover Library's periodicals room and the Law Library. Access to *World News Connection* at these locations requires a password.. Ask at the reference desk.

The British Broadcasting Corporation provides translations in English of news reports worldwide, including statements of government officials. These BBC Monitoring International Reports (1996-) are available online via [Global Newsbank](#), a web-based subscription service available to members of the Stanford community.

Other sources include newsletters and other information emanating from the [embassies](#) of foreign states in the United States.

6. Study the Texts of Resolutions Sponsored by the Country

Model UN participants are interested in resolutions and draft resolutions for several reasons. First, these documents serve as examples for writing their own resolutions in terms of form. But MUN participants are also interested in the content of the resolutions that their own country has participated in sponsoring. The official index for resolutions is *UNBIS Plus on CD-ROM* (access at Government Documents International CD-ROM Workstation). This quarterly publication contains a "Personal/Corporate Name" index which identifies draft resolutions under each country name and reference to specific document numbers in the masthead documents series in which the draft resolution text can be located.

It is also possible to easily identify draft resolutions sponsored by particular countries on selected topics by searching the [AccessUN](#) database, inserting the country name and phrase "draft resolution" into the "title" field and desired topic in the "subject" field. A key advantage of this database is that the retrieved reference will indicate not only the resolution number, but also the names of the countries that co-sponsored the resolution.

Draft resolutions that have been officially passed are first printed in the masthead series (A/RES; S/RES; E/RES) and then republished in a supplement to the Official Records for each of the principal UN organs. The United Nations gopher includes the full text for [General Assembly resolutions](#), [Economic and Social Council resolutions](#), and [Security Council resolutions](#). The most timely official index to General Assembly resolutions is an annual press release from the UN Department of Public Information called *Resolutions and Decisions Adopted by the General Assembly during the First Part of its...Session* (Government Documents Reference unclassified) This press release contains an excellent index to the resolutions passed by the General Assembly during its longer session, including the recorded vote and references to related reports.

7. Develop an Understanding of the Country's Voting Pattern

Establishing the voting pattern for a nation in particular issue areas at the United Nations is a challenge. The only source for locating votes on draft resolutions in all of the four principal organs is the record found in the summary ("SR") or verbatim ("PV") meeting record at which the vote on a draft resolution is held.

For the record of all resolutions that have been passed, the most current source for the General Assembly is the annual *Resolutions and Decisions* press release cited above. Voting tables for recent sessions of the General Assembly, Economic and Social Council, and Security Council are available full text on *UNBIS Plus on CD-ROM*. Selected key resolution voting records are found in the *United Nations Yearbook* (Government Documents Reference unclassified)