Tips on Researching and Writing Your Position Summary

Research

- The Info-Sheet is meant as a basic guide, but given the wealth of information available to you on the Internet, you may not even need it. You may wish to begin your research by looking at current trends and developments in your topic, not just at the ASEAN level, but at the international level too. You can also examine past international or regional efforts and policies aimed at addressing similar issues.

- News articles and official statements from policy-makers can be a key source of information for how a particular ASEAN member state feels about the issue. Keying in broad search terms about your topic and assigned country into Google News can be a way to find more directed information about their stance, and past actions taken.

- You may also wish to look at official treaties, UN or ASEAN declarations, and domestic policies ratified or signed into law by the country that deal with the particular issue your committee is working on. The official UN, ASEAN, and Ministry websites will list these instruments and their signatories.

- Some countries may not have as clear a defined stance or policy as others. In this case, some inference from past international actions, programs, or even policies in similar areas made by your country may be necessary in your analysis. You may also want to look at the Member State's domestic actions, programs and policy on the particular issue as well. You may even want to ask yourself if certain national values or goals will be a factor in your topic and issue, or even how other Member States' actions affect your country.

- While doing research, keep track of key relevant sources, facts, statistics and other kinds of evidence that will help support your arguments in the Position Summary. While not required, proper citations and a good reference list can help your Position Summary stand out in terms of credibility and accuracy.

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Writing

- The Position Summary is meant to be succinct in only 500 to 800 words. Avoid language that is too flowery and complicated.

- Use the active voice often, and write in the first-person perspective from the viewpoint of your country (i.e. “Singapore feels that…”)

- Organize your Position Summary according to the headings in the template. Use topic sentences to start your paragraphs, and logical transitions (e.g. “also, however, hence, furthermore” etc.) to make sure your arguments link with each other and make sense on reading. Create an outline if necessary.

- Leave some time for editing. Re-read and re-write after completing each draft, bearing in mind to the aim is to make your writing more clear and concise.

- Use proper grammar and spelling. Poor grammar and spelling is easily fixed by editing and computerized spell-checking. Get someone else to read through your Position Summary, if needed.

- If you are intending to create a bibliography, or use citations, do pick a style and stick to it. Examples of popular citation styles are the Harvard Author-Date system, MLA style, and APA style. Being consistent and accurate is key.

Example of Position Summary

Issue: How can ASEAN states work together to better combat cybercrime in the region?

Country Assigned: Singapore

1. What is the current status of the 'Issue' in your country?

   The sophistication of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the last three decades has changed the way we live and work. Increasingly, governments and privately-owned companies have turned to technologies like laptops and notepads which are purchased and used by employees in their day-to-day roles and responsibilities. Organisations communicate with one another via electronic mails, and the number of Internet users across the world have increased tenfold from 1999 to 2013. To give an even greater contrast: back in 1995, only 1% of the world's population was connected to the Internet; in 2014, this has risen to 40%. Unfortunately, the rise of the Internet has also given birth to what is known as cybercrime.

   Singapore is one country that is very well connected to the Internet and the Cloud. As early as December 2008, Singapore's household broadband penetration rate was 99.9%. This indicates that Singaporeans are very reliant on the Internet, both for work and for play. More and more activities – whether professional or recreational – are being done online, and this has a profound impact on how Singapore functions as a nation. A public servant will have difficulties performing his job without access to his work email account. An online merchant may potentially lose thousands of dollars a day if the Internet server she uses is down for a few hours. The situation is made worse by fraudulent sellers and buyers online, as well as hackers who work to compromise the security of any organisation that they are targeting to discredit.

   In the second half of 2013, there was a series of cyber-attacks on some government and government-linked websites. At the start of November 2013, the Singapore Press Holdings' main English newspaper *The Straits Times* online web-blog was hacked. On 20 November, the websites of 13 Singapore schools were also reportedly defaced between 3:30pm to 5:00pm.

   These attacks have been linked to the organisation Anonymous, an online hacktivist that launched a cyber-war on the Singapore government. Singapore responded robustly and had the situation under control after performing some investigations and a thorough re-evaluation of the country's firewall capabilities and other security system flaws that may compromise Internet security.

2. What is your country's stand on this 'Issue'?

   The fact that almost every household in Singapore has an Internet connection makes the country vulnerable to cybercrime. Even though some people may not think much about it, the dangers of cybercrime are very real, and this is something which Singapore takes very seriously in our campaign against hackers and other online criminals. There is a need

to make people more aware of cybercrime and its repercussions to the civil service, private organisations and also the citizens in the island state.

Singapore hopes that a concerted effort in fighting cybercrime will deter cybercriminals from attempting to do what the hacktivist Anonymous has done. Because of the close ties between Singapore and the rest of the ASEAN member states, a breach in security for Singapore may also result in repercussions that would implicate more than just one country. The peace and security that we current enjoy in the region is not something to be taken for granted. Instead, it is something which we should fight hard to uphold and preserve.

3. State 2-3 solutions which your country will take to solve the 'Issue' in your country. (More solutions are welcome too.)

    1) Singapore will step up on cybersecurity management in the country. Governmental agencies will work alongside private sectors to ensure that the cybersecurity networks of different organisations are up to date and can withstand possible attacks from hackers. Regular cybersecurity exercises will be conducted to test the system from inside, ensuring that measures put in place to counter such criminal activities are sound and impenetrable. Singapore will also engage more cybersecurity experts to help design a whole-of-country security network in the next 5 years which can stand up against attacks of all permutations.

    2) The Singapore government will put emphasis on educating citizens, from public servants to private sector employees to retirees and young people, the importance of ensuring security in their work and recreational activities online. Talks, surveys, and workshops will be conducted to share strategies to counter cyberattacks, and personal awareness of cybersecurity will be promoted throughout the island state through a three-prong approach: via education, mass media, and workplace enrichment. Singaporean from all walks of life will be engaged in learning and understanding cybercrime in order to better deal with it when the time calls for it.

    3) Singapore will strive to attain greater bilateral collaborations with our regional partners when it comes to cybercrime. Access to vital information concerning a breach of online security regarding government and other private organisations, as well as sharing of best practices when it comes to online security may help Singapore and the region to enjoy greater cybersecurity in the future.

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Position Summary

Name of Delegate: _____

Issue: _____

Country Assigned: _____

1. What is the current status of the 'Issue' in your country?

2. What is your country's stand on this 'Issue'?

3. State 2-3 solutions which your country will take to solve the 'Issue' in your country. (More solutions are welcome too.)