

Northwest Model United Nations – Seattle 2021

Security Council – Explanatory Note

Overview

The Security Council is the primary organ mandated to address issues related to the maintenance of international peace and security, and is one of the committees simulated annually at NWMUN-. Delegates are encouraged to read the Background Guide and conduct their own research for more general information about the Security Council.

The purpose of this Explanatory Note is to provide more detail on two procedures at NWMUN: The open agenda and the rotating Vice Presidency.

Open Agenda

The United Nations Security Council has a list of agenda items on which they are “seized.” Any of these agenda items, as well as any other agenda item brought to the attention of the Council by the Secretary-General or a Member State, can be discussed at any time. We seek to simulate this “open agenda” at NWMUN, with some additional guidelines in order to ensure the educational experience is maintained.

Most committees at NWMUN conferences have a set agenda of two or three topics. Delegates set the order in which the topics are addressed and, by determining the pace of the committee, determine how many of the topics are addressed over the course of the conference. The NWMUN Security Council, however, is different. While the Executive Secretariat offers suggested topics, each with its own set of background materials, for the Council’s consideration, we do not limit the Council to those suggestions. Delegates may, at the beginning of the conference, propose an agenda that consists of one or more topics that are *not* on the suggested list. The committee’s staff will then check for two requirements to be met:

1. Pursuant to Rules 5 and 6 of the NWMUN Rules Addendum, the Secretary-General must determine that any new topics are “within the mandates of the Council.” The committee dais may suspend the meeting briefly to consult with the Secretary-General and obtain a ruling.
2. Pursuant to Rule 7 of the NWMUN Long Form Rules of Procedure, new items require “an explanatory memorandum.” The delegate who moves to set an agenda to include the new topic not suggested by the Executive Secretariat will be asked if they have an explanatory memorandum; if an explanatory memorandum is produced, the committee staff may review and consult with the Executive Secretariat to ensure neutrality. The explanatory memorandum should include “basic documents,” which would be similar to the committee’s Background Guide in style and scope. If approved by the Executive Secretariat, the explanatory memorandum would be circulated to all delegates in the committee.

Should these two requirements be met, the proposed topic shall be considered permissible by the conference. The delegates may then vote on the motion to set the agenda to include the newly proposed topic. Should that motion pass, the NWMUN Security Council can consider the topic in whatever order the motion indicated.

Secretariat Briefings

Delegates may also, during the course of the Councils’ deliberations, receive updates from the United Nations Secretariat. These updates will be presented in the form of neutral reports from the Secretariat, or the delivery of communiques from interested parties to an issue that may be considered by the Councils. Should any situation warrant more discussion by one or both of the Councils, delegates may make motions to set a new agenda including one or more of these issues.

If the issue is determined to be “within the mandates of the Council” by the Secretary-General, the body of information delivered by the Secretariat to the Council will be considered to constitute an “explanatory memorandum” and “basic documents,” in which case a motion of this kind (to set a new agenda containing one or more of these issues) would be allowed to proceed. If such a motion is adopted, the NWMUN Security Council can consider the topic. The Secretariat will update the Council with updated information as any situation develops that may be considered by the Council, regardless of if the issue is on the Council’s agenda at the time.

Rotating Vice Presidency

The United Nations Security Council presidency rotates between each Council member every month, in alphabetical order. The president is responsible for chairing each session. We seek to simulate this rotation at NWMUN through a rotating “vice presidency” over the course of the conference.

The Director and Assistant Director will serve as the “President” of the Security Council by chairing (facilitating the procedure) the committee. Additionally, delegates have the opportunity to take on the role of Vice President, during which time they will chair the committee session.

Pursuant to Rule 11 (2) of the NWMUN Rules Addendums, delegates will be offered approximately one hour of committee session (inclusive of both formal session and suspensions of the meeting), to serve as Vice President, in alphabetical order. The rotation will begin by the second day of the conference. Delegates serving as Vice President will chair formal sessions of the committee that occur within this hour, with the assistance of the Director and Assistant Director. It is important to note that the Director may choose to temporarily chair the committee during these hours at their discretion. While serving as Vice President, delegates will not be allowed to take part in any aspect of formal session (other than voting on procedural motions), but may participate fully during suspensions of the meeting. If their country is next on the Speaker’s List during their Vice Presidency, they will be skipped, but given the first right to speak after the conclusion of their hour.

Delegates may decline the opportunity to serve as Vice President and will not face any penalty for doing so. If a delegate declines, the next delegate in the alphabetical order of country names will proceed as Vice President. At the end of the alphabetical order, any delegates that declined will be given a second chance to serve as Vice President. No delegate will be allowed to serve as Vice President for longer than an hour total over the course of the conference.

Thank you! We look forward to seeing you this November!