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**Preparation Paper/Study Guide:**

**Human Rights Council (HRC)**

**“Human Rights and Private Military Companies”**

## **Presentation of the Chairs**

### **Chair**

Barbora Obračajová is about to commence her last year at the Faculty of Law, at Charles University. Here she has been passionate about Public International Law, Human Rights and International Development Cooperation. She has been to more than a dozen MUNs, both chairing and as a delegate. She has interned with the Czech Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Permanent Mission to United Nations in New York, which she misses a lot. Nowadays she is privileged to work at a global law firm, hence VIMUN is like coming home after a corporate vacation. She would love to create a fun environment with a lot of jokes and shared humor in the committee; nonetheless as a lawyer she has a particular proclivity for Rules of Procedure.

### **Co-Chair**

Mirheta Omerovic is a master student of a double degree programme of “International Management” at Ca’Foscari University of Venice in Italy and “International Economics and Business” at Hohenheim University of Stuttgart in Germany. Moreover, she is a scholarship holder of the “International College Ca’Foscari” and a member of the “Venice Diplomatic Society”. She holds a BA in “Economics and management” from the Ca’Foscari University of Venice. During her bachelor she has done an Erasmus exchange at the Linköping University in Sweden. She is particularly interested in macroeconomics and likes to travel and learn about different politics, perspectives and ideas. She is a certified British council motivator of the Active Citizens and holds the award of “The best international delegate” of the International European Forum 2015 in Yerevan, Armenia. She already participated in several MUN Sessions, with the highlight being the “Change the world MUN” held in NYC, USA. Currently, she works as a teaching assistant intern at the SSST University in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## 1) Introduction

In the past 20 years, there has been a brand new phenomenon when it comes to security issues - the usage of private military and security companies (hereinafter referred to as "PMSC"). PMSC have been on the rise in numerous countries during armed conflicts, such as Afghanistan, the Balkans, Colombia, the Congo, Iraq, Somalia or Sudan.<sup>1</sup> According to some sources, the industry has an estimated worth of approximately \$100 and \$120 billion annually.<sup>2</sup>

Quintessentially, the majority of these issues fall within a grey zone. It all starts with the very definition of PMSC, since they are lacking both a clear definition as well as common perception thereof. Due to the wide range of their operations, this field is till now just as blurry as the legal framework to which they are subjected. Furthermore, questionable on a long-term basis is, if, how and in what way PMSC may be held accountable for human rights violations, as well as for violations of international humanitarian law. Past efforts have been questionable and the debate stagnates.

## 2) General background

### **2.1) Definitions of PMSC**

First and foremost, there is no definition of PMSC that is agreed upon internationally. Therefore the perception of the subject matter can be either very wide or rather restricted depending on the point of view and related priorities. There are for example certain calls for a clear distinction between

- *private security companies,*
- *private military companies and*
- *mercenaries*

in order to diminish arbitrariness in regulating these phenomena. Others would prefer a "one size fits all" type of provisions that would cover the biggest number of these providers possible.

A draft convention proposed by the Working Group on Mercenaries (see hereunder) defines **PMSC** as "*a corporate entity which provides on a compensatory basis military and/or security services by physical persons and/or legal entities,*"<sup>3</sup> whereas the term "**military services**" shall be understood as "*specialized services related to military actions including strategic planning, intelligence, investigation, land, sea or air reconnaissance, flight operations of any type, manned or unmanned, satellite surveillance, any kind of knowledge transfer with military applications, material and technical support to armed forces and other related activities.*"<sup>4</sup>

Definitions of mercenaries, as laid out in variety of international agreements (like Article 47 of the Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts and in Article 1 of the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries of 1989) may up to some point also cover PMSC personnel.

According to the International Convention *against the* Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries of 1989 a "**mercenary** is any person who:

- a) *Is specially recruited locally or abroad in order to fight in an armed conflict;*
- b) *Is motivated to take part in the hostilities essentially by the desire for private gain and, in fact, is promised, by or on behalf of a party to the conflict, material compensation substantially in excess of that promised or paid to combatants of similar rank and functions in the armed forces of that party;*
- c) *Is neither a national of a party to the conflict nor a resident of territory controlled by a party to the conflict;*
- d) *Is not a member of the armed forces of a party to the conflict; and*

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<sup>1</sup> Gomez del Prado, José L.: Impact on Human Rights of Private Military and Security Companies' Activities. Global Research, 9 April 2016, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/impact-on-human-rights-of-private-military-and-security-companies-activities/10523>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Draft Convention, Article 2

<sup>4</sup> Draft Convention, Article 3

- e) *Has not been sent by a State which is not a party to the conflict on official duty as a member of its armed forces.*
2. *A mercenary is also any person who, in any other situation:*
- a) *Is specially recruited locally or abroad for the purpose of participating in a concerted act of violence aimed at:*
    - i. *Overthrowing a Government or otherwise undermining the constitutional order of a State; or*
    - ii. *Undermining the territorial integrity of a State;*
  - b) *Is motivated to take part therein essentially by the desire for significant private gain and is prompted by the promise or payment of material compensation;*
  - c) *Is neither a national nor a resident of the State against which such an act is directed;*
  - d) *Has not been sent by a State on official duty; and*
  - e) *Is not a member of the armed forces of the State on whose territory the act is undertaken.”*

What, furthermore, makes coming up with a clear definition quite hard, is that the scope of PMSC operations may be enormously wide, since they cover a wide range of activities both within and outside war zones. PMSC personnel may either operate as combatants within a conflict, usually being heavily armed and rather lacking oversight (which poses quite a significant threat to human rights safeguards), or conduct a variety of activities outside conflict zones. PMSC are then, for instance, used to protect mines, refineries and ships, participate in drug-eradication efforts, and provide logistics support or train security forces.

## 2.2.) Legal regime pertaining to PMSC

International Humanitarian Law ("IHL") essentially prohibits outsourcing certain military activities to PMSC in terms of command of prisoner of war camps, civilian internment camps or exercise of an occupying power.<sup>5</sup> However, the participation of any private persons in hostilities is not explicitly forbidden.

It must hereby be emphasized that one of the utmost fundamental maxims of IHL is the principle of **distinction between civilians and combatants** in the situation of an armed conflict. Each of these statuses is connected to a different range of legal protection and entitlements.

What is important in

this regard is that most employees of PMSC are not members of an armed force of a party to a conflict and have not been officially sent by their respective states. Therefore, the sole presence of such personnel creates challenges in terms of ensuring respect for the principle of distinction between combatants and civilians. Especially in this regard would a clear distinction of PMSC personnel and a definition of its status be utterly important.

Moreover, armed forces operate within a certain chain of command that has wide-ranging implications in terms of accountability mechanisms. Private persons participating in hostilities are usually exempt from such a chain of command as well as other accountability mechanisms, which in fact keep them out of reach of usual legal safeguards pertaining to the status of combatants.

With regard to the legal regime pursuant to international human rights law, one also needs to point out that it is primarily States who are responsible for the observance of internationally recognized norms and standards. There are generally three types of relations between States and PMSCs, with especially the State always being obliged to safeguard human rights law:

1. **Home State** (a State where a PMSC has its seat)
2. **Contracting State** (a State that uses the services of PMSC), and
3. **Territorial State** (a State on which a PMSC operates).

The PMSC personnel should be, of course, also personally subjected to liability, be it criminal liability under national laws or under International Criminal Law. Such regulation can attain its desired ends solely when it is matched by parallel enforcement structures that make it possible to render justice in relation to the perpetrators themselves. Responsibility for this aspect also lies predominantly with the States themselves. Some PMSC, however, opt to regulate themselves through non-binding initiatives and private law pledges. These are, however, only voluntary initiatives of the industry; hence they cannot be invoked before a court of law, unless they have been integrated into a contract or national legislation.

### 2.3) Accountability for human rights violations

PMSC personnel has been, over time, accused of a plethora of violations of human rights, including abuse and torture of detainees, shootings and killings of civilians, destruction of property, sexual harassment and rape, human trafficking, and others.<sup>6</sup> Certain allegations were also raised that PMSC personnel were using arms that are banned under international law.<sup>7</sup>

It has, however, been criticized that countries often only reluctantly approach cases of abuse. PMSC personnel responsible for torture and shootings in Iraq or for the *Abu Ghraib prison* case, for instance, have never been brought to justice.

But even PMSC personnel may be subjects of human rights abuse. A lot of people who enter into PMSC's service come from developing countries. Exposure to labor exploitation, harassment or other abuses is a result of broadly determined waivers of rights that are usually included in the work contracts for the newly hired.

Furthermore, there is a rather inefficient control in terms of registration and licensing. It should be a norm for an employer to provide its employees with relevant instructions with regards to human rights protection. Unfortunately, such guarantees are usually not required when a PMSC is being set up under national laws. On the top of that, licensed PMSC usually do not require background checks on personnel; hence the accountability safeguards are yet again diminished.

Although these steps must be essentially undertaken on a national level, the coordination and cooperation of states in this field might be just as essential, given the transnational nature of PMSC operations. There have been further deliberations on the issue of whether a public listing of companies involved in human rights violations would be useful as a means for sanction. Similar proceedings are already in use with regard to various other issues, even by the Security Council. Such a step would, however, require agreements on who would make a listing decision, what consequences might flow from being listed and how should related accountability mechanisms look like.<sup>8</sup>

### 2.4) Usage of PMSC by the UN

As pointed out in the report of the Working Group on PMSC (as described hereunder), there are great concerns about the increasing use of PMSC by the UN itself<sup>9</sup>. Despite heavy criticism coming also from official UN bodies, including the relevant working groups, the UN extensively tends to turn to private providers. These have especially been deployed with the task of granting protection to UN personnel in areas, where they have been often exposed to kidnapping or other forms of attacks.

In this regard, the UN has been increasingly turning to PMSC for non-combat tasks and this solely when the host country (like for example in Somalia, Afghanistan and Pakistan) is unable to secure a sufficient level of protection for deployed UN personnel<sup>10</sup>.

After years of flourishing the perception of mercenaries as unreliable profit hunters, however, the UN has herewith alienated this policy due to security reasons.

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<sup>5</sup> Para 20, p. 6; see also Article 39 of the Third Geneva Convention and Article 99 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

<sup>6</sup> Amnesty USA: The Costs of Outsourcing War. <http://www.amnestyusa.org/our-work/issues/military-police-and-arms/private-military-and-security-companies>

<sup>7</sup> Gomez del Prado, José L.: *Impact on Human Rights of Private Military and Security Companies' Activities*. Global Research, 9 April 2016, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/impact-on-human-rights-of-private-military-and-security-companies-activities/10523>

<sup>8</sup> Human Rights Council: *Report of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination*, UN Doc A/HRC/15/25, 15<sup>th</sup> session, 2 July 2010, <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/mercenaries/docs/A.HRC.15.25.pdf>, para 47, p11

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, para 14, p. 5

<sup>10</sup> Lynch, C.: *U.N. embraces private military contractors*. Foreign Policy, 17 January 2010, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2010/01/17/u-n-embraces-private-military-contractors/>.

### **3) Past Committee Action**

#### **3.1) Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination**

The group was established in July 2005 pursuant to the Commission of Human Rights resolution 2005/2, when it replaced the former office of the Special Rapporteur<sup>11</sup> on the use of mercenaries<sup>12</sup>. Pursuant to the resolution, the working groups mandate is as follows:

- To elaborate and present concrete proposals on possible new standards, general guidelines or basic principles encouraging the further protection of human rights, in particular the right of peoples to self-determination, while facing current and emergent threats posed by mercenaries or mercenary-related activities;
- To seek opinions and contributions from Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations on questions relating to its mandate;
- To monitor mercenaries and mercenary-related activities in all their forms and manifestations in different parts of the world;
- To study and identify emerging issues, manifestations and trends regarding mercenaries or mercenary-related activities and their impact on human rights, particularly on the right of peoples to self-determination;
- To monitor and study the effects of the activities of private companies offering military assistance, consultancy and security services on the international market on the enjoyment of human rights, particularly the right of peoples to self-determination, and to prepare draft international basic principles that encourage respect for human rights on the part of those companies in their activities;

#### **3.2) Open-ended intergovernmental working group**

The Working Group on PMSC (full name *Open-ended intergovernmental working group to consider the possibility of elaborating an international regulatory framework on the regulation, monitoring and oversight of the activities of private military and security companies*, hereinafter referred to as "WG Military") was established through HRC Resolution 15/26 of 7 October 2010<sup>13</sup> and further prolonged and reaffirmed through HRC Resolution 22/33 of 19 April 2013<sup>14</sup>. Its mandate extends to "*consider the possibility of elaborating an international regulatory framework, including, inter alia, the option of elaborating a legally binding instrument on the regulation, monitoring and oversight of the activities of private military and security companies, including their accountability, taking into consideration the principles, main elements and draft text as proposed by the [WG Military].*"<sup>15</sup> The WG Military presents its conclusions to the HRC in the form of reports.

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<sup>11</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights: Special Rapporteur on use of mercenaries as a means of impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination. <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Mercenaries/SRMercenaries/Pages/SRMercenariesIndex.aspx>

<sup>12</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights: Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination. <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Mercenaries/WGMercenaries/Pages/WGMercenariesIndex.aspx>

<sup>13</sup> Human Rights Council resolution 15/26 of 7 October 2010 "*Open-ended intergovernmental working group to consider the possibility of elaborating an international regulatory framework on the regulation, monitoring and oversight of the activities of private military and security companies*", A/HRC/RES/15/26, 15<sup>th</sup> session, available at: [http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage\\_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/RES/15/26](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/RES/15/26).

<sup>14</sup> Human Rights Council resolution 22/33 of 19 April 2013, "*Open-ended intergovernmental working group to consider the possibility of elaborating an international regulatory framework on the regulation, monitoring and oversight of the activities of private military and security companies*", A/HRC/RES/22/33, 22<sup>nd</sup> session, available at: [http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage\\_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/RES/22/33](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/RES/22/33).

<sup>15</sup> Human Rights Council: *Report of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination*, UN Doc A/HRC/15/25, 15<sup>th</sup> session, 2 July 2010, <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/mercenaries/docs/A.HRC.15.25.pdf>, para 4.

### **3.3) Draft convention on PMSC**

As noted above, the most pressing issue from a human rights angle is the absence of a valid and binding regulatory framework pertaining to the usage of PMSC. Hence the consideration of the establishment of such regulation shall have upmost priority. Nonetheless, particular national realities and stances of each state must be borne in mind, since certain countries are willing to regulate PMSC with a varying degree of eagerness.

The draft convention on PMSC shall, alongside with existing non-binding initiatives (see below), serve as a helpful stepping-stone towards weighing the interests for the formation of an approach for the future. One sole regulatory instrument, be it national or international, however, is hardly ever fully capable of addressing the whole issue in a satisfactory manner; hence the regulation has to be based on a multi-faceted variety of instruments.

### **4) Block positions**

Some countries wish to continue the discussion over this pressing topic. Those states acknowledge that further deliberations must be made in order to precisely define the whole scope of the issue, and to develop necessary accountability frameworks that would be both elaborate and highly effective.

Some states, however, tend to highlight the distinction of PMSC operations during peace and war times, whereas the former poses less of a challenge to human rights safeguards and shall hence be rather tolerated.

Other states have repeatedly expressed their support for the creation of internationally binding legal instruments regulating the operation of the PMSC. At this point, the impact of existing efforts that includes but is not limited to industry self-regulation or national legislation must be acknowledged.

The main objection includes the argument that the issue has not yet been fully grasped and lacks careful inspection. This may lead to fragmentation and cause an adverse effect on the distribution of resources as well as the efforts themselves. A "one size fits all" convention may also unduly affect those PMSC whose activities shall fall outside the scope of regulation.

Another middle-ground approach stands for gradually creating partial regulations in certain fields prior to the establishment of a broader and more comprehensive convention later on. While this may seem to be a compromise - to firstly sort out those areas that could be regulated consensually and then proceed with the slightly more controversial ones - such approach may not be comprehensive and holistic enough, and basically be a process without any substantive results.

### **5) Summary of the key points**

The key fields for consideration in general shall be, questions of:

- Accountability,
- Remedies,
- Licensing,
- Oversight of the PMCs,
- Ways if and how to vest these concerns satisfactorily in both national and international law.

The purpose of a regulatory instrument shall, however, not be outright banning of PMSC (this cannot be considered to have gained sufficient support on international level). States have primarily been aiming at creating minimum standards that would govern PMSC undertakings.

When creating a regulatory instrument, one must always bear in mind that such mechanism shall be effective, inclusive, transparent and affordable. Criteria must be, furthermore, reconciled with the national

priorities of states. The final resolution shall also reflect relevant past international undertakings in this field, including the major IHL treaties, human rights agreement, and the past committee action.

It must be noted, that the reports of the working groups as well as this study guide were prepared mostly by persons with no diplomatic affiliation, unless stated otherwise. Therefore, the honorable delegates shall aim at clarifying the position of their State primarily by researching official documents, statements made, and real-time undertakings for themselves.

## **Further reading**

### **Recommended official HRC documents**

*Report of the WG Military, A/HRC/22/41*

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G12/189/42/PDF/G1218942.pdf?OpenElement>

Special regards may be given to part IV (*Views of member States and other stakeholders*), which shall be enormously helpful for many delegate's when clarifying their State's stance on the matter.

*Draft Convention of the WG Mercenaries (Annex I)*

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/mercenaries/docs/A.HRC.15.25.pdf>

*Study on the use of private military and security companies (PMSCs) by the United Nations*

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Mercenaries/WGMercenaries/Pages/StudyOnPMSC.aspx>

Highly recommended sources that give a great overview of the issue - to be found in the section "resource materials".

### **Montreux Document on Pertinent International Legal Obligations and Good Practices for States related to Operations of Private Military and Security Companies during Armed Conflict**

[https://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/icrc\\_002\\_0996.pdf](https://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/icrc_002_0996.pdf)

Multilateral non-binding document based on a joint humanitarian initiative of Switzerland and the ICRC, which aims to address international obligations and good practices for States related to operations of PMSC during armed conflict.

### **International Code of Conduct for Private Security Providers**

[http://www.geneva-academy.ch/docs/publications/briefing4\\_web\\_final.pdf](http://www.geneva-academy.ch/docs/publications/briefing4_web_final.pdf)

Multi-stakeholder initiative convened by the Government of Switzerland in November 2010, which sets out the principles for conduct for PMSC in various fields, such as: *commitments to humane treatment, dignity and privacy, and human rights standards like prohibitions on torture and ill-treatment, slavery, trafficking, and discrimination, as well as principles of management relating to the selection, vetting and training of personnel; the use of weapons and equipment; incident reporting on use of force; grievance procedures and financial undertakings in case of liability to pay compensation.*

In relation to this initiative, there were efforts to develop a charter for an oversight mechanism for this purpose.

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## **How to Get Prepared**

You probably cannot wait until it is the end of July and VIMUN 2016 is about to start – at least we cannot! However, before the conference starts, there is still some work to be done.

You are the ones that fill the conference with life, that lead interesting discussions and fruitful debates and make innovative resolutions reality. This requires some preparation on your side. **While conducting research, try to keep in mind that your primary goal is to represent your country as realistically as possible.**

In advance to the conference we expect all delegates to research your state's position and become experts for the given agenda topic, to familiarize yourself with the rules of procedure (which you can find on our VIMUN homepage) and to practice your debating and writing skills.

Here are some useful hints on how to get prepared for the VIMUN conference:

### **Do Some Research**

The first step after you have been assigned your state and committee will be to do some research in order to prepare for the conference. These are areas you should look into:

- The structure and history of the UN
- Your assigned member state
- Research your committee
- Your member state's role in the committee
- Your agenda topics

### **Central Questions that Should Guide your Research**

- What sort of government does your country have?
- What types of ideologies (political, religious or other) influence your country's government?
- Which domestic issues might influence your country's foreign policy?
- What are some major events in your country's history? Why are they important?
- Which ethnicities, religions and languages can be found in your country?
- Where is your country located and how does its geography affect its political relationships?
- Which countries share a border with your country?
- Which countries are considered allies of your country?
- Which countries are considered enemies of your country?
- What are the characteristics of your country's economy?
- What is your country's gross domestic product (GDP)? How does this compare to other countries in the world?
- When did your country become a member of the UN?
- Does your country belong to any intergovernmental organizations outside the UN system such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)?
- Does your country belong to any regional organizations such as the European Union (EU), the African Union (AU) or the Organization of American States (OAS)?
- Does your country belong to any trade organizations or agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) or the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)?
- What are the key issues of your agenda topics?
- Why are these issues important?
- What are possible solutions?
- What is hindering those solutions?
- What has the UN (or other international agencies) done so far, in order to solve these problems?
- What should be done from the perspective of your state to resolve the issues?
- Which other states share your view, which are opposed to your position?

For further research apart from reading the study guide we greatly recommend:

- The UN homepage
- NGO (particularly those accredited by the UN)
- Country reports and data published by international or regional organizations such as the World Bank, WHO, OECD, APEC, etc.
- General socio-economic data: e.g. CIA World Factbook has served delegates in previous years in gaining a first overview of a particular member state
- Your country's government website
- Search for speeches made by your country on the topic
- Search for important resolutions regarding your topic

### **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 want to 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

Delegation of the **Republic of India**

Represented by **XXX**

Topic: Primary Education

The Republic of India acknowledges and has responded to the call of the United Nations for a universalization of primary education with fierce engagement and enthusiasm over the past 10 years. India firmly believes that the challenge of guaranteeing every child the opportunity to primary education can and shall be overcome by raising greater awareness among the public and by public involvement through respectful regional cooperation, e.g. the cooperation with Village Education Committees and Local Government substatal Bodies. Furthermore it is crucial not only to focus on the quantity of students, but on the quality of the education they receive.

The Republic of India recognizes the need and urgency to address universal primary education. Primary Education is of crucial importance to India. Although India is still facing difficulties in its efforts to guarantee every child the education it deserves, the Indian country will not succumb, but face the challenge with effective policies which have shown immersive and lasting effects in the past.

In 2010 The Right of Free and Compulsory Education Act was ratified, making the fundamental Right To Education Act the first of its kind in the world, which puts the responsibility of ensuring enrollment, attendance and completion of primary education to the government. To enforce implementation of this act, India strongly supports its governmental organizations, which have brought positive long-term effects, e.g. "The Education for All"- Movement, which has as a main objective the universalization of elementary education, making education free and compulsory for children between 6-14 years. In addition to this program, India launched the Mid-Day Meal Scheme in 1995, revised and improved it over the last ten years. Mid-Day Meal Scheme, as the world's largest school feeding program, reaches 1.2 million children across the country.

Furthermore a stronger emphasis is put on unprivileged and disadvantaged sections of the Indian society. As a result to the 10th five year plan of India the joined forces to tackle illiteracy, the number of elementary schools has increased by 216.054, the number of enrolment in the lower and upper primary school classes has increased about 30 million students, only in the period between 2000 and 2006.

In the 11th five year plan of the Republic of India, the focus is set on achieving an 80%- literacy rate, on reducing the gender gap in literacy rate to 10%, to reduce dropout rates of children at the elementary level from 52, 2% in 2003-04 to 20% by 2011-12, and to support low literacy States, disadvantaged groups, minorities and to reduce regional, social and gender disparities and on granting the quality of the given education.

However, universal education cannot be established in isolation, therefore the Indian government has successfully joined hands with the UN on this matter, as extensive cooperation within the United Nations Development Program prove. Together we can bring the MDGs in achievable and reachable range. Therefore the issue of primary education should be discussed realistically and on a basis, where not only providing quantity, but quality plays an immense and even more important role. Due to India's ideals which are Socialism, Democracy, Justice, Equality, Fraternity the Indian Republic believes that the question on how to provide and ensure qualitative education with well-equipped and modern schools and on the basic training of teachers should be raised.

In conclusion, India is striving to guarantee its pupils the universal access to education, regardless of their gender. Moreover it is of the main concerns to support tribal States, rural areas, disadvantaged groups, religious/ethnic minorities and to extinguish any kind of disparities which influence the access to education.

These main concerns remain to be: access, equity, quality, relevance, resources, planning and management of educational programmes.

Therefore the Republic of India highly approves of all expenditures which were made to tackle the problem of primary education and warmly welcomes every effort made on capacity building, modern education programmes, teacher training programmes and progressive use of instructional materials.

## Sources

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## How to Make an Opening Speech

- First, you should thank the presiding official by saying "Thank you Mr./ Madame/ Honorable Chair/ President..."
- Then begin by providing a brief history on the issue as it relates to your country.
- Speak about how the issue is currently affecting your country.
- your country's position on the issue. Include an explanation for your country's stance, such as economic or security concerns or political or religious ideology.
- You may choose to give an explanation of how your country's position relates to the positions of other member states such as the major powers or countries in your regional bloc.
- You should discuss some of the past actions taken by the UN, member states and NGOs to address the issue.
- Present ideas for a resolution, stressing your country's objectives for the resolution.
- Talk about the role that NGOs or regional organizations have to play in addressing the issue.
- Indicate to the committee members whether your country is willing to negotiate.

## Vocabulary: Sample Preambulatory Phrases

Accept	Notes Proclaims	Designates
Affirms	Reaffirms	Draws the attention
Approves	Recommends	Emphasizes
Authorizes	Regrets	Encourages
Calls	Reminds	Endorses
Calls upon	Requests Solemnly affirms	Expresses its appreciation
Condemns	Strongly condemns Supports	Expresses its hope
Confirms	Takes note of Transmits Trusts	Further invites
Congratulates	Encourages	Further proclaims
Considers	Endorses	Further reminds
Declares accordingly	Expresses its appreciation	Further resolves
Deplores	Expresses its hope	Has resolved
Designates	Further invites	Further recommends
Draws the attention	Deplores	Further requests
Emphasizes		