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WHAT IS A WORKING PAPER?

A Working Paper in a Model United Nations conference is an initial, basic document that a delegate or a group of delegates write to express their ideas, opinions, and possible solutions related to the topic in the committee.

Basically, a Working Paper is like a rough draft or a starting point that delegates can use to communicate their ideas more effectively, explore different options, and eventually merge their ideas to come up with the final resolution. Moreover, Working Papers are an essential element of the debates as they lead the way of negotiations and bring more order to the discussions.

WHO CAN WRITE A WORKING PAPER?

A Working Paper may be produced in one of two ways:

- Individually, a single delegate representing one country.
- In a group (Bloc), several delegates who share the same views or have common interests regarding the agenda. A bloc is just a group of countries that agree on major points and decide to collaborate in finding solutions.

RULES RELATED TO WORKING PAPERS

The Executive Board (EB) of each committee has the word over everything related to Working Papers. AS IN-

- The EB is the one that decides whether individual Working Papers are allowed.
- The EB sets the submission deadline.
- The EB determines the format.



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•At their discretion, the EB may compel or exempt preambulatory clauses from being included.

Since rules may be different from one committee to another, delegates should always check the format and rules with their Executive Board before preparing a Working Paper.

WORKING PAPER FORMATS

There are two formats commonly accepted in MUNs. One of the most popular and structured formats is described here. First, time delegates normally find this format easier to comprehend and follow.

1st Format of a Working Paper (Structured Format)

This format distinctly separates the Working Paper into three main components:

- Heading
- Preambulatory Clauses
- Operative Clauses

1. Heading of Working Paper

The document opens with a heading that contains:

- The title "Working Paper"
- Name of the Committee
- The Agenda / Topic
- Name(s) of the Author(s)



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This heading informs the Executive Board of the author of the document and the issue it addresses.

2. Preambulatory Clauses (Explaining the Problem)

Preambulatory clauses describe the background of the issue. They explain:

- Why the committee is discussing it
- What previous international actions or efforts have already been taken
- The committee members get a better understanding of the context through these clauses before proceeding to the solutions.

Important characteristics of preambulatory clauses are:

- Each clause starts with an italicized introductory phrase.
- Each clause ends with a comma
- They focus on explaining the issue, not solving it

3. Operative Clauses (Suggesting Solutions)

Operative clauses form the central part of the Working Paper. They explicitly state:

- What actions should be taken?
- What solutions are being proposed?
- What recommendations is the committee making?

These clauses explain the various ways in which the problem could be solved.

Essential things to recall about operative clauses are:



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- Each clause begins with a strong action word.
- Each clause is numbered. Except for the last one, each clause ends with a full stop.
- One clause should focus on only one idea.

If more explanation is needed, sub-points using letters or Roman numerals can be added.

IMPORTANCE OF WORKING PAPER

- Working Papers are a great tool for first-time delegates as they: clearly lay out the delegate's ideas.
- Facilitate more confident participation in the debate.
- Serve as a tool to develop alliances and blocs, which are the original source from which the final resolution is drafted.
- Basically, a Working Paper is a document that allows delegates to convert speeches into concrete ideas and take the committee towards productive outcomes.