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# The Model United Nations Chairing Guide

How to be a Chair from A to Z



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Please think about the environment and do not print this guide unless absolutely necessary.

# 1 Introduction

*„The fact that THIMUN exists to uphold the ideals of the United Nations among the youth is particularly important since it is from the young that we should draw our energy and inspiration as we strive to make the United Nations effective and responsive to the needs of the people worldwide”,*

Kofi Annan, the Secretary General of the United Nations from 1997 to 2007 once said. You are about to not only attend a THIMUN-affiliated conference as a delegate, but to introduce new delegates to Model United Nations in the role of a Chair.

Model United Nations gives us the chance to practice tolerance, celebrate diplomacy and mutual respect on an international floor. It is our opportunity to voice our opinion and to share it with the world’s leaders. It is our forum to create tomorrow’s world leaders. You have been given the unique opportunity to share this experience with other students and to encourage less experienced delegates, to open their door into politics, into diversity, into the future we create.

A Chair or President is the leader of a committee; one, who confidently guides the delegates through debate, one to answer all their questions and one to turn a group of young students into competent delegates of the nations they represent, who are skilfully addressing vital issues of global importance.

Serving as a Chair gives you the great opportunity of stimulating lobbying, co-ordinating debate and initiating effective resolutions. However, the position also comes with great responsibility. You are the face of the conference to all your delegates. You represent the entire Student Officer team, as well as the Executive Staff, being the link between them and the delegates. You set the tone for the entire weekend. You serve as a role model to the delegates and you will be the one to encourage young students to rise above themselves in diplomatic debate.

Therefore it is especially important for you to act responsibly, to be well prepared and professional at all times. The quality of your Research Reports will determine the quality of resolutions and debate. However, aside of these characteristics, as you will remember from being a delegate, approachable Chairs are the ones who give you confidence to speak and who inspire you. In conclusion you should aim to stimulate rather than intimidate.

All of the above may appear to be an unmanageable amount to keep in mind, but this guide explains your task of serving as a Chair step by step and additionally gives a range of tips to make your Chairing experience the best it can possibly be.

Remember that you have been appointed as a Chair, because you are trusted to be capable of excelling in this position.

Good luck and enjoy!

# 2 Pre-Conference

Planning is the underpinning element of any successful project. Whether it be baking a cake or organizing an MUN, planning is essential. This guide aims at providing you with the necessary tools that not only anchor and foster the attributes of an exemplary student officer, but also provide you with necessary tips that align themselves perfectly with the ethos of an inspirational Student Officer.

We have split the guide into several sections so as to enable you to acquire an in-depth understanding of the issues highlighted in this document. The sections, have been placed in a particular order that aims at enhancing your understanding in a structured manner. We strongly suggest that you consolidate each section before the actual conference, as all the information highlighted in this booklet, is important for beginner chairs.

Prior to the conference, we strongly recommend that you take a folder with you, which should comprise of the following, basic elements:

1. This booklet- we are positive, that using this guide as a reference throughout the conference will ensure a smooth and enjoyable experience.
2. A number of pens and spare sheets of paper- this may seem like an evident addition to your folder, however, we cannot stress the importance of pens, as they do come in handy!
3. USB- a USB is definitely an object that should go into your folder, as in the final debriefing, the executive staff often want a copy of the resolutions, thus saving them on a USB throughout the conference, will facilitate the process.
4. Finally, a laptop. They can be used to project resolutions digitally and amendments can be made in much more eco-friendly and practical manner.

## 2.1 Different Positions

### 2.1.1 The Secretariat/Executive staff

At the peak of the Student Officer (StOff) pyramid, stands the Executive team which is composed of: *The Secretary General and the Deputy-Secretaries General*. These positions lie at the core of the conference and set the groundwork and platform for the conference to take place.

The respective duties of the positions highlighted above are outlined below:

#### 2.1.1.1 Secretary General

The role of the SG, is one which ultimately assumes the most responsibility. As a whole, an exemplary Secretary General, will need to have the following distinctive attributes:

##### Leadership

An inspiring and admirable leader is one, which makes the key transition from being **good** to becoming **great**. A Secretary General should have no doubt he/she will bring about change and innovative ideas to the conference, which will enhance this crucial transition, within every member of the BOD.

##### Ambition

**Dedication stems from motivation, and motivation is derived from ambition.** By placing ourselves in the virtual sphere of a Secretary General, we come to the simple conclusion, that the three characteristics outlined above as

well as values revolving around the ability to strive for excellence, are ones which align themselves perfectly with the ethos of an exemplary leader.

### **Time Management**

**Time is of the essence**, and one needs to be able to manipulate their schedule so as to allow him or herself to perform to the best of their ability. A secretary general will have to oversee the selection of issues as well as supervise the organization process as a whole; in addition the SG will have to remain in close and constant contact with MUN directors and the Board of Directors. Communication is of utmost importance, thus time management is essential.

### **Charisma**

**Charisma** is essential if one is to take up this role. If one is driven by the prospect, of one day being able to accomplish the millennium goals and is eager to **give time, share skills, and promote human rights**, then they can feel at home within the MUN sphere.

### **Knowledge**

The SG needs to have in-depth knowledge of what running an MUN conference entails. They need to be politically aware and have a profound interest in political affairs, as they will play a significant role in drawing up the provisional list of issues.

As a whole, the Secretary General will oversee all the activities taking place both in the pre-conference period and during the conference.

The SG will also be required to deliver a speech both at the opening and closing ceremonies.<sup>1</sup>

Prior to the conference The Secretary General will work very closely with the Deputy Secretaries-General, MUN Directors and often the President of the General Assembly. He or she will be actively involved in the selection of Guest Speakers and the division of issues and all decisions will have to go through the SG.

At the actual conference, the Secretary General will have to assist the Student Officer briefings and debriefings as well as greet the MUN Directors and guest speakers, and respond to any queries they should have with regards to the conference, and on a more general note, will be ultimately responsible for everything.

#### ***2.1.1.2 Deputy Secretaries-General***

NB: It is important to keep in mind that each conference has a unique structure. This section can be seen to outline the general responsibilities of those involved in the executive teams and not solely Deputy Secretary Generals.

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<sup>1</sup> In the opening ceremonies, the speech often revolves around the theme for the conference and its relevance to today's evolving society. However, the final speech sums up the conference, outlines a number of highlights and thanks all members, which helped organize the conference.

The Deputy-Secretaries General can be seen as the closest *aides* of the Secretary General. They are there to assist the SG in managing the operations of the secretariat as well as assuming any responsibilities of the SG in the absence of the Secretary General. They are there to help enhance and supervise the coherence and structure of the conference.

If we are to look at this role in more detail, the DSG's are often put in charge of drawing up the provisional list of issues and are the interface through which the external Student Officers and the Secretary General communicate. The Deputy Secretaries-General are to be assigned a number of forums for which they will be ultimately responsible prior and throughout the duration of the conference: The duties of the DSG'S prior to the conference, entail the following:

The Deputy Secretaries-General will be reviewing applications for Student Officer positions at the conference along with the Secretary General.

They will then communicate the results of the applications to **all** candidates.

They will produce documents highlighting what is to be expected of the chairs, notably-the structure of the research reports and guidelines which are to be abided by (i.e. plagiarism policy).

They will set deadlines for research reports and shall answer to any questions the Chairs may have with regards to any of their responsibilities prior and during the conference.

They will review the research reports (review standard of work, structure and plagiarism).

They will produce a booklet for the StOff team highlighting procedural matters specific to the conference as well as schedules and important information.

Moreover, they will work collaboratively with the Secretary General, must foster the same attributes as the SG and will also be delivering a final speech at the Closing Ceremonies, summing up their experience, and most importantly acknowledging the work carried out by the SG.

Furthermore, the Secretariat will also put together a workshop lead by themselves for Student Officers, where they will brief the chairs on what is expected of them and on any particular rules of procedure, which are of utmost importance. They will also put together a number of workshops for aspiring delegates of StOff members. Their role will not be to necessarily run them, but to organise who will run them and how they will be structured.

On a final note, The DSG's main focus are administrative procedures with the secretariat, however their responsibilities branch out to the duties outlined. At times, when assuming such a responsibility, one might feel inundated with work, however this justifies the importance of teamwork and communication skills with the rest of the Student Officer team.

## **2.1.2 Student Officers**

### **2.1.2.1 President of the General Assembly**

As can be deduced from the title given to this post, the President is ultimately responsible for all activities within the General Assembly. Prior to the conference, the PGA will oversee all preparations made by his fellow chairmen in the committees within the General Assembly. He shall update the Secretariat on the developments made within the Committee and shall be in charge of drawing up the agenda (including deadlines and necessary information) for his fellow chairmen.

At the actual conference, the President will declare the **opening** and **closure** of the conference at the respective ceremonies. The President will preside during the opening and closing ceremonies and will have met with the Secretariat prior to the conference so as to run through the agenda for the ceremonies.

When the sub-committees are in session the president will be answering to any queries made by his fellow chairmen and supervise all activities during the GA. The president will chair the plenary sessions and has the right to:

1. Declare the opening and closure of the plenary session,
2. Decide the point at which debate should adjourn ,
3. Direct discussions during the plenary meeting ,
4. Accord the floor to delegates ,
5. Ensure obedience to the rules of procedure by all delegations,

In short, the President will have complete control on all items under discussion during the plenary, and can restrict/influence many factors during debate such as the amount of time a speaker may take the floor, the time spent on the discussion on an issue and other items of such matters.

### **2.1.2.2 General Role of The President in an assigned forum**

The president is ultimately responsible for the activities in his/her forum. The President will review the research report(s) submitted by his/her deputy and will be in direct communication with the Secretariat prior to the conference. He/she will also support and help his/her deputy in answering any questions the deputy may have. In addition, at the conference, in the President's respective forum, he/she is the leading figure of authority; therefore the house will answer to their commands. If he/she proves to be a stern yet exemplary leader, therefore, the characteristic highlighted above in relation to those of a Secretary General, also have a high degree of relevance to a respected leader.

At the conference, the President (along with the deputy) will attend the Student Officer briefings and debriefings, in which (in the former) they will be given necessary information with regards to timetables and procedural matters and in the latter, will be given a chance to submit some form of evaluation to the Secretariat with regards to that conference day.

Within the confines of their respective committee, the President will brief the house the programme for the day. It is advised that the President takes on chairing responsibilities before the before the deputy. The President will be in control of all activities within the forum however will answer to the commands of the DSG in charge of that forum (these commands include, when to adjourn for lunch and other practicalities of that matter).

The President will be responsible for maintaining complete control of the house at all times.

### **2.1.2.3 General Role of the Deputy- President in an assigned forum**

The Deputy assumes less responsibility than the President, however both these positions carry out the same core functions. The Deputy will be required to produce research reports and chair during debate. They will attend the briefings and debriefings along with the President, and if the President is to be absent at any point during the conference, the Deputy is to assume the President's standard responsibilities. The President may delegate jobs to the Deputy; therefore teamwork and collaboration are essential elements.

## **2.1.3 Other Positions**

### **2.1.3.1 Advisor on the Advisory Panel**

### **2.1.3.2 Judge on the International Criminal Court**

### **2.1.3.3 Prosecutor on the International Criminal Court**

## **2.2 Research Reports**

Firstly, one of the key responsibilities that somewhat define the role of a Chair, is the production of research reports, which aim at preparing delegates for the conference. A research report can be defined as "a document, which provides your delegates with all the core information, which acts as a platform for them to build upon thus come up with solutions to the issues at hand".

The following structure will permit you to produce a well-structured research report, which will most definitely enhance the preparation of the delegates.

Note: This is a formal piece of writing, so a formal register should be used at all times.

### **Introduction**

In this section your aim is simply to introduce the topic with particular relevance to the prominence of the issue at hand in today's world, its origin and what the issue revolves around. You could also let the reader get a glimpse of what is to be expected in the research report. If you would like to emphasize certain words or phrases use *italics*, for sub-headings stick to **Bold**. Make sure to maintain a consistent structure throughout your research report (this structure may be stipulated by the conference).

### **Definition of Key Terms**

In this section you simply explain the meaning of a number of terms which either may prove to be difficult to understand to a number of delegates and require further explanation or are simply of high relevance to the issue and will be

referred to throughout the report, therefore a clear definition would enhance the understanding of the report.

If the definition is taken directly from another source, please credit the source (in the Bibliography), as there is zero tolerance for plagiarism within the MUN.

### **General Overview**

This is often the largest section of the research report, seeing as it provides the reader with detailed information highlighting:

1. What the issue is essentially about (in greater detail than was outlined in the introduction)
2. The origin and history of the issue
3. The current situation, including:
  - What has been done up to this point
  - Is the situation worsening or getting better? If one or the other, in which regions is the issue is still prominent?
4. Other forms of representation (so as to support the information highlighted in the report) can be used such as:
  - Statics (represented graphically or in a tabular form)
  - Diagrams (pictures, barometers, etc)

### **Major Parties Involved**

In this section, you should focus on the “parties” that play a significant role in the issue. These may be countries, companies or Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). The views of each entity should be clearly stated and elaborated upon. Any measures taken by the parties in relation to the issue should be stated. Try to stick to a small number of significant parties, in other words, ones that influence the direction and path of the issue.

### **Timeline of Key Events**

This section should be short and concise, and should only highlight events which play a role in defining the existence and development of the issue at hand. This section should be presented in a clear and coherent manner, preferably in a ‘column form’ whereby a date and the title of the event are present, only. For example:

Issue: Democratic People’s Republic of Congo

**May 2005**      A new constitution is decided upon and implemented by the government

**July 2006**      Elections are held. There are no clear majorities, thus elections named redundant. A run-off is held.

### **Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue**

This sub-heading speaks for itself. In this section, you should highlight any measures which attempted at resolving the issue, and who (which nation or

entity) made these attempts. You should evaluate their success and comment on any follow up these attempts received, for example: Did they influence the situation today or not? Will these measures be taken in the future?

It is strongly advised, that you make reference to any treaties or resolutions which are directed towards tackling the issue at hand. Evaluate such documents too, in terms of the causes for their success or failure, as this may enhance the work produced by the delegates.

### **Possible Solutions**

In this section you simply suggest a number of possible solutions that may resolve the issue. You are not to suggest any perambulatory or operative clauses and this section should merely set the groundwork for delegates to build upon. If, via research, you have come across treaties or resolutions that prove to be possible solutions, do not forget to file them into the appendix section.

### **Appendix/Appendices**

In this section you may choose to include the following:

1. Treaties or Resolutions related to the issue,
2. Documents or useful articles highlighting the issue,
3. Useful websites,
4. Relevant books or any other useful sources.

Keep it concise and ensure that only relevant information is included.

### **Bibliography**

This section is an essential element of your research report. You should aim to cite all the sources (i.e. books, documentaries, pictures, and websites) that have helped you in the process of writing the report. All quotations need to be cited. The bibliography can be written under the MLA7 format. This can be found on the following website: [www.easybib.com](http://www.easybib.com).

**Note:** Plagiarism is viewed as a major offense at all THIMUN affiliated conferences. It can lose a student officer their position. Keep this in mind when carrying out research and make sure to assemble all your sources correctly.

## 3 At the Conference

### 3.1 Prior to Debate

#### 3.1.1 Rules of Procedure

The rules of procedure are your guidelines to debate. It is important, as a Chair that you know what they are so that you can explain them to delegates and, more importantly, you can react confidently to any situation.

The rules of procedure mainly consist of motions and points. Keep in mind that no motion or point may interrupt a speaker (except a Point of Personal Privilege pertaining to audibility). The various motions and points are explained below.

#### Motions

##### Motion to Move to Previous Question

This is more commonly known as a motion to move into voting procedures. This must be backed by a “second” and can be objected. However, it is up to the Chair to decide what is appropriate. Keep in mind the amount of time an issue, resolution, clause or amendment has been discussed and whether there is the potential for more debate.

If in closed debate and in time in favour this motion signals a move to time against.

##### Motion to Extend Debate Time

This simply means to allow more time for debate on a resolution, clause or amendment. Again the Chair has the final decision. Take into account the amount of time already given and try to gauge the mood in the committee. Would it make the house rowdier if debate time was extended or would it produce more high quality debate?

##### Motion to Table a Resolution

This would mean to put a resolution aside until recalled into debate. For this to occur the person who called for the tabling of the resolution can take to the floor to make a speech about their reasoning. There can be time in favour and time against this proposal. Then a vote must be held. A 2/3 majority is required to pass the motion.

This motion is rare and time consuming. It would be more practical to ask the delegate if there are any changes that he/she considers necessary for debate to continue on the resolution and evaluate the situation from there.

##### Motion to Reconsider a Resolution

This is the motion to recall a tabled resolution to debate. This would require a 2/3 majority. However, if the house decides to redebate or continue debate on it, this resolution must come last as other, undebated resolutions have priority.

##### Objection to the Main Motion

This occurs when a delegate objects to the debate, for reasons such as it infringes on their national sovereignty. The delegate that proposed the motion can then have a short speech. It would then be voted upon and would require a 2/3 majority.

This motion is generally discouraged as it is destructive and generally inappropriate.

### Points

#### Point of Personal Privilege

This refers to the delegates' wellbeing and comfort in the committee room. It may be called out for some of the following reasons: the room is too hot/cold, the delegate cannot hear the speaker. This point may disrupt a speaker only when due to audibility.

#### Point of Information (to the speaker)

This is simply a question that is asked to the speaker concerning the content of a speech or other issues relevant to debate. The point must be phrased as a question and the delegate asking must remain standing whilst the question is answered, out of respect for the speaker. This point must not be abused by delegates wishing to make a speech.

There may be a "request for a follow up". This means the delegate wants to ask another question. Depending on the conference this may or may not be allowed by the Chair. No direct dialogue between delegates is allowed in between; the question is asked and then the answer is given.

#### Point of Information (to the Chair)

This is a question addressed to the Chair, pertaining to anything other than the rules of procedure. So it may be about lunch break, or asking the Chair to clarify a decision that was made.

#### Point of Order

This refers to the rules of procedure, but pertains to decisions made by the Chairs. It could be to disagree with a decision the Chair made or to ask about the rules of procedure. This is a non debatable point.

#### Point of Parliamentary Inquiry

This is similar to a point of order, but is a question about the rules of procedure and does not pertain to decision made by the Chair.

### **3.1.2 Lobbying**

Lobbying is an extremely important aspect to any conference and should therefore not be overlooked. As a Chair your job is to provide as much assistance as possible to ensure the best resolutions are produced from the lobbying time. The lobbying process will be explained below, as well as an idea of what the Chairs should do at each stage. Keep in mind that every conference and committee has its own procedure for lobbying, but the essential idea is always the same. That is, the main objective of lobbying is to produce good quality, consistent resolutions ready for debate.

#### Ad Hoc Committees

In general committees that have Ad Hoc debate (debating with clauses and not resolutions) are given less lobbying time. This is simply because delegates do not need co submitters for their clauses, which are submitted as amendments.

Therefore debate can start sooner and more time can be given to discussing a wider range of clauses.

### Non-Ad Hoc Committees

These committees are generally given much longer to lobby (at least two or three hours). The general structure of lobbying is:

1. **Chair takes role call**
2. **Chair explains how much time will be given for lobbying and how it works (if necessary)**
3. **Chair divides delegates according to issues**

This means that whichever issue a delegate has written a resolution on or is interested in contributing towards will be put into the group discussing that issue. Splitting the committee up in this way speeds the lobbying process up and ensures that everyone concerned with an issue has a say. It also helps you to keep track of which issues are most popular and how many resolutions there are on which issues.
4. **Delegates begin lobbying process**
5. **Chair keeps track of how many resolutions, on which issues, and main submitted by who**

Make sure you keep a constant check on the resolutions and who is writing them. This will help you keep control of the committee and allow you to follow the process and estimate how long it will take. All this will contribute to your planning for when to begin debate.
6. **When delegates finished with resolution, Chair checks formatting and content for suitability**

It is important for you to check all resolutions before they are taken to the Approval Panel as this generally saves time for the delegates and for the process in general. Check that the formatting is correct or at least consistent (see example resolution). You can also check that delegates maintain the correct language and do not refer to any specific monetary values (for example they cannot state that \$10,000 will be given to Amnesty International. It is presumed in MUN that the UN has unlimited funds). It is also good to help delegates by making suggestions on how they could improve clauses, thus potentially raising the standard of the resolution, and subsequently, debate.
7. **Resolution passes through Approval Panel process**
8. **Chair makes sure that they have a record of how many delegates are present in the committee**

This is to be able to obtain the correct amount of copies of the resolution for debate.

Note: Remember that delegates are not obliged to co-submit a resolution just because they agree with it. In many cases delegates co-submit simply to see the resolution debated.

### 3.1.3 Resolutions

A resolution is a key aspect to debate; it makes or breaks it. It is important that it is clearly formatted and that the content is appropriate and coherent. Essentially a resolution is made up of two parts; the perambulatory clauses and the operative clauses and it runs like one long sentence. This is reflected in the punctuation, where a full stop only comes at the end (see example resolution).

#### Perambulatory Clauses

Known in short as “preams” these are the clauses where delegates recognise facts and figures, the efforts of certain nations or organisations and an overview of the issue’s in general. Generally these are shorter than operative clauses. They begin with a cursive word and end in a comma. Words that are commonly used to start off a pream are:

Recognising	Reaffirming
Noting	Observing
Noting with concern	Fully aware
Realising	Deeply concerned
Recalling	Expecting
Welcoming	Approving

As a Chair your job is to check the format of preams and to make sure they are not too biased, as the objective of a pream is to recognise its situation. Preams are where the names of Non Governmental Organisations or any relevant charities are written out in full, with the acronym in brackets after. Only after that point can they be referred to in acronym form.

An example pream is:

“*Welcoming* charities such as, but not limited to, Save the Children, USAid, Oxfam and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and their views and actions,”

#### Operative Clauses

Operative clauses are where the solutions are presented. These are usually longer because of the detail required. They must be numbered and begin with an underlined word or phrase. They must end in a semi-colon. Some commonly used phrases for beginning an operative clause are:

Asks	Requests
Urges	Encourages
Strongly urges	Further resolves
Suggests	Deplores
Approves	Recommends
Invites	Calls upon

The following beginnings for operatives can only be used in Security Council:

Condemns	Decides
Strongly condemns	Strongly urges
Decides	Declares accordingly

Operatives may include sub clauses and sub sub clauses, where more detailed or specific information is included. Sub clauses are formatted using letters, and sub sub clauses using i's, for example:

- “ 1. Calls for MEDC's to take on the responsibility of assisting LEDC's in the same region in times of humanitarian crisis, in the form of, but not limited to:
- a) Financial support,
  - b) Medical aid,
  - c) Food supplies:
    - i. Funded and provided by neighbouring countries, whether LEDC's or MEDC's
    - ii. Distributed from central distribution centres located at least 20km from each major settlement,
  - d) Sustainable initiatives such as the reation of projects that help civilians provide and help themselves; ”

Note the use of a colon before the sub and sub sub clauses and the use of commas between sub clauses.

As a Chair, check for formatting. Also be aware of operative clauses that are vague or irrelevant to the point. You can always ask a delegate to rephrase or create more detail in a clause. This can often make debate more interesting. It is also important to keep in mind that specific amounts of money are not allowed to be referred to in an operative clause, however the source of the fund is. Do not worry about making a resolution perfect before going off to the Approval Panel and beginning debate because often this does not yield good debate. Sometimes the more vague resolutions can give debate an aim and a constructive purpose.

To start off debate on a resolution call upon the main submitter to take the floor. Make sure you inform the main submitter beforehand what they must do, just to set them at ease and to help keep everything running smoothly. Once the main submitter has taken the floor ask them to read out the operative clauses (do not make them read the preams. This is not relevant to debate as delegates should already know what the issue entails). Then you can give them a speech to introduce their resolution or convince the house that it is appropriate for the issue at hand. It is in order for the main submitter to yield the floor to other delegations. However, the main submitter must first ask the Chair. Then the Chair must ask the delegate if they accept the floor. Only then can the delegate take the floor. The floor can only be yielded twice consecutively.

An example:

China is the main submitter and wants to yield he floor to the delegate of Albania.

*China:* We would like to yield the floor to the delegate of Albania.

*Chair:* That will be in order. Delegate of Albania, do you accept the floor?

*Albania:* We do.

*Chair:* Then please take the floor.

### 3.1.4 Chairing Styles

Being a Chair is such an exciting position to hold at an MUN because it requires you to take on responsibility, but also to think well on your feet and to respond immediately to a committee. In many ways the Chair sets the tone of the committee, so it is important to set and maintain a tone that allows you to keep control of the delegates, but that is comfortable and fun for all involved. Every Chair has their own style and that is something that cannot be taught, however, the manner in which to Chair or the tone to set is something that is applicable to every Chair in every conference. Here are some guidelines:

- 1. Always begin more strictly.**  
This shows the delegates you have authority and gains you respect. This is key. If the delegates do not respect you it will be hard to keep control of them as the conference progresses.
- 2. Remain approachable, open and friendly throughout the conference.**  
It is important that delegates know they can come to their Chairs if they have questions or problems. You must always be polite and attentive to delegates, as this also helps gain you respect. As the saying goes "Treat others as you yourself would like to be treated". Treating delegates in the right way will make them more willing to comply to your authority.
- 3. Never publically contradict a co-chair.**  
As Chairs you are a team, and to maintain your control you must seem united. Contradicting your co-Chair in front of the house is not only rude and undermining, it can also give the delegates the impression that you are not strong as a team and can lose you respect. If you feel your Co-Chair has done or said something wrong, quietly mention it to him/her and talk about it afterwards.
- 4. Never shout at the house/delegates.**  
As a Chair you must always remain clam and collected. Once you begin shouting you quickly lose respect and control of any situation.
- 5. Never ignore a point made by a delegate or dismiss a question or remark.**  
Even if a comment is inappropriate, let the house know, but move on swiftly and do not pay too much attention to it. By ignoring or dismissing comments or questions you are not fulfilling your role as mentor to the delegates. As mentioned before, always remain approachable and friendly.
- 6. Always explain things fully and clearly.**  
This ensures that all delegates are aware of what is happening. Even if it seems obvious to you, it may not be to them. If they ask a question and you answer, ask if they have understood or if there is anything further they wish to know. This avoids confusion or misunderstandings, which can breed resentment or anger towards you as a Chair.
- 7. Do not abuse your authority.**  
It is tempting to want to use the privileges chairing encompasses. However, always remember the responsibilities you have. Abusing your authority can come off as arrogant and will not make delegates any more respectful or friendly towards you.

8. **Never be afraid to admit mistakes.**  
The term “The Chair stands corrected” is very useful! Do not try to overlook mistakes you made or dismiss delegates that point these out. Recognise them, accept them and move on. Admitting your faults will show the delegates that you are fair and, after all, only human.

## 3.2 During debate

### 3.2.1 Stock phrases

Stock phrases are simple phrases or words that Chairs use to explain the procedures during debate. These are very useful in all situations. Some example/important stock phrases can be seen below:

- Could the house please come to order?
- The next resolution to be debated will be on the question of...
- Would the main-submitter please take the floor and read out the operative clauses?
- The Chair sets the debate time at 40 minutes of open debate
- The floor is now open
- Are there any delegations wishing to take the floor?
- ... you have been recognized
- ... you have floor
- The speaker will [please] refrain from using unparliamentarily language
- The speaker will [please] refrain from insulting other delegates
- An amendment has been proposed by... This is in order. The chair will read it out
- We will now move into voting procedures on the amendment
- The speaker has opened himself to point of information. Are there any such points in the house?
- Please rise and state your point
- Please state your point in the form of a question
- Please refrain from asking several questions in one point
- Would the delegate please repeat/rephrase the question?
- There will be no direct dialogue between delegates

- I am sorry, but there is no more time for points of information. Could the speaker please yield the floor?
- I am sorry, but in the interest of debate, could the delegate please yield the floor?
- There has been a point of order in the house
- Your point is well/not well taken
- The chair stands corrected
- There has been a point of personal privilege on the floor
- Could the house please come to order and show the speaker the respect he/she deserves?
- Debate time on this resolution has elapsed
- We will now move into voting procedures on this resolution
- Would the administrative staff please close/secure all the doors and take up their voting positions?
- All those in favour of this resolution please raise your placards high
- All those against...
- All those abstaining...
- By a vote of... in favour, against, with... abstentions, this resolution/amendment passes/fails
- Clapping is (not) in order<sup>2</sup>

### **3.2.2 Task Division**

Normally, a committee has three or four Chairs, among those Chairs every Chair is an expert on a certain topic. If a topic is being debated, the expert Chair is never chairing, he/she will have to focus on sorting out amendments and writing up a “pick me and do not pick me” list for the chairing chair. Other Chairs will focus on the person chairing and take care of his/her “administrative work” such as notes, talking to disruptive delegates etc.

Therefore to sum up the roles of the Chairs during debate is the following:

1. 1<sup>st</sup> Chair chairing, only focuses on debate
2. 2<sup>nd</sup> Chair is the expert chair, sits next to the 1<sup>st</sup> Chair, will focus on debate and write up a pick me and do not pick me list.

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<sup>2</sup> Clapping is in order when an amendment or resolution passes in general. However, clapping is not permitted if an amendment or resolution fails. It is also not permitted if an amendment passes that is deemed destructive, e.g. suggests to strike some part of a clause. This would be seen as promotion of destructive debate.

3. 3<sup>rd</sup> Chair and 4<sup>th</sup> Chair focus on administrative tasks and will help the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Chairs.

### **What is a “pick me and do not pick me” list?**

This list will help the 1<sup>st</sup> Chair to pick certain delegates, which he/she should or should not pick. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Chair will base this list on the amendments; how well they are formulated and to what extent they fit to the issue debated and the previous behaviour of the delegates in the house.

### **3.2.3 Chairing Scenarios**

- I. A Chair is sick
- II. The Chair makes a mistake
- III. A question you cannot answer
- IV. A declaration of war
- V. Maintaining silence
- VI. Chair gets criticism
- VII. Dealing with disruptive delegates

During all these scenarios the most important thing is to stay calm and professional, it takes a lot responsibility to be a Chair, however after a conference you feel extremely proud and it is definitely worth it.

- I. A Chair is sick

This can happen during the conference, but also before the conference. The most important thing is that you will inform your MUN director and your Co-Chairs but also the Executive Team. The Executive Team will then find a replacement and will let you and your Co-Chairs know. If this happens before the conference, you must also send all your research material to your replacement, so that a smooth transaction can take place.

- II. The Chair makes a mistake

If you make a mistake, the easiest way is to say you are wrong, therefore just admit it. You should just say “The chair stands corrected”.

- II. A question you cannot answer

If a question is being asked by a delegate that you cannot answer, you can always look it up. Ask a Chair who is not chairing at that moment to go to a computer room and to look up the answer to the question. This is the easiest way to continue the debate and to answer the question.

- IV. A declaration of war

Declarations of war are absolutely out of order. Make this clear to the entire committee, but do not award it with too much attention and continue with debate.

- V. Maintaining silence

You can say “order in the house” numerous times, however sometimes this simply does not work, especially at the end of the day, when delegates get tired

or if you are chairing a big committee. It is important to listen to the delegates to understand why they are being so rowdy, in order to understand the best way of keeping them calm.

When you call for order, do not proceed before there is order, wait a few seconds.

There are a few things you should not do under these circumstances:

*Don't* keep saying that they need to be quiet, then it is better to have a recess/wait until there is silence.

*Don't* expect there to be complete silence, only mention it if the murmur bothers the speaker.

*Don't* lose your temper and do not raise your voice. Never yell, react aggressively or annoyed at delegates; stay calm, and warn them of consequences that may arise from their behaviour.

*Don't* suspend note passing if it is not the source of commotion.

Also, bear the following in mind:

- Start with a rather serious chairing style to set the right debating tone. This will also help you establish authority. If everything runs well then you may choose to loosen up.
- Be polite, friendly, helpful, serious, clear, co-operative, committed, involved, un-biased, fair and diplomatic at all times. This way you earn the respect of the delegates.
- Recognize delegates from all over the room, especially delegates in the back corners of the room and the first few rows of the room.
- Be consistent during the debate with your style, policies, and implantations of the Rules of Procedure.
- Move your ego to the back. Never speak condescendingly or arrogantly towards a delegate.

## VI. Chair gets criticism

The idea of having a mutiny amongst the delegates, or notes threatening to impeach the Chair does seem quite daunting, but the most important thing is to stay in control and stay calm.

Do not pay too much attention to it, as that way you will give it importance.

Remind the house that they are not being constructive and that it is not relevant to the debate. Just say something along the lines of "Thank you for your point, but it is hardly relevant to the debate. It is important that you all try to focus on a constructive debate."

Should there be a motion "to remove the Chair", ask your Co-Chair to state that this is out of order.

## VII. Dealing with disruptive delegates

Chairs will occasionally have to deal with "disruptive" delegates, who are usually simply seeking attention. Chairs should not take their remarks or behaviour as a personal insult, but deal with them quietly and calmly.

Chairs should react when the general conduct of a delegate is inappropriate to the conference and shows a lack of respect or politeness or if a delegate voices opinions. In both cases the following steps can be taken.

Take them aside privately, explain the situation, and ask them nicely to stop their current behaviour. Try to do this privately without making it public in front of the whole forum.

If the delegate continues to disrupt the forum, send them to one of the Executive Team. They will then deal with those delegates.

In extreme cases, the Executive Team may decide to confiscate the badge and remove the delegate from the forum and conference. MUN directors should also be informed about this.

These disruptive delegates will be reported to the Board of Directors, who will consider further action, such as banning the school from participation in future conferences.

## 4 The Top Tips to Remember

1. You should keep the C-strategy in mind. Your behaviour should tie in with these words:  
Calm  
Creative  
Considerate  
Co-ordinated  
in Control  
Cooperative
2. If you are feeling insecure think about the authority you have over the delegates do not ever show this in arrogant behaviour towards them.
3. When you are stressed or unsure about how to deal with a situation always discuss with you Co-Chair. You are a team for a reason!
4. Always take your time. You do not need to rush things- it can impede your ability to make good decisions and can cause you more stress than is necessary.
5. Use stock phrases; they are useful and explain exactly what you want to say in most situations.
6. Never yell at delegates, make sure to stay calm and professional at all times. Speak loudly and firm.
7. You are attending this conference as a Chair, a position that comes with a lot of responsibility, but don't forget to enjoy and have a laugh with your delegates at times.

## 5 Appendices

I – An example research report:

**Forum:** Human Rights Council

**Issue:** The effects of Media distortion, suppression and bias.

**Student Officer:** Imene Hamdi-Cherif

**Position:** Deputy Chair of the Human Rights Council

### Definition of Key Terms

**Media Distortion :** This occurs when media networks alter or change the original information obtained from the primary sources.

**Media Suppression :** This occurs when information is withheld from the public, in other words is censored, and is prevented from making the headlines, often by the government.

**Media Bias:** Media Bias relates to the subjective perspective in which information is delivered to the public via news channels, for example. The reporters report the story and often side with one of the parties, conveying a negative image of one of the parties and a better one for the other.

### Introduction

The effects of media suppression, distortion and bias has long been a prominent issue on the United Nation's agenda and one which has often been the underlying cause of heated debates amongst politicians. Media suppression is often related to freedom of speech, as the information passed on to the public is censored, often by the government. This deprives citizens from obtaining the truth which can lead to disastrous outcomes. What is meant by media bias, is when one party, in this case the media, chooses to report news or happening from a subjective perspective, often misleading the public. This issue has for long been a human rights problem, as Article 19, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, states : *' Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.'* Even though, many nations may claim to abide by this article, many of them, do not. The information distributed by the media, is often altered, and in no way works in conjunction with the article highlighted above. The people have the right to the truth, yet they do not obtain it.

### General Overview

Many view the media, as being the watchdog within the society. The public hope and depend on the media as being a transparent body, which reports what the state fails to deliver. For instance, media in the Middle East has often been prejudiced for its biased ways and dishonest information. A recent example of this, is the scandal which broke out in late September 2010, when Barack Obama hosted peace talks between Palestine, Israel, Jordan and Egypt. A photo was taken which depicted Barack Obama in the lead on the red carpet, followed by Israel's Netanyahu, Palestine's President, the King of Jordan, and lastly Egypt's Mubarak . This event was documented, by one of Egypt's most renowned and ancient newspapers: Al-Ahram, a state owned corporation. However, when Al-Ahram, reported the news, they decided to photoshop the original photo, highlighted above, and decided to place Mubarak in the lead, followed by Obama and so on. Why did the journalists choose to display dishonest information?

In order to defend itself, the paper stated that it only edited the photograph in order to show the public that Egypt was taking a stand in the peace talks, however, the company did not do itself any favours. Western media companies, drew this opportunity to criticise Middle Eastern media networks, consequently their governments. However, in this particular case, many argue, that it is fair to blame the Egyptian regime, seeing as the government had no implication with this scandal. The people were furious. Seeing as the media is esteemed to play a watchful eye in society, and what triggered more fury, was the fact that, if this is the most respected and best-reputed paper within the country, what is to be expected from the remaining media sources within Egypt?

Many might not view this issue as one of great importance, yet what the Egyptian media was trying to convey was that Egypt was really working hard towards obtaining peace in these regions, plagued with war. Yet, the real situation depicted the president, at the end of the line. Had this shot been printed, it would have demonstrated the opposite message to what Al-Ashram was opting to convey. In other words, the public has been misled. This is an example of media distortion, in other words, dishonest journalism.

Furthermore, media distortion, does not only occur within the political sphere. At times, news coverage in relation to new scientific discoveries is often altered. This may have disastrous effects on the people, the researchers', and both parties (in this case, the company the researcher works for and the media network covering the news.) If news is delivered to the public which states that that temperature is to rise by x degrees in the next few decades, when actually researchers stated that it would rise by x amount in y centuries, the public might begin to panic, leading to several disastrous outcomes, such as accidents, for example. Furthermore, Scientists might cut ties with the media, if they believe they are being misrepresented, which in the end would prevent the public from acquiring any news with regards to recent discoveries.

### **Media Suppression and distortion in China**

The Chinese population is known as being one of the most affected by media suppression. *How to control the media, and to what extent, has always been a tough decision for China's ruling party.* ([www.cfr.org](http://www.cfr.org), Media censorship in China) Journalist's are constantly being detained and tortured by Chinese authorities. However, with a fast growing economy, the scope for media coverage is much greater and with the growing demand for information by Chinese citizens, the current regime the Chinese government is implementing with regards to the media, is being tested, and many claim that the only reason the state wants to maintain control of the media, is so that it can remain in power.

The current President of China, Hu Jintao was expected to relax the previous media policy, however, his administration has only pursued tougher regulations and is also fond of the idea of arresting and harassing journalists. *But in spite of a crackdown under Hu, China's media is undergoing a process of commercialization, leading to growing competition, diversified content, and an increase in investigative reporting by Chinese news agencies. According to a government report, there are more than two thousand newspapers, over eight thousand magazines, and some 374 television stations in the country.* ([www.cfr.org](http://www.cfr.org), Media Censorship in China) In addition, all media networks in China, are state owned. In short, Chinese law states that journalists must always act in favour of the motherland, and must not let any state secrets slip or damage China's image, as this may lead to disastrous effects between China and its global partners.

In 2008, an earthquake hit the Sichuan Province, and caused a high number of schools to collapse, consequently killing many students. Tan Zuoren, an editor and environmentalist created a list of all the deceased students, and blamed the poor construction of the school buildings and corruption for the thousands of deaths which occurred. The Chinese government blocked all investigations related to the issue, and Zuoren's partners and helpers were harassed or beaten, and he was officially sentenced to five years in prison, for breaching the law.

The Chinese authorities, use various tactics in order to censor the media. Threats are the most popular. Imprisonment, loss of job occupation, torture and fines, are the ones that arises most often. Self-censorship has also become a new problem. Journalists, like any other human being, should have complete freedom of speech, yet with the numerous threats submitted by the Chinese authorities, many journalists distort their own findings, or present them from a biased perspective. Chang ping, a Chinese columnist who lost his job due to a commentary he produced on Tibet stated on his blog, which highlights the struggles of a Chinese journalist: *"I am afraid of other people praising me as a brave newspaperman, because I know I am full of fear in my heart. In my various media positions in the past decade, what I've practiced most is avoiding risk. Self-censorship has become part of my life."*

Prior to the 2008 Beijing Olympics, China agreed to let foreign media enter the country and report whatever they chose. However, this was not the case during the event. Chinese authorities detained many journalists, beat them and imprisoned them, unfortunately, many still remain in prison today. As can be seen from this brief analysis on media censorship in China, the issue at hand affect millions worldwide, and is one which we must strive to resolve.

### **Media Distortion and Suppression in Vietnam**

Blogs, are regarded as personalised spaces, on which people record their interests, daily activities, their work or anything of that matter. Even though, blogs seem to be the safest place for journalists to express their thoughts and document issues, that is certainly not the case in Vietnam. On numerous accounts, Police have raided homes and claimed possession of bloggers' laptops, files and any other documents. Any journalist who documents findings, that the state finds controversial, such as news related to the relationship between Vietnam and China, is often prosecuted. Article 79 of Vietnam's penal code highlights any activities which aim at overthrowing the government. This is often the main law that journalists 'breach'. Unfortunately, as is the case with china, the media in Vietnam are decreasing at an inverse rate than the booming economy.

On a final note, as with Chinese authorities, primarily due to self-censorship, many issues in local areas are often ignored by journalists, in order to ensure that the image of the head of that town is not damaged. As can be seen once again, media suppression undermines the whole concept of the right to information, knowledge and education and most importantly, freedom of speech.

### **Media Bias in the United States of America**

With one of the most democratic regimes and free market economies worldwide, one would not expect such an issue to occur within the US. Knowing that most if not all media networks in the US are privately owned, pressures to increase revenue, consequently profits, has lead to the avoidance of sensitive or controversial issues which might otherwise stir up conflict and criticism, which would damage the

reputation of the company. The fact that these corporations are driven by business interest only, defies the role of media within society, which entails being a form of guide and watchdog.

Altered information with regards to the Vietnam war, has stirred up conflict in the past. However, national media networks continue to present and alter information from a subjective perspective. The first picture below was the original snapshot taken by a photographer, however when it was published by CNN (one of the largest media networks worldwide) the woman was photo shopped and cropped out of the image. CNN is misleading the public by decreasing the graveness and importance of the issue.



Figure 1. Original shot taken by Photographer of demolished Building.



Figure 2. Image displayed by CNN.

### **Major Parties Involved**

This issue is one that has been making the headlines for years. It has put many giant corporations and governments such as CNN, CBS News, and the Chinese government, for example, under the spotlight. Many non-profit organizations have also decided to take a stand and put an end to the suffering of these journalists, as many regard the imprisonment of these journalists, simply unacceptable and immoral.

### **Committee to Protect Journalists (CJP)**

This non-profit organization aims at promoting press freedom and protecting the rights of journalists. It is most definitely, the organization which is most related to and engaged at hand. It was founded back in 1981, when a number of journalists endured harassment from the authorities. It leads protests, and provides the public with special reports and news coverage in relation to the issues. It also produces an annual press survey named: *Attacks on the press*. It is also known for honoring journalists which have been tortured, imprisoned, harassed beaten and so on, with an award: CJP international Press freedom award. Annual, CJP also compiles a list of all the murdered journalists within that year. It is also one of the fundamental members of the International Freedom of Expression exchange, which is made of 70 Non-Governmental organization which monitors the violations of journalists' rights worldwide.

### **International Freedom of Expression exchange (IFEX)**

The IFEX is a network of free-expression groups which monitor the violations of people which use exercise the right to voice their own opinion. IFEX members, work collaboratively towards freeing jailed individuals, whom are in prison for speaking their mind. The members meet up at meetings and discuss new ways in which they can take action. They run campaigns and produce a weekly newsletter in order to inform the public of their activities. Freedom of speech, is a core moral value which both of the organizations mentioned so far, abide by.

### **Reporters without Borders**

**Reporters without Borders** is a non-profit organization which speaks up for the rights of journalists and as does IFEX, documents any human rights violations in relation to freedom of speech. They have also included a 'Barometer' which records the number of journalists imprisoned amongst other criteria. The image below is a screenshot of the barometer taken on January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2011.



### **Human Rights Watch**

Human Rights watch is another NGO which focuses primarily which any issue regarding human rights. They publish regular news articles with regards to media distortion, suppression and bias, and are a deemed to be a very reliable source of information. They often write to senior officials asking them to relax their laws on press freedom and things of that matter. Human Rights Watch recently took on a very controversial issue, regarding the imprisonment of the Wikileaks founder, Wikileaks being a site on which secret documents regarding private content within the political arena are published

### **The United nations Education, scientific and cultural Organization (UNESCO)**

UNESCO promotes freedom of expressions and recognizes it as basic human right. It believes that with democracy comes freedom of speech. It provides advice to governments with regards to the matter.

### **Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue**

In the past, non-governmental organizations have initiated campaigns in order to raise awareness of this pressing issue. However, they have only been able to achieve so much. They consistently wrote to senior officials in various countries urging them to recognize the rights of these journalists. In 2006, the United Nations held a press conference regarding the 10 most censored countries. China remains the leading nation in terms of journalists' imprisonment. In addition 500 journalists are imprisoned a year, however, press freedom is better than it has ever been in China, at the moment. The freedom of journalists is often due to the pressure from protests and campaigns ran primarily by CPJ and pressure from foreign governments. The Organizations highlighted above continue to run campaigns, initiate the creation of watchdogs and continue to fight for what is right.

### **Possible Solutions**

By setting up companies which would facilitate the creation of new media networks, would diversify the media arena, consequently allowing more journalists into the field therefore documenting various stories. The companies that would facilitate the

creation of such networks would be closely affiliated with watchdogs which would monitor the activities of the government in relation to the journalists of that particular company. The watchdogs and NGO's would have detailed records and most importantly, accurate and up to date records of the events taking place within the media sphere, allowing them to act promptly against any form of human rights violations carried out by the government, and in time, the governments will hopefully succumb to the constant pressure, and relax their media censorship laws.

## **Appendices**

The following link contains masses of information with regards to restricted press freedom within China:

- [http://www.cfr.org/publication/11515/media\\_censorship\\_in\\_china.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/11515/media_censorship_in_china.html)

The CPJ and IFEX are also great places to start as they contain large amounts of reports in relation to the issue at hand:

- <http://cpj.org/>
- [www.ifex.org](http://www.ifex.org)

This link contains a brief report of what took place during the 2006 United Nation's conference with regards to media censorship:

- [http://www.un.org/News/briefings/docs/2006/060502\\_Cooper.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/News/briefings/docs/2006/060502_Cooper.doc.htm)

This final link, is one which highlights and concentrates primarily on media bias within the United States:

- <http://www.globalissues.org/article/163/media-in-the-united-states>

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