WRITING MUN RESOLUTIONS

WHAT IS A RESOLUTION?

A resolution is a document submitted by a country, on a certain issue, which is the basis of an MUN debate. It is comparable to a motion in debating – some speak in favour of it, some speak against it, and then it is voted upon. Unlike a motion, though, resolutions are often long, detailed, and set out a number of different actions which the submitter believes the UN ought to take. Whereas in debating a motion is designed to be easily open to interpretation, a resolution should formally set out exactly what the submitter thinks needs to be done – this can then be discussed and amended by the other delegates there who will support or oppose it to varying degrees.

The ultimate purpose of a committee session is to pass resolutions which most countries support as solutions to problems that the UN has to deal with.

Before the Stonyhurst MUN, you can write one or more resolutions which you will try to get debated in your committee at the conference. The list of issues for each committee can be found on the website.

THE HEADING

In the heading of your resolution you should write the name of the committee in which the resolution will be debated, the subject of the debate, and the name of your country, and any other country which supports the resolution (no need to write this just yet, this kind of lobbying will happen at the conference itself):

Committee...
Question of...
Submitted by...
Co-submitted by…

This will help chairs and other delegates keep track of what the resolution is about and which countries are supporting it.

THE PREAMBLE

In the first half of your resolution you should set out your reasons for suggesting what you are about to suggest in the operative clauses of the resolution. You should make reference to past events, previous UN resolutions and parts of the UN charter, any facts or figures which you believe support your argument - anything, in short, which you believe shows why it is important for the committee to pass your resolution, e.g.

> *Deeply concerned* by the extent of the problem of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in which more than 500 soldiers and civilians have died this year,
> *Fully aware* of the UN's previous efforts in trying to solve this problem, for example in resolution xxxx of 2002,
> *Believing* these efforts to have been ineffectual in the face of rising levels of violence in the area etc.

Of course, if you think it will make your resolution more balanced, you may add clauses that do not directly support your viewpoint, e.g.

> *Aware* of the lack of support for this kind of solution in the past,

But remember that as well as being as well as being informative you should make your pre-amble as persuasive as possible for the operative clauses that will follow.

The Operative Clauses

In your operative clauses you should set out what you believe actually needs to be done by the UN. These are easily the most important clauses of the resolution and will be the topic of almost all of the debate. What's more, these clauses can be amended by other delegates whereas the pre-amble cannot.

Each operative clause should contain a main verb (to denote action, as opposed to the pre-ambulatory clauses which start with adjectives) and then an action which the delegate believes ought to be taken. For the purposes of easy debate and amending there should be no more than one point or action per operative clause.

The actions which you recommend should be based on careful research of the issue at hand, what you think a viable solution would be for tackling it, and what your country's (real-life) policy has been on it in the past, and should follow naturally from the points you have made in your pre-amble.

You could propose a new way of approaching a problem, you could continue or condemn current efforts at solving it, and you could propose new bodies which are designed to solve it, or give new responsibilities to organisations that already exist. You may think strongly condemning a country or individual or their actions is the best way of solving the problem, or you could call for talks on the issue in order to come to a more multilateral but potentially slower and less powerful conclusion. As ever, consider the aims of the UN as set out in the UN Charter (http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter1.shtml) but don't be afraid to suggest something radical if you think it could be a good solution to the problem – it will be up to the other delegates to decide whether yours is a good idea or not based on how they vote, after there has been debate on the merits and shortcomings of your resolution.

Slightly different rules for operative clauses are set out for the Security Council from the other committees, and these can be found here (http://www.un.org/en/sc/repertoire/faq.shtml)

Operative clauses should be numbered, to help delegates keep track of which parts of the resolution they are debating at a given time and also to make amendments clearer when they are submitted.

1. *Condemns* Israel for the continuing presence of its troops in the West Bank;
2. *Urges* Israel to reconsider its position regarding the annexing of East Jerusalem;
3. *Further urges* Israel to call to mind Article x of the UN Charter etc.

Style Points

These are important as all resolutions should resemble each other as much as possible to make for a better debate:

- There is a line-space between each clause
- The opening word or phrase of each clause is underlined
- Each operative clause is numbered
- Each pre-ambulatory clause ends with a comma
- Each operative clause except the last one ends with a semicolon
- The only full stop is at the end of the resolution so that it reads like one clear sentence
- All acronyms are written out in full the first time they are used

Some useful links

http://bestdelegate.com/model-un-made-easy-how-to-write-a-resolution/

http://juniormodelunitednations.blogspot.co.uk/2009/11/how-to-write-draft-resolution-by-thimun.html

http://www.freewebs.com/mun_reso_writing/