

# Chairing Made Easy

## **General tips:**

above all, remember the phrase "Fair but firm". Never be biased against any delegate, no matter how annoying they may be. Do not however, bend over backwards to accommodate; after all, you are the chairs!

most of the delegates will not have been to an MUN-style conference, and so understandably will be very nervous. Some humour can go a long way to breaking the ice. Please, however, don't make them laugh to the point where your committee becomes a circus.

make sure that even if you do joke around a bit, the conference is a formal situation. As chairs, it is your duty to uphold this - make sure formal attire is worn and that you use "formal language".

ensure that you are well-versed on your committee's topic - you may need to provide a general background during the opening remarks or you may need to rephrase a point of information.

Remember: there is a reason why there are two chairs for each committee! It is so that you can divide your responsibilities and hopefully reduce stress levels! One suggested way to share the workload:

one of you is responsible for opening remarks/closing remarks

the other is responsible for the formal roll call during the opening of committee

you take turns calling up delegates to the podium to make their opening speeches

you take turns chairing debate on specific action plans (although the other may interject)

finally, as chairs you have near supreme authority over your committees - make sure you do not abuse this power

## **Explanation of rules:**

**(NB - if at any time, you feel a delegate has breached parliamentary procedure or is deliberately holding up debate, you may see fit to give a warning. No actual penalty is given for the first warning. If however, they receive a second warning, they will lose speaking and voting rights for a**

**time period to be decided via consultation between chairs and teacher advisers)**

lobbying period

- this is the time when delegates attempt to gain support for their action plans so that they may be debated the following day. They will need at least one co-submitter (but if they could only get one, the action plan would probably not pass). They can only co-submit two action plans (probably their own and perhaps one that focuses on a different aspect of the issue) - check all co-submitter lists to make sure that no delegate sponsors more than two. Pass the action plan to the vetting committee which will comprise of faculty advisers. If it meets their approval, it is your duty to draw up a speaker's list comprising of at least two speakers for and two speakers against an action plan. Try to co-ordinate lobbying in such a way that all delegates will be aware of which action plans are likely to be debated in committee. At the end of the lobbying period, you should get copies of each action plan to be discussed photocopied to be distributed to delegates during committee. Only the six (assuming there are that many) most popular action plans should be discussed.

**(NB - italics are what you say, bold is what the delegate says)**

points of concern

- this may occur at any point during committee. If a delegate wishes to raise a point about conduct of debate, enquire about an aspect of parliamentary procedure or is affected by something which obstructs their ability to follow debate (e.g. cannot hear, wants to go to toilet), then they should raise their placard. After recognising them, they should say that they rise to a point of concern. You should ask them to state their concern, and if it is legitimate, you should deal with it appropriately.

Sample dialogue:1. *“Delegate of (somewhere), to what point do you rise?  
**Honourable chair, I rise to a point of concern. Granted, please state your concern. I cannot hear what the delegate of (somewhere) is saying. Very well, delegate of (somewhere) please speak louder.”***

2. *“Delegate of (somewhere), to what point do you rise? **Honourable chair, I rise to a point of concern. Granted, please state your concern. I’m hungry. Can we go to lunch?** Delegate, that is out of order; if you continue to disrupt debate, you will be given a warning.”*

formal roll call

- after opening remarks (which should include introducing yourself and perhaps providing a quick background summary on the issue), proceed to formal roll call. Going from A-Z, call out each country’s name. Delegates should respond by saying “Present and voting”.

Sample dialogue: *“We will now proceed to formal roll call. When your country’s name is called, say “present and voting”. (Somewhere). **Present and voting.**”*

opening speeches

- following formal roll call, delegates should proceed to give their opening speeches which should be no longer than one minute. Have some sort of mechanism in place so that you can inform them when 55 seconds have passed, and when they should conclude (bell? hammer and gavel?).

Sample dialogue: *“Now that we have finished the roll call, we will now proceed to hearing opening speeches. Opening speeches should be no longer than one minute. We will (something) at 55 seconds and (something) at 1 minute. Would the delegate of (somewhere) please approach the podium? (once delegate reaches podium), delegate of (somewhere), you will have one minute. You may begin.”*

**(NB - unless otherwise stated, all speeches are to be two minutes long)**

motion for recess

- at any point after opening speeches, a delegate may wish for time to discuss an action plan or amendment with other delegates. They should raise their placard and say “motion for recess”. You have the right to refuse the motion. If you accept, there will be a placard vote, and if a majority of delegates vote to recess, then caucusing will be allowed.

Sample dialogue: *“Delegate of (somewhere), to what point do you rise? **Honourable chair, I rise to motion for recess.** Very well, there will be a placard vote; delegates will vote for, against or abstain, and a simple majority is needed to break for caucusing.”*

flow of debate

- after opening speeches, move onto debate on the first action plan. Distribute copies of the action plan via the page(s). Make sure that all delegates (and yourselves of course!) have copies. Reconfirm the co-submitter's list. Reconfirm the speaker's list (if you feel that more speakers are needed for a particular side For or Against, ask if there are any delegates who wish to be placed on the speaker's list).

Sample dialogue: *"We will now begin debate on the first action plan. Have all delegates been given a copy of this action plan? Very well, the co-submitter's list will now be re-confirmed. If there is a mistake, please make a point of concern. The co-submitter's list is as follows: (somewhere), (somewhere), (somewhere). If there are no mistakes, the speaker's list will now be re-confirmed, again, make a point of concern if something is incorrect. The speaker's list is as follows: delegates speaking for this action plan are (somewhere), (somewhere) and (somewhere). Delegates speaking against are (somewhere), (somewhere) and (somewhere)."*

-Then call upon the main co-submitter to approach the podium to read out the operative clauses of the action plan. There is to be no time constraint for this. After the operative clauses have been read out, begin moving through the For speeches. If the main co-submitter is on the speaker's list, they may begin their For speech immediately.

Sample dialogue: *"We now call upon the main co-submitter of this action plan, (somewhere), to read out the operative clauses of this action plan. Delegate of (somewhere), please approach the podium. (once delegate reaches podium). Delegate of (somewhere), as you are on the Speaker's list, following the reading out of the operative clauses, you will have two minutes to make a speech in favour of this action plan. **Thank you chair.** (after delegate reads out operative clauses). Thank you, delegate. You will now have two minutes to make your For speech. You may begin."*

-After the delegate finishes making their For speech. Ask them if they are open to points of information. If they are not, tell them that they may step down from the podium. If they say they are, ask if there are any points of information on the floor.

Sample dialogue: 1. *"Delegate, are you open to points of information? **No.** Very well, delegate, you may step down from the podium."*

2. *"Delegate, are you open to points of information? **Yes, any at all.** Very well, are there any points of information on the floor?"*

- If a delegate wishes to make a point of information, they should raise their placard. Recognise them, and ask to what point they rise? After they say point of information, it is up to you whether you grant or deny it. They should they then

address their question to the speaker. There are many scenarios that could arise from this, best illustrated by examples:

Sample dialogue: 1. *“Delegate of (somewhere), to what point do you rise? Honourable chair, I rise to a point of information. Granted. Delegate, could you please clarify what is the purpose of including operative clause 4 in this action plan? (speaker responds). Thank you delegate.”*

2. *“Delegate of (somewhere), to what point do you rise? Honourable chair, I rise to a point of information. Denied, in the interests of time.”*

3. *“Delegate of (somewhere), to what point do you rise? Honourable chair, I rise to a point of information. Granted. Delegate, what do you think of the clause? (speaker asks Chair, could you please ask the delegate to rephrase the question?) That is in order, would the delegate please rephrase the question? Delegate, do you feel that operative clause 4 is a good one? (speaker responds). Thank you delegate.”*

**(NB - try to discourage delegates from asking “leading questions”, as these do not really add much to debate. Leading questions will usually come from delegates on the same side of the action plan as the speaker, and often begin with something along the lines of “Do/don’t you agree that...”)**

- If a delegate feels that the speaker has not adequately answered the question, or if they wish to make a supplementary point, they should raise their placard and request for a motion to follow-up. Ask on what grounds they demand this follow-up. If you feel their response is adequate, grant the follow-up. Note that a delegate cannot motion to follow-up on a follow-up.

Sample dialogue: **“Chair, request for follow-up. On what grounds? That the speaker did not answer my question. Granted, delegate please answer the question properly.”**

**(NB - If the speaker does not understand the question, it may be necessary for you to attempt to rephrase the delegate’s point of information).**

- after the speaker has finished answering all points of information, tell them to step down from the podium. Repeat the processes detailed with each of the For speakers. After the For speaker’s list has been exhausted, you should ask if there are any delegates wishing to speak from the floor. Basically, by speaking from the floor, a delegate has the opportunity to say anything they want relating to the action plan: for example, they may choose to support one of the speeches, go against one of the speeches, or state what needs to be amended in order to gain their support.

Sample dialogue: “As the For speaker’s list has been exhausted, we will now recognise delegates wishing to speak from the floor. If you wish to make a speak from the floor, please raise your placard.”

- repeat the processes detailed above with the Against speaker’s list.

#### amendments

- sometimes a delegate may feel that they will be able to lend support to an action plan if part of the action plan is changed. In that case, they may wish to make an amendment. The delegate should write the amendment clearly on an overhead sheet, which should be obtained by writing a note to you requesting it. After all speeches and statements from the floor have been given, you should ask if there are any amendments on the floor. If a delegate responds in the affirmative by raising their placard, you should recognise them, unless you feel pressed for time. They should be then be called to the podium to address the floor. Delegates wishing to make amendments can be open to points of information. After points of information have been addressed, a placard vote will then be taken to determine whether the amendment passes. A simple majority is needed.

Sample dialogue: “As all speeches and right to statements have been given, amendments will now be in order. Are there are amendments on the floor? Delegate of (somewhere), to what point do you rise? **Honourable chair, I rise to make an amendment to this action plan.** Granted, please approach the podium with your amendment written on an overhead sheet. (once delegate reaches podium). Delegate of (somewhere), you will have two minutes to make a statement explaining why you feel this amendment is needed. You may begin. (once delegate finishes). Delegate, are you open to points of information? **Any at all.** Very well, are there any points of information on the floor? (once all points of information have been addressed) Thank you delegate. You may step down from the podium. (once delegate returns to seat). We will now take a vote on whether this amendment should pass. It will be conducted via placard vote; delegates will vote for, against or abstain, and a simple majority will be needed to pass this amendment.”

**(NB - as the chair, you will always have the discretionary right to accept as many points of information, right to statements and amendments as you wish. If at any point, you feel that that they you are running out of time or that debate is being held up, which can often occur in this type of conference, you may move to any stage of the debate, although this will usually be roll call vote on the action plan as it currently stands.)**

#### division of the question

- after debate and amendments on an action plan, a delegate may feel that although they support the basic “thrust” of the action plan, but not all clauses. Thus, they may request for a division of the question. If you grant the request, they should be invited to approach the podium, and address the floor, explaining why they feel a division of the question would be appropriate. Their statement should include how they feel the clauses should be divided, for the purposes of voting. As with statements on amendments, delegates may be open to points of information. The vote is a placard vote, with delegates voting separately on each clause or group of clauses e.g. operative clause 4 or operative clauses 1-3. In the interests of reducing bureaucracy, it is probably best to restrict division of the question to operative clauses only.

Sample dialogue: *“As all debate and amendments on this action plan have been completed, division of the question will now be in order. Delegate of (somewhere), to what point do you rise? **Honourable chair, I move to divide the question.** Granted, would the delegate please approach the podium? (once delegate reaches podium). Delegate of (somewhere), you will have two minutes to make a statement explaining which clauses or group of clauses you feel need to be voted on. You may begin. (after delegate finishes) Delegate of (somewhere), are you open to points of information? (once all points of information have been addressed). Thank you delegate. You may step down from the podium. (once delegate returns to seat) We will now move to division of the question. As stated by the delegate of (somewhere), we will be voting on each individual clause. This will be conducted via placard vote; delegates will vote for, against or abstain. A simple majority is needed to pass an individual clause.”*

**(NB - As a chair, it is your duty to ensure that the action plan would not be substantially altered by an amendment or a division of the question that would cancel most of the clauses. Use your judgement wisely, and rule the result out of order if needed.)**

roll call on an action plan

- after all of the above processes have been concluded, you should then proceed to a roll call vote on whether the action plan should be sent for debate to the General Assembly. Instead of saying something along the lines of “Delegates voting for? Against:? Abstaining?”, you should call out each country’s name and they should vote for, against or abstain. A simple majority is needed to pass the action plan. Tabulate the results, ignoring abstentions in reckoning vote totals, and then announce results. At the end of the day, the three action plans which gained the highest levels of support should be passed to the General Secretaries, who through consultation with you will draw up Speaker’s lists.

Sample dialogue: *“As all debate, amendments and division of the questions have been completed, a roll call vote will now be held to determine whether this action*

*plan should be sent to the General Assembly for debate. Delegates will vote for, against or abstain; and a simple majority will be needed for successful passage. (after results have been tabulated) With x votes for, y votes against and z abstentions, this action plan passes/fails.”*

#### Right to Public Statement

- after all debate on action plans has been completed, if there is time, you may wish to recognise delegates wishing to give delegate a “Right to Public Statement”. Basically, this statement is an opportunity for a delegate to talk about anything related to the country including politics, economy, history, culture etc. Priority should be given to delegates who have not previously spoken in committee.