

## RUN A UNITED NATIONS DEBATE.

The United Nations is the main international organization responsible for promoting world peace. It has played a vital role in preventing the use of nuclear weapons, yet very few people understand how it works. How much do you know? This activity requires you to represent the views of a particular country. There are currently 191 such states—almost every nation in the world—and each has one vote in the main body within the United Nations, known as the General Assembly.



The very first resolution of the General Assembly called for the complete abolition of nuclear weapons. Another major body is the Security Council, which meets at any time to debate matters of international security. Its decisions, unlike the decisions of the General

Assembly, are enforceable. This activity will teach you the art of diplomacy. You will learn about how the United Nations operates and how different countries perceive the nuclear threat.

### STEPS

- 1 Decide **which countries** should participate in the debate.
- 2 Allocate each participant a **country to represent**.
- 3 The President should **open proceedings** and invite any nation to propose a resolution.
- 4 A delegate should **introduce a resolution** and read it aloud to the Assembly.
- 5 The President should then invite a delegate from another country to **second the proposal**.
- 6 All delegates should notify the President if they wish to **speak for or against it**.
- 7 The secretary should produce a **list of speakers**, alternating between “for” and “against”.
- 8 The **first speaker** should be from the delegation that proposed the amendment.
- 9 The **timekeeper** should ring a bell after a certain time for each speaker, e.g. three minutes.
- 10 At any stage, a delegation can introduce an **amendment** to the resolution.
- 11 Any amendment should be **debated and voted upon**.
- 12 The resolution itself should also be **voted upon**—you can say “for”, “against” or “abstain”.
- 13 The **resolution succeeds** if there are more voting “for” than “against”.
- 14 It is customary to **applaud** if a resolution succeeds but not if it fails.
- 15 The President should **close proceedings** or invite another resolution.

## PARTICIPANTS

- **President of the General Assembly**—to oversee proceedings and make rulings
- **A secretary**—to maintain the list of speakers
- **A timekeeper**—to limit the length of time any delegate has to speak
- **Note-passers**—to pass official notes between delegates and to the President
- **Delegates**—to represent their respective countries

## DELEGATES

Delegates should represent the views of their particular country. If you don't know much about the policies of the country you're required to represent, you should do some research. Find out whether it supports the elimination of nuclear weapons and measures

to prevent nuclear proliferation. A useful website is Reaching Critical Will ([www.reachingcriticalwill.org](http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org)). Summaries for the United States, Russia and New Zealand have been provided on the following page to put you on the right track.

The UN Security Council in New York.



## UNITED STATES

You have 10,000 nuclear weapons, many of which are on hair-trigger alert—that is, they're ready to use within minutes of a command. To date, you are the only country to have used nuclear weapons against another country. You're determined to keep your nuclear weapons but want to make sure that no new countries develop any. You have considered using small nuclear weapons to attack deeply buried targets, such as bunkers, and have reserved the right to use your nuclear weapons against any country which threatens to use weapons of mass destruction against you or your allies. You support efforts to curb the illegal transfer of nuclear technology and materials and would be willing to take your nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert if Russia did the same. Your relations with Russia have improved significantly since the Cold War. Your allies include the United Kingdom, Australia, Israel and Pakistan.



## RUSSIA

You have the largest nuclear arsenal of any country in the world. It consists of some 15,000 nuclear weapons, but several thousand of them are awaiting dismantlement. Some of your nuclear weapons are kept on hair-trigger alert. You are determined to keep your nuclear weapons but want to make sure that no new countries develop any. You support efforts to curb the illegal transfer of nuclear technology and materials and would be willing to take your nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert if the United States did the same.



## NEW ZEALAND

You don't have any nuclear weapons and have never had any. Though a small country, you are unafraid of voicing your concerns on the international stage. You strongly support efforts to abolish nuclear weapons and to prevent their proliferation. You believe that nuclear power generation is dangerous because it can lead to nuclear weapons production.



## SAMPLE RESOLUTION

### Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*

*The General Assembly,*

*Convinced* that the continuing existence of nuclear weapons poses a threat to all humanity and that their use would have catastrophic consequences for all life on Earth,

*Reaffirming* the commitment of the international community to the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons and the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free world,

*Emphasizing* the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament,

*Stressing* the importance of strengthening all existing nuclear-related disarmament and arms control and reduction measures,

*Recognizing* the need for a multilaterally negotiated and legally binding instrument to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the threat or use of nuclear weapons,

*Desiring* to achieve the objective of a legally binding prohibition of the development, production, testing, deployment, stockpiling, threat or use of nuclear weapons and their destruction under effective international control,

*Recalling* the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*, issued on 8 July 1996,

- 1 *Underlines* the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control;
- 2 *Calls upon* all States immediately to fulfil that obligation by commencing multilateral negotiations leading to an early conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the development, production, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer, threat or use of nuclear weapons and providing for their elimination;
- 3 *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its next session the item entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*".