The Art of Resolution Writing

Before learning what it takes to create a stand-out resolution for committee, you must first understand the various stages a resolution goes through, from the very start of debate all the way through to voting. At IMUNA conferences, this is the essential workflow:

Debate → Write → Submit → More Debate → Amend → Vote → Celebrate!

We discussed the process a resolution must go through in order to get passed in the "Flow of a MUN Committee" section. However, let's be explicit about this process here. Below we have outlined the three main stages of a resolution:

- **Phase I**: While a caucus bloc is putting together its resolution, the document is known as a **working paper.** This means that the document is not formally acknowledged by the chair, meaning that if debate closes, it will not be voted on. At most conferences, working papers are hand-written, but are written with the goal of turning them into resolutions in mind, and so obey the resolution format rules presented below. Working papers are also largely works in progress and are more subject to change than a draft resolution.

- **Phase II**: Once the bloc has written the working paper and it has all the ideas that the caucus bloc wants to include, it is then submitted to the dais. Once the dais recognizes it, it becomes a **draft resolution**. This recognition is critical, as most conferences require the chair to recognize a draft resolution before copies of it will be distributed to everyone. Furthermore, when voting starts, *only* draft resolutions are voted on, not working papers. However, draft resolutions are not the end of the writing process.

- **Phase III**: Prior to being voted on, delegates can write **amendments**, which change other draft resolutions. Some conferences may deemphasize or even skip the amendment phase—either because the chairs want to or the delegates simply don't have any amendments—but it is usually an option. Once the draft resolution is voted on (and if it is approved by the committee), it finally becomes a resolution.

Components of a Resolution

Now that we've discussed the way resolutions are written, we can turn our attention to how to write a resolution. Resolution format, like many other parts of MUN, may vary between conferences, but they all share the same basic components. Below, we'll describe how resolutions are written at IMUNA's conferences.

The first section is the **header** which describes the basic information about the resolution and committee. Headers vary between conferences, but they *always* include the list of **sponsors**: the countries that are proposing the draft resolution and support it fully. Usually, conferences also ask for **signatories** (countries that aren't signing to the resolution but think it should be debated) and a title for the resolution. Here's an example header from a resolution that was debated at NHSMUN.

Resolution 1.1

Committee: United Nations Development Programme

Topic: Facilitating Primary Response to Natural Disasters in South America

Sponsors: Bangladesh, Belarus, Bhutan, Bulgaria, Ethiopia, Fiji, Guinea, Indonesia, Lesotho, Morocco, New Zealand, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, United States

Signatories: Djibouti, Egypt, France, People's Republic of China, South Africa

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Getting into the real content of the resolution, we start with the **preambulatory clauses,** or the "why" of the resolution, which explain the context for the topic under debate. These could include general statements about the situation, references to actions already taken by the committee or other resolutions, quotations from Secretaries-General, statistics related to a topic or subtopic, etc. These clauses always start with words or phrases written in italics and starting with gerunds ("-ing words").

Example preambulatory clauses: *bearing in mind, deeply concerned, further deploring, keeping in mind, recognizing.*

> The General Assembly,
>
> *Recognizing* the increasing severity of the El Nino effect and the consequent flooding of South America,
>
> *Noting with regret* the immense causalities of the earthquake in Haiti,
>
> *Taking into account* the developing status of many South American countries,

Once the "why" is out of the way, resolutions describe the "what" and "how" with **operative clauses.** These detail the *actions* that the committee wishes to take, which can include recommendations from Member States, establishments of protocols and subcommittees, collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGO's), etc. These clauses always start with a present tense verb that is underlined.

Example operative clauses: <u>calls upon</u>, <u>endorses</u>, <u>encourages</u>, <u>further invites</u>, <u>recommends</u>, <u>requests</u>

> 1. <u>Recommends</u> that governments establish cash-for-work programs to build disaster resistant infrastructure, with:
>
>   a. Funding from foreign direct investments, World Bank loans, and regional disaster funds,
>
>   b. Urban cash-for-work programs, which will include:
>
>   i. Building better housing for urban slum dwellers,
>
>   ii. Constructing better, more stable roads for easy evacuation and communication between rural and urban areas,
>
> 2. <u>Endorses</u> a radio-data-system (RDS) establishment in rural South America for early response systems that:
>
>   a. Supports the use of two-way FM broadcasting signals to allow rural areas to communicate with cities,
>
>   b. Utilizes a high frequency signal to transmit early warnings
>
>   c. Distributes cheap radios that contain rechargeable batteries or use solar power
>
> 3. <u>Encourages</u> the use of cheap, well-established companies such as 2Wcom to institute the RDS program.

It's safe to say that no resolution is perfect. That is why before voting on draft resolutions, the delegates can create **amendments,**