




Position Paper Guide

For

Delegates



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Many conferences require that each delegation submit a position paper—an essay detailing your country's policies on the topics being discussed in your committee. Writing a position paper will help you organize your ideas so that you can share your country's position with the rest of the committee. If you conduct extensive research, a position paper should be easy to write.

Most conferences that require position papers ask for them about one month before the conference so that staff members can read them and get a feel for the direction debate will take. If the conference you are attending does not require a position paper, you should still consider writing one to help you organize your research and prepare your speeches. Many delegates use their position papers as their opening remarks.

How to Write a Position Paper

Writing a position paper might appear to be a daunting task, especially for new delegates. But with enough research, you will find that writing a position paper will be easy and useful. Position papers are usually one to one-and-a-half pages in length. Your position paper should include a brief introduction followed by a comprehensive breakdown of your country's position on the topics that are being discussed by the committee. A good position paper will not only provide facts but also make proposals for resolutions.

Many conferences will ask for specific details in a position paper, so be sure to include all the required information. Most conferences will provide delegates a background guide to the issue. Usually, the background guide will contain questions to consider. Make sure that your position paper answers these questions.



A good position paper will include:

- A brief introduction to your country and its history concerning the topic and committee;
- How the issue affects your country;
- Your country's policies with respect to the issue and your country's justification for these policies;
- Quotes from your country's leaders about the issue;
- Statistics to back up your country's position on the issue;
- Actions taken by your government with regard to the issue;
- Conventions and resolutions that your country has signed or ratified;
- UN actions that your country supported or opposed;
- What your country believes should be done to address the issue;
- What your country would like to accomplish in the committee's resolution; and
- How the positions of other countries affect your country's position.

Position Paper Tips

- **Keep it simple.** To communicate strongly and effectively, avoid flowery wording and stick to uncomplicated language and sentence structure.
- **Make it official.** Try to use the seal of your country or create an "official" letterhead for your position paper. The more realistic it looks, the more others will read it.
- **Get organized.** Give each separate idea or proposal its own paragraph. Make sure each paragraph starts with a topic sentence.
- **Cite your sources.** Use footnotes or endnotes to show where you found your facts and statistics. If you are unfamiliar with bibliographic form, look up the Modern Language Association (MLA) guidelines at your school's library.
- **Read and reread.** Leave time to edit your position paper. Ask yourself if the organization of the paper makes sense and double-check your spelling and grammar.
- **Speech! Speech!** Do you plan to make an opening statement at your conference? A good position paper makes a great introductory speech. During debate, a good position paper will also help you to stick to your country's policies.
- **Let the bullets fly.** Try not to let your proposals become lost in a sea of information. For speechmaking, create a bulleted list of your proposals along with your most important facts and statistics so that you will not lose time looking for them during debate.



SAMPLE POSITION PAPER

Papua New Guinea

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Illicit trade of small arms has long been a social ill that undermines world peace, human rights, and economic development. It kills at least 500,000 people a year and poses a serious threat on maintaining a peaceful community. It is estimated that approximately 1 person out of 10 people own a type of small arms in a nation in the pacific region including Papua New Guinea, Solomon island, and Fiji. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in Papua New Guinea has had a profound impact on tribal warfare, crime, and political conflicts, interfering with the delivery of basic services to citizens. Papua New Guinea has been working actively to eradicate the illicit trade of SALW through amending obsolete legislations, adopting regional law framework, and ratifying conventions. However, Papua New Guinea faces big obstacles that need comprehensive and long-term solutions. With over a thousand cultural groups and 820 languages, the central government has been regarded as a foreign entity to most tribal population living in rural areas. Papua New Guinea faces serious difficulties in centralizing power and enforcing it to various cultural societies which don't understand the concepts of "government" or "citizenship". The combatant nature of many tribes also poses hindrances to eradicating conflicts and illicit trade of SALW. Although Papua New Guinea has established a somewhat comprehensive legal framework to annihilate the illegal use of SALW, the task of enforcing regulations on highly diverse geographical and cultural backgrounds still remain as a major issue.

In efforts to curb the rapid proliferation of SALW, the Papua New Guinea's government has implemented comprehensive legislation to gain control over the flow of illegal SALW. The fundamental legislative work, The Firearms Act 1996 regulates the manufacture, import, retransfer, transit, and other areas that need a solid implementation to eradicate the illicit trade of SALW radically. Firearms act CH No 310 illegalizes small arms production by an individual to reduce the supply of illegal weapons inside the country and allows the Papua New Guinean government to forfeit small arms owned by an individual. The government also implemented a program to computerize the registration numbers of SALW so that they can be traced after distribution. Papua New Guinea has also instituted a Guns Control Committee in 2005 with the help of UNDP, Australian International Development Assistance and the New Zealand government which explored widely to acquire strategies in combating illegal SALW. After the implementation of various policies and plans, the government expected to see decrease in criminal rate, especially in the assaultive use of guns. However, the legislation and programs did not meet its initiative goals in some aspects. Unlike the Bougainville case, where the UNOMB (United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville) set policies to gain gun control after the bloodiest 16 years of civil conflicts,



the implementation of national laws were hindered by varying demographics and geographical environment. Although the collection and destruction of SALW has shown effective, ceasing the circulation of illegal SALW seems almost impossible without international cooperation as illegal trade of SALW is prominent in the Pacific region.

As no country is immune to the spread of illegal SALW, Papua New Guinea has been actively participating in regional efforts to eradicate the illicit trade of SALW. From bilateral assistance with the Australian government to multilateral cooperation with surrounding Fiji, New Zealand, Tonga and other countries, Papua New Guinea musters its utmost power to eradicate this issue through a wide range of activities. As one of the members of The Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police (PCPC), Papua New Guinea took part in establishing the Pacific Transnational Crime Coordination Centre and implementing its Nadi legal framework. Papua New Guinea has adopted applicable conventions and resolutions such as the UNSCR 1325 Women, Peace, and Security when it realized the need to address SALW's threat to the most vulnerable, women and girl children to further strengthen its determination on the complete termination of illicit SALW. Although Papua New Guinea and the members of Pacific Islands Group Forum (PIF) strive to alleviate the illicit trade of SALW, they have difficulties in conducting thorough research for a decent assessment of status quo. Papua New Guinea calls for human resources and financial assistance from the international community in order to better enact international plans and legislation.

The illicit trade of SALW has long been considered as a powerful vice that causes human-rights abuses, injury, death, and interference on development goals. As the proliferation of SALW is very contagious and rapid, effective solutions collaborated by regional countries are imperative. Strong enforcement of laws, cooperation between NGOs and the government, and vigorous implementation of action plans should also be put forward in combating the illicit trade of SALW. Papua New Guinea has been carrying out various tasks such as the ratification of UN resolution 1373, the implementation of Nadi legal framework and participating in PIF and PIPC to eradicate this problem where it is most prone in the Southern Highlands. However as Papua New Guinea faces resource constraints and other challenges to meet its goals, it calls for international support in technological and financial aspects. Papua New Guinea sincerely affirms its position to engage in future activities related to the eradication of illicit trade of SALW.

Papua New Guinea closes this position paper with the following quote by the 7th Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan addressing the Security Council September 1999.

“In an era where the world will no longer stand by in silence when gross and systematic violations of human rights are being committed, the United Nations is dedicated to addressing both the supply and demand aspects of the trade in small arms.”

Thank you.



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Biography – MLA format

<Name of the site. Date of the posting/revision. Affiliated organizations or institutes to the site. Accessed date. Address of the Site>

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