

Model UN Society

# University of Essex Delegation to National Model UN 2010

*Representing the Holy See and the  
University of Essex in New York City*







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# NMUN 2010 Conference

## Overview

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### **Pre-Conference Preparation**

Delegates were chosen to join the delegation for this conference in November 2009 and initial training began in December 2009. The delegation was a mix of experience level, which allowed for those with more experience to be paired with those who had less experience. The delegation obtained their committee assignments before the winter holidays and was asked to research for their respective committees and topics as well as complete initial research on the Holy See for the first meeting after the break. Beginning in January 2010, training sessions were held bi-weekly with emphasis on position paper writing, public speaking, and debating techniques. The delegates benefitted from the knowledge of Scott Sheeran, former UN Legal Advisor for New Zealand and who is now teaching in the School of Law. He was able to assist the delegation and the society with proper negotiation techniques and diplomatic speech, which all delegates found useful during the conference. Position papers were submitted twice, once for initial revision and once again after updates were made to the committee guides that were provided by the conference organizers. These were submitted, along with the final delegation numbers on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010.

### **Pre-Conference Fundraising**

Fundraising for the conference began in September and the society acquired £500 from the Societies Guild for the conference. Additional funds were awarded by the National Collegiate Conference Association (NCCA) in the form of the Brian Hayden Fund Scholarship of \$500, awarded to only 4 international schools. These funds went to cover subsidize delegate registration fees. The society applied for sponsorship from the annual Alumni Fund and was informed of being awarded £3,000 in February. These moneys were distributed as a flight stipend to each participant to subsidize these expenses. In both February and March the delegation held Krispy Kreme donut sales to raise additional funds to cover the cost of hotel expenses, raising over £600. Upon return from the conference, the delegation held an additional Krispy Kreme sale and raised over £400.

Ultimately, the University's attendance and participation could not have been possible without the assistance of both the Students Union and the University's Alumni Fund.

## NMUN 2010 Conference

The conference venue that we were assigned was the Sheraton venue, which ran from March 28<sup>th</sup>-April 1<sup>st</sup>. One of the main benefits of attending the conference in New York was the opportunity to experience the United Nations Headquarters and the Great Hall where the General Assembly meets. Both the opening and closing ceremonies were meant to be held here, however, due to a roof leak the Opening Ceremony had to be held at the Sheraton. The final day of debating, where the General Assembly Plenary voted on all the resolutions passed throughout the week, along with the Closing Ceremony, was held in the UN Headquarters. Also, the delegation had pre-arranged a meeting on Monday, March 29<sup>th</sup>, with the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations. The meeting with one of the Holy See's own diplomats was an invaluable experience. He was able to provide the delegation with advice on how to present ourselves in debate and how the Holy See can act as a bridge between two opposing sides through finding common ground.

Debating began most days at 8:30am and did not finish until 11:00pm. On Tuesday however, both informative breakout sessions were available, with guest speakers from across the world, as well as a Graduate School and Career Fair. This allowed delegates to not only increase their knowledge of the topics being debated at the



conference, but also explore further educational and career prospects. Despite the long hours of the conference, the level of debating was quite high and delegates had the opportunity to work with students from around the world.

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The delegation played the role of the Holy See well, receiving an award for Honorable Mention for their efforts. As the Holy See is only an Observer State and only had voting rights in two committees, this award was a true testament to how the delegation approached their role. As this award is computed through a mathematical formula requiring the delegation to score as a whole within a certain percentile, the delegation found itself in the top 20% of the over 250 schools in attendance. Many committee directors remarked that the delegates speeches were on point and productive to driving debate forward. They noted that their behavior during informal debating session was also fruitful and strategic. This performance can be attributed to the extensive pre-conference preparation, the sessions with Scott Sheeran, and the meeting with the Holy See representative in New York. In sum, the University of Essex was well represented at National Model UN-New York 2010 and looks forward to continuing to attend this conference in the future.





# Committee Reports

## General Assembly Plenary

With an estimate number of 150 delegates, the General Assembly Plenary certainly promised to be an exciting and challenging committee. The first night of committee sessions was all about setting the agenda. The Holy See made its presence known by engaging early on in the debate during the first unmoderated caucus. Our delegation thus introduced ourselves to the other countries present and soon discovered that our preference with regards to the topics at hand was shared by some Member States, although the order in which the topics would be discussed became more and more apparent; taking into consideration the recent grave natural disasters in places like Haiti and Chile, as well as their evident dire consequences, the large majority of the countries in the GA Plen voted to set the agenda as follows:

1. Climate Change/ Environmental Degradation as a Source of Conflict;
2. 10 – Year Review of the Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals;
3. Elimination of International Terrorism.

Despite the fact that The Holy See had been lobbying for the Review of the Implementation of the MDGs to be tackled primarily, as we find ourselves at a critical moment in time when assessment and recommitment are key in our fight for the global common good, we were nevertheless pleased to take a stand on the topic eventually chosen. The next day, after the meeting with the Holy See’s legal attaché to the United Nations at the Holy See’s Permanent Observer Mission, the task before our delegation

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was further confirmed. We were to advocate for the protection of universal human rights, in ensuring that the other Member States put their advancement at the core of their efforts. From that point on, The Holy See strived to do exactly that during the whole of the conference, pushing for an integrated approach to combating climate change – a human ecology, bearing in mind the inherent dignity of the human person. [

On the last day of the NMUN conference, the General Assembly Plenary committee had the honour of holding its three-hour long last session in the General Assembly Hall at the United Nations Headquarters. The main purpose of that session was to listen to the reports adopted and to vote on the resolutions of other committees, a role the ECOSOC committee would also serve after the GA Plen (for the resolutions of specialised agencies, mainly). To sum up, the GA Plen took note of the reports coming from the intergovernmental organisations: ASEAN (Association of South Eastern Asian Nations), the African Union, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), as well as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and The International Court of Justice (ICJ). Also, the GA Plen got to vote, in the following order, on the resolutions which were the product of diplomacy of these committees: General Assembly Third Committee – regarding The Implementation of a Global Standard for Education (GA3/2/1) and Improving the Quality of Teachers’ Training as related to the Millennium Development Goals (GA3/2/3); General Assembly Second Committee – on the topic of Protecting Developing Countries during the Current Financial Crisis (Resolutions GA2/1/6 and GA2/1/7); and the General Assembly First Committee – regarding Illicit Arms Sales (GA1/RES/1 and GA1/RES/1/2). All of these resolutions were successful, being voted upon in favour by a reasonably large majority of the GA Plen.

As the Holy See only has procedural voting rights due to its permanent observer status, we were not allowed to cast our vote on these respective resolutions. However, the Holy See continued to have an influence in the process, as commentator on one of the resolutions, specifically GA2/1/6, to which we expressed our support and applauded the efforts of the committee which adopted it. This opportunity came when the Honourable Chair realised that there is sufficient time to allow several substantive speeches on the resolutions on the floor. Following an unsuccessful motion to divide the question (clause 10 and 12), that particular resolution was passed with 104 votes in favour, 20 against and 27 abstentions. After the final resolution was passed, the Dais then took a final motion on the floor; and it came from the delegation of Brunei Darussalam. It was a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seeing a large majority in favour, the committee entered into voting procedures... With 116 in favour, 24 against and 10 abstentions, the meeting was adjourned until next year’s edition of NMUN-NY.

## **General Assembly First Committee**

Upon our arrival at the conference, the initial task was to set the agenda. Our delegation’s preference was to set the agenda at: I, III, II. Our ranking of the topics in this order was due to the Holy See’s strong opinion on the control and destruction of small arms and light weapons, the role of the Geneva convention and the protection of human rights presented in the topic on the privatization of the military, and finally, the control of conflict minerals was the least pressing topic of the three. We found that most of the delegations were in favor of setting the agenda at I, II, III. However,

there was a fair amount of support for a II, I, III agenda, which would have been dissatisfying to our delegation. As such, we voted in favor of setting the agenda at I, II, III, which overwhelmingly passed. The topics were thus set as:

1. Illicit Arms Sales
2. The Control of Conflict Minerals
3. Privatization of War: Employing and Arming Independent Militias

Once the agenda was set, our delegation went to work to express the Holy See's viewpoints accurately. Regional groups quickly formed with varying approaches to control the international small arms trade. The African Union advocated a regional approach to arms control, while a small group of Caribbean nations sought to impose procedures for better tracking arms once they are manufactured. The group we decided to work with was a group of largely South American countries and other nations who were drawn to our viewpoint. Our main concerns with the control of the illicit arms trade were: to start by maximizing the institutions and treaties already in place, namely the Arms Trade Treaty to regulate the flow of arms exports to peoples responsible for war crimes and human rights abuses; second, the Holy See strongly advocated for the destruction of stockpiles of weapons, especially in post conflict zones where national armies cannot adequately guarantee the safety of these weapons; third, the group we were involved in sought to modify the existing programs created to diminish private ownership of weapons in post conflict zones through payments for weapons in food vouchers, farming equipment, etc. Although this South American bloc was most receptive to our ideas and their own goals were most in tangent with our own, we were open to working with all nations and acting as a mediator when necessary. We successfully brokered a merger between the resolutions the Caribbean countries had been working on with the South American resolution. We were very optimistic about our resolution, as the general consensus as we spoke with delegations from other groups was that they would be in favour of it as well. Unfortunately the conference staff did not leave adequate time at the end of our final day to discuss all resolutions, so although our resolution was passed we do not feel like it was adequately debated and appreciated for its new ideas. In the end the committee passed 5 out of the 8 resolutions presented to the committee, which can be deemed an overall success.

## **General Assembly Second Committee**

The delegation of the Holy See arrived at the conference with time to spare before the start of the first committee sessions, allowing for introductions and networking with fellow delegations. We were able, during this time, briefly, to convey to the other delegations our objections as Holy See delegates. During the networking process, we found out which delegations shared our preference of the order in which we wanted the topics to be addressed. This would later prove useful as it was suggestive of which delegations would listen to our ideas. Although we found delegations who had opposing views, at the end of the first committee session, the final vote was in our favor. The agenda was set in the following order:

1. Protecting Developing Countries During the Current Financial Crisis
2. Promoting Low-Carbon Economic Growth in the Developing World
3. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for Development

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Once the agenda was set, several block positions formed throughout the room. At this time the Holy See began its integration into the networking process. The Holy See delegation tried to form an alliance with most blocks, but was unable to do so, due to disagreements in how the topic should be addressed. During the first committee session the Holy See conveyed its willingness of collaborating with the other delegations and our effort to contribute valid points and ideas. The second day of the conference we settled ourselves in working with three blocks. We decided to work with Luxembourg, the EU block, the block comprised of Palestine, Russia and Iran. Although we primarily worked with these countries, the Holy See, maintained diplomatic relations with the other countries in the room. We worked with the delegation of Luxembourg on issues concerning aid effectiveness and conditionality. With the EU block, the Holy See offered advice and suggestions about shifting focus of the World Bank to regional projects and increased investment in regional banks. In working with the block consisting of Russia, Palestine and Iran, we contributed ideas on regional banking and decreasing IMF conditionality. The Holy See was a signatory on the resolutions put forth by the EU block, the Russia, Palestine and Iran block, the AU block and Mauritania.

### **General Assembly Third Committee**

On Sunday the 25<sup>th</sup> of March, the Holy See started our first committee session by choosing the order in which we would be discussing the topics. Arriving slightly before the session started and the many unmoderated caucuses, where we had the chance to talk to delegates informally, allowed us to exchange points of view with the representatives of other countries. We quickly discovered that the topic the Holy See wanted to discuss first was not going to pass, however we exchanged interesting points with the other delegates. It took the entire two hour session to agree on the order. Some delegates on the speakers list had the chance to give a speech. The Holy See was put on the list but there was not enough time for us to speak that day. As a result, the committee voted on discussing the three topics in this order:

1. Global Standard of Education
2. Advancing Technology to promote Development and Peace
3. The Implementation of the Geneva Convention on Armed Forces

Throughout the next few days, there were many unmoderated caucuses where the Holy See negotiated and discussed with other countries in order to come to some consensus on clauses in various working papers. We debated and worked with the Latin American block mainly but also the African Nations block as well as certain individual states.

As a permanent observer, it was sometimes difficult to be heard by the block and propose our ideas. However we were able to convince the state members to add our clauses to their draft resolutions. The committee spent the majority of the conference debating informally which gave us the necessary time to introduce our arguments and make them heard by a large number of delegates. The Holy See does not have the authority to sponsor any working papers, however we were signatories to quite a few

papers as we wanted to see them being discussed by the entire committee. We finally managed to speak in formal debating session on the Tuesday of the conference in order to make our points we wanted to see in the final resolutions known by all. We also got to speak the next day to give a conclusion to the debate and express our content with the consistency of some of the working papers encouraging other states to sign and sponsor them.

We finally became signatories of 3 papers. On Wednesday, the committee concluded with 18 working papers which were reduced to 10 resolution papers. We were running late to vote on the resolutions but by the end of the conference, even though we had only resolved one topic, we had passed six out of the ten working papers, which then went to the plenary assembly for voting. Our main difficulty was to convince the Latin American block that according to the Holy See, education is not only taught through scholar institutions but also within the children's community and family. We felt like this was an important point that too few states stressed on.

Successfully convincing not only the Latin American block but also the African block and some other states such as Eastern European states was the highlight of the Holy See in this committee as we were able to include our clauses into several resolution papers which passed. The Holy See's aim in this committee was not to start a resolution paper on our own but simply to contribute largely to others. Being a permanent observer meant that many states did not take our ideas fully into account as we did not have the same voting powers as them.

## **International Atomic Energy Agency**

The first day of the committee sessions was brief and was mainly focused on setting the agenda for the following 3 days. The Holy See had a set preference due to logical reasoning; however, there were other delegations with very opposing viewpoints. After about an hour of debating and procedural matters, the committee eventually settled down with the following agenda:

1. 2010 NPT Review Conference: Towards General and Complete Disarmament
2. Water and Nuclear Technologies
3. Implementing Nuclear Energy Infrastructure without Weapon Protection Threats

This was very favourable for the Holy See as it has always pressed for fair reform of the NPT. The Holy See used the end of the first day and the beginning of the second forming alliances with a majority of the Latin American nations. They were extremely welcoming of the Holy See's opinions and were enthusiastic about working together. However, since the bloc was relatively weaker, it got heavily influenced by European Union bloc and this did not please the Holy See and Haiti. We decided to form a separate resolution with all the key points needing attention and then garner support for it. There were 2 main clauses that set this draft resolution apart from all others. These were regarding the formation of regional panels to monitor nuclear programmes and also about the introduction of a new concept of 'Nuclear Debts'.

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After 2 days of intense debating, resolution writing and amendments, the agency had 11 draft resolutions to vote on. The Holy See is very proud to announce that amongst the 5 resolutions that passed, its resolution had the greatest support and was almost unanimously supported by North America, Western Europe, Africa, South Asia and certain countries from Latin America.

## **United Nations High Commission for Refugees**

The Holy See began the conference on Sunday, March 25<sup>th</sup> by arriving approximately 20 minutes before committee sessions were due to start. We found this to be very useful as several delegations had also arrived and we began to begin the networking process, discussing the order in which we would like to set the agenda. Although we found few delegations that shared our viewpoint of addressing the topics in our order of preference, we found other delegations very open to our reasoning. In the end, the vote was taken to address the topics in the order in which the committee guide dictated them:

1. International Cooperation, Burden and Responsibility Sharing in Mass Influx Situations
2. Local Integration as a Durable Solution
3. Enhancing the protection of UNHCR and NGO Aid Workers in Conflict Zones

Following an initial vote during the first committee sessions, the order for discussing the topics was set to the above. In the context of Mass Influx Situations, the Holy See hoped to develop a normative standard for the discussion in order to avoid contradictions that stemmed from other delegates' entrenched historical and socio-political biases. To this end, we heard and compiled the views of a vast majority of delegations into a draft working paper. An emerging issue in the initial discussions on Mass Influx Situations was the diversity of definitions, which prevented delegations with conceptually congruent theses from working together. To resolve this issue, it was insufficient to provide purely empirical or conceptual assessments of the problem. Conceptual foundations offer a pre-theoretical grasp of the phenomenon under question, which lays the groundwork for empirical discussions on the topic. Bearing this in mind, the Holy See provided ample definitions, backed by empirical data, in its assessment of Mass Influxes. Specifically, we provided UNCHR-sanctioned definitions of mass influx situations and prolonged refugee situations, a distinction that we deemed important. In bilateral negotiations, we reinforced this with factual data from existing mass influx and prolonged refugee situations. We made it expressly clear that the former can result in the latter, as to avoid further confusion on the subject. This, it seemed, was an acceptable groundwork on which legal principles could be based.

Throughout bilateral negotiations, the Holy See was continually approached by Ghana, who deemed it important "to make locals know that there is some benefit in having refugees living there, because it can be good and make jobs for them." Also important were our negotiations with the United States and several of its allies, who deemed it imperative for their political ends to create, respectively, a financial trust and database that already exists. Having enquired about the real-world implications of such a decision after those resolutions were passed, the Holy See was informed

that “there would be duplicates.” Following extensive negotiations, our working paper was merged with the exemplary work of Algeria, Zambia, Mozambique, Tunisia, Guinea, the Human Rights Watch, and others. This was the first working paper on the floor, and the first resolution to be passed. Unfortunately, it was superseded by a further resolution which proposed similar solutions but contained different percentages. The Holy See was informed that in the case of conceptual crossovers, “the last resolution to be passed is the one that is binding.”

## **United Nations Children’s Fund**

The Holy See was positively surprised to notice it was able to play an active role both during debate and negotiations throughout all sessions of the UNICEF Committee at NMUN-NY notwithstanding its status of observer country. Negotiations began even before committee sessions started as delegates found themselves discussing informally on which topic they wanted to see debated as soon as they entered the committee room. This was also an extremely useful moment for us to identify any possible allies and countries which would have approximately the same aim as us so to approach them in a later stage for collaboration. The issues set for discussion where:

1. Legal Concerns and Safeguards for Children in Transitional Justice
2. Preventing Sexual Violence against Children as a Weapon of War
3. Implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child in Order to Combat Child Exploitation

The Holy See, following the advice received during our visit to the Permanent Mission of the Holy See to the UN, made sure to collaborate with all countries during negotiations and played an important role in insuring the maximum degree of communication between working groups so to work towards building a large consensus within the committee. The Holy See also worked strenuously to keep the focus on the protection of the rights of the child and not have the main objective of the committee overridden by each individual country’s interests and concerns on state sovereignty. Overall the committee worked very well and as there was a general consensus of the different underlying problems so in the interest of effectiveness and time the committee divided itself up in working groups each tackling a different area such as legal aspects, aid and assistance for victims, prevention mechanisms. During this process the Holy See ensured that all the working groups where informed of the work of their fellow delegates so to avoid major conflict at later stages. Also, the Holy See played a key role in ensuring that the measures the different groups proposed were not part of already existing UN action plans. In more the one occasion we were able to collaborate with the countries working on such a measures to make sure that space was given to expand and develop them instead of simply repeating the principle. The Holy See also attempted constantly to ensure that delicate issues such as the institution of sex education programs were dealt with in a way compatible with the Catholic faith.

The Holy See found the committee functioned in a very productive way as we had many quite extensive suspensions of the meeting, in order to allow the working groups to produce the documents that where, if passed, to be introduced in the final

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UNICEF report. These suspensions were alternated with shorter formal committee sessions during which the whole committee was updated on the progress of work. The Holy See frequently intervened both with updates on work and raising any concerns we felt needed to be addressed during the suspensions.

The Holy See collaborated actively with a working group whose focus was on ways to break the stigma within local communities and worldwide on the issue of sexual violence as a weapon of war. The group composed by amongst others Switzerland, Antigua and Barbuda, Republic of Korea, Somalia, worked on the creation of a database named: “Breaking the Stigma Database: A UNICEF action against sexual violence in armed conflict. Helping victims feel safe, improving data collection, making progress measurable”. It was initially difficult to identify the form this project was to take but after many brainstorming sessions we managed to find an agreement. The idea developed with the creation of centres of assistance for abused children who would provide medical and psychological assistance to the victims, combat their ostracization through awareness campaigns. The Centres were to be supervised by the governments (where present) with support of UNICEF and ensuring specific attention was given to the collaboration and engagement of local communities and local religious leaders. These centres would also have the function of collecting data on the abuses. This data would then be globally collected by the Innocenti Research Centre that would then compile an international database and establish statistical models whose aim would be to identify the correlation between sexual violence and evolving war strategies. The Holy See had an active role in creating this mechanism but especially thanks to accurate research it was able to suggest that the creation of these centres would be part of the current Child Protection Network project presented in the Secretary General’s Plan of Action 2005. Also, the database was created as a response to Security Council Resolution 1612 (S/RES/1612) which specifically requested such a system to be created.

When drafts were ready we made sure that their content and language was acceptable by the Holy See. This interest was very much appreciated by all delegates as whenever possible the Holy See worked hard to explain the content of the document and its strength to countries that seemed to be opposing the document. Especially during the final stages the Holy See had a key role, together with the other members of the working group, in promoting the draft working paper on the “Breaking the Stigma Database” as many countries, not understanding fully the document seemed to not want to support it. We found this lobbying process to be interesting and frustrating but at the same time extremely rewarding as the document was passed during voting procedures almost unanimously. The Holy See was very satisfied with the report that was finally passed by the committee as it was comprehensive and discretely accurate in all parts.

# Delegate Reports

**Iulia Nicolescu, First Year, English and European Laws, GAPLEN**

The National Model United Nations conference 2010 was my fourth MUN conference to date and by far the most amazing and enlightening. One of the obvious motives which come to mind is the very fact of being in a city and country I have always wanted to visit, not to mention debating in a MUN conference at the actual UN HQ (in the last committee session). This thrilling idea was one of the key factors which fuelled my constant enthusiastic engagement during the conference. It was also the reason why, as never before, I felt that there were no boundaries in place to stop me from fulfilling my role there, as the conference was something I had long been investing and preparing for.

On a personal note, the real-life Holy See's overall views and self-proclaimed mission of advancing the protection of universal human rights on an international scale greatly appealed to me, strangely enough. As the committee sessions progressed, stepping into those papal shoes became an increasingly less difficult thing to do; the part I had to play gradually took over thus making my commitment utterly enjoyable. Some highlights of my NMUN conference experience include the morning when our delegation met the representative of the Holy See, who's diplomatic and well spoken character was indeed inspiring, as the other members of my delegation would agree. Another memorable time was when my partner Holy See delegate was not able to make it for some of the committee sessions, due to justifiable reasons. – Nonetheless, Olga has been a very good partner diplomat and made the job a great deal easier during the committee sessions we collaborated as a delegation, as exemplified by her engaging in invaluable debate with states, at the same time as I was at the other end of the room working with others. – Therefore, I did not take the situation as misfortunate, rather it sharpened my goal and saw it as the ideal opportunity to push my own limits and make the most of it; which I did, by the end of the day, as I succeeded in establishing alliances with many states and regional blocs (specifically the ones mentioned in the first part of this report). In the committee sessions to come, these delegations would always keep the Holy See informed of new developments of their work and seek my advice before launching further in their endeavours.

A moment which I will forever treasure was when I was given the amazing privilege to make an intervention on behalf of the Holy See during the GA Plen's last committee session. As we were honoured to have the facilities of the UN's General Assembly Hall at our disposal (including your state's rightful seats in the room, placards, microphone, voting buttons etc.) those three hours shall always be in my memory; particularly as commenting on the resolution coming from the GA2 committee (the one about protecting developing countries during the current financial crisis) was a way I could finally manage to address the issues I was passionate about the most, as the Holy See's topic preference from the beginning had been the Millennium Development Goals review.

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I don't think there is anything of major significance I would like to have happened differently or that I would like to see changed. This conference has been the most intense and immensely enjoyable learning experience, which offered me a clearer scope and, above all, made a huge improvement in my public speaking abilities. I feel that I gained so much in terms of negotiation and debating skills, as well as the art of assertiveness, knowing how to keep the balance right in your diplomatic efforts. I would suppose this is the ultimate goal in itself behind the idea of simulating international bodies at an academic level, and I was simply thrilled to be have been given the chance to do so in New York, at NMUN. I could never be grateful enough for this opportunity. Thank you very much.

### **Olga Shkanakina, Third Year, IR and Politics, GAPLEN**

Although the formal committee sessions were not to start until 8 o'clock in the evening, the delegation was present in the lobby of the venue many hours prior to this in order to dive in the process of negotiations, consensus-seeking and relation-building. Indeed this was the intention shared by many other delegations as the lobby was filling in with excited, passionate and determined young people speaking many different languages. One of the most interesting days, Monday started with mission briefings. Due to superb organisational abilities of Essex Model UN society, the university delegation was able to meet with the representative of the Holy See delegation to UN headquarters in New York. The representative was welcoming and accommodative; he gave us little presentation on the work of the mission and encouraged us to ask questions. The conversation provided a useful insight into the inner workings of the mission and guided our behaviour as a delegation representing God on Earth. Tuesday was the most promising and challenging days with committee sessions throughout the day, delegate seminars on a variety of topical themes and an opportunity fair, I was not able to attend due to having to recover my long-lost luggage from the paws of unorganised airports and airlines. In addition to this, the news of Moscow bombings and chaos in my hometown was uninspiring to my participation on this day. Having to catch up with the negotiations, I ensured that during the Committee sessions lasting from 8.30am till 5.00pm the Holy See fulfilled its mission to support the culture of peace, to strive for the good of humanity and to provide moral advice to troubled nations. As such, I worked with African nations, China and USA in order to come to a consensus on what needs to be done in order to avoid security threats as a result of environmental degradation, the topic under discussion. The most fun day, Thursday had committee sessions at the United Nations for the GAP committee. Although the Holy See did not have the voting rights, my partner made our delegations' voice heard when giving an inspirational speech for adopting the right resolutions. The session was followed by a grand closing ceremony. Overall, it was a worthy educational experience. It was more fun than the traditional formal education though, as participants enjoyed lively interaction with each other, sharing learning experiences from around the world and were encouraged to improve many skills that are often forgone by formal educational institutions, such as public speaking, negotiation abilities, team-work and mutual understanding. All young people should try once!

### **Brooke Goodbary, MA International Relations GA First Committee**

I gained a great deal from this conference. Our 13-person delegation was a delight to spend time with, and although there were quite a few challenges we encountered over the duration of the trip, I think we were able to overcome them and all gained a great deal. I enjoyed being able to present my ideas to a group of my peers and have a lively discussion about possible solutions to such an important issue facing the world today. Meeting a member of the staff at the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the UN was a pleasure and provided great insight into the delegation's role as well as the UN procedures as a whole. I will take from this experience greater skills in debating, public speaking, and being able to work well in a group. Thank you for helping us attend such a worthwhile conference.

### **Beatrice Blois, Second Year, PPE, GA First Committee**

I am a politics student at Essex and I find it very hard to separate my own views in a debate and come across as convincing and persuasive if I don't myself believe in what I am arguing for from the start, which is a possible scenario in the MUN world, you are assigned a country or a state and you must represent this countries view. Its not in many situations in life where you defend something you do not believe in and at least I believe that you shouldn't defend something you do not believe is right, however debating skills and being able to convince someone of something is a very valuable skill. In this MUN conference I felt I was able to improve my debating ability and persuade many delegates to change their clauses, I set aside my personal views and watered down my emotions for the topics and this in itself is an achievement for me. Also what I considered the most interesting part of the conference was the opportunity we had to meet the representative of the Holy See in the UN and ask him questions regarding our committee. I was very please to ask him contemporary questions regarding the Vatican's latest Pedophilia scandals and condemned priests and cardinals from past dictatorship in South America. Overall I felt this trip was a success, I feel like the whole delegation got a lot out of it.

### **Liam McGrath, MA, Political Economy, GA Second Committee**

Throughout the conference I also used the times when we spoke on the speakers list to further put forward our preferences with regards to the topic and also speak to the entire committee which is more time consuming during caucusing. In one of our first speeches I emphasised the key issues that the Holy See felt faced developing countries such as reduced flows of foreign aid, IMF conditionality, etc. and highlighting ways this could be dealt with. Towards the end of the conference I also used the opportunity to speak to encourage the various regional blocs to begin working together as a number of working papers were starting to emerge, many of which had similar ideas or contradictory ideas (which would be a problem if multiple resolutions were passed). The speeches I gave always received a good reception as a number of countries would approach me afterwards, suggesting it was really a useful platform to get across our position.

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Looking back at the conference I found it was a great educational experience. In many ways it made me think about the more practical issues involved with the topics that we discussed, rather than the more abstract and theoretical reasoning used in my own research. It also improved my networking and debating skills, emphasising the importance of understanding people's underlying preferences and how to shape issues in a way that will satisfy these. It was also a great experience meeting so many people from different countries who were deeply interested in the topics debated and had numerous great ideas and unique solutions to the issues faced in the world today.

### **Paula Oltean, MA, Political Economy, GA Second Committee**

The conference experience was the best I have had due to the fact that we were able to meet with a member of the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the UN. He was willing to answer our questions and generously offered valuable tips on how to present ourselves in debate. The committee sessions, as a whole, were magnanimous. NMUN-NY was the largest conference I have had the privilege of attending and I was impressed by the standard of debate throughout the duration of the conference. My partner, Liam, held himself with aplomb and the character of his speech was luminous. It was a pleasure working with him. I have to say that the highlight of the trip was the closing ceremony. It was held in a grand edifice reminiscent of the stately buildings of Europe—this was the great hall of the UN headquarters. While we did not have the privilege of sitting at the desk of one of the member states, we had a wonderful view and could envisage what it would be like to take place in such proceedings.

Although, overall, the conference was a positive experience, there were some issues worth mentioning. With regards to the conference, the lack of moderated caucuses seemed more hindering than constructive to the overall debate. The committee sessions consisted, mostly, of hour-long caucuses that seemed to become progressively unproductive as working papers were submitted. A few members of the delegation, myself included, had the misfortune to arrive in New York without our luggage. I only received the luggage with all my belongings after the first day of the conference. Even though the problem could not have been avoided, it was an inconvenience that added unnecessary difficulties that negatively affected my personal experience. I also consider that our experience as a delegation could have been better if we had stayed at the Sheraton – the conference venue, where most of the other delegations were staying. Last but not least. I would like to praise our head delegate, Catherine, for the wonderful job she did throughout the conference. It is not an easy task to manage thirteen people, but she was exceptional.

### **Harriet Shaw, Second Year, English & French Law, GA Third Committee**

I quickly came to appreciate, even as soon as the first day, that we were two delegates per committee. This meant that a lot more work could be done. My partner and I always divided up during the informal debating and one would talk to one group whilst the other talked to another. We would then meet up to discuss our

strategy and plan our next move. It was much easier to work with a partner representing the Holy See with me.

As a whole, I learnt more about improving my negotiation skills and sometimes forcing the way a little while remaining calm and diplomatic. Speaking in front of a crowd was also something I was improving all throughout the conference, particularly during informal debates. The conference was partly supposed to take place in the United Nations Head Quarters in New York; however this was not made possible due to some minor incident. We were lucky to attend the closing ceremony there and it felt quite overwhelming to have the chance to be in the headquarter itself. I also had a good time as a delegation. We all worked hard on our respective preparations and helped the others out if some elements were missing in our research. There was a lot of team effort involved from everyone's behalf.

We were immensely privileged to be able to visit the Vatican embassy in New York and spent quite some time talking to one of the representatives about the Holy See's positions on our topics and on various other topics. This discussion benefited us vastly during committee sessions.

And last but not least, the fact that the conference was held in New York City made it even more special as we even had some free time to go sightseeing.

### **Oliver Killeen, First Year, BA International Relations, GA Third Committee**

For me the opportunity to go to New York and represent the University at this conference was an amazing one. When I submitted my letter of motivation, it was one that I never expected to get. At the time I had very little experience at MUN conferences and thought that perhaps I may not have been the best candidate. Having said that, I was very grateful for the opportunity. I found the fact that we were to be representing the Holy See a very odd one at first, not least because I am not religious in any way but also because the allocation of the Holy See was in my mind an obscure one. The research was first difficult from my position, as I was of the opinion that the Holy See did not take a large role in international diplomacy.

I found of course that this was not the case. As the Holy See, we found ourselves in a unique position, with the ability to speak to many other catholic nations across the world. I found that we were able to exert considerable influence to make sure that our views were heard. There can be no denying that part of the conference was very frustrating, with endless unmoderated caucuses, this was however a valuable tool in gauging opinion on the various draft resolutions. The conference was a great way to network and to make friends. I had a great experience and would welcome the opportunity to go again, I am even considering the idea of applying to be on the staff next conference.

### **Pranav Sawhney, Second Year, Economics, IAEA**

I have been to numerous conferences before, at High School level as well as University level. This conference was very different from all other conferences in terms of the Rules of Procedure. And, in all honesty, they added absolutely nothing to

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the debate, in fact, only took away an exceptional procedural motion for a Moderated Caucus. This was brought to the attention of the Executive Table a number of times, but the rules at NMUN did not permit moderated caucuses.

However, it just meant that we had more opportunities for one to one negotiating and also working in groups to get things moving faster. As this Model UN Conferences was the culmination of my 7 year MUN Career, I am glad to have finished it in New York City with an experienced and motivated delegation of the Holy See.

### **Catherine Moore, Second Year, English & French Law, UNHCR**

On the whole, I was quite impressed with the way committee sessions progressed, the standard of debate throughout, and the organization of the conference. Pawel was an excellent partner to have as I was sometimes called out of the room for head delegate duties and I could always count on him to be working diligently for the Holy See. Although the first day was a bit trying as the Committee Director did not believe the Holy See had voting rights in our committee, in the end we were proven correct and could proudly announce ourselves “Present and Voting,” which we did the entire week save for the last session. I believe that the lack of moderated caucuses though seriously hampered debate. More could have been done had NMUN had these in their procedural rules. The continuance of hour long caucusing was repetitive and once we were finished with our working paper/resolution and the other groups working were not allied with our views (i.e. Iran and Russia were very inclusive and did not want outside input, especially from the Holy See), there was not much left to do.

Although I felt that the debate could have been more productive, the conference experience was one of the best that I have had due to the fact that we were able to meet with a member of the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the UN and learned valuable tips for how to present ourselves in debate. We were also able to sit in the Great Hall at the UN Headquarters, which was a memory that I will forever keep in my mind and that I hope the other delegates who attended will as well.

My main takeaways from this conference include improving my organizational skills as we had a delegation of 13 attend the conference, improving my negotiation skills, and improving my public speaking skills. During caucusing and in formal debate I felt very confident due to the extensive preparation and research the delegation had done. If I could change one thing about the conference experience, it would be the commitment of the entire delegation to function as a delegation, as a single unit, to foster the spirit of teamwork and unity that MUN should bring.

### **Pawel Wargan, Second Year, Law & Philosophy, UNHCR**

This delegate must agree with his co-delegate on the matter of formal debate, or its absence. The lack of moderated caucuses was, we believed, abused by delegations who repeatedly called for extensive caucuses in order to prolong the debate. Being a part of the first group to submit a working paper, the Holy See had to spend the

remainder of the conference offering feedback to other groups, which was counterproductive in many instances. We are nonetheless satisfied with the fruits of our collaboration with many countries, and consider it to have been an educational and eye-opening experience.

### **Alice Lixi, Second Year, Law & Human Rights, UNICEF**

The experience at NMUN NY was for me extremely interesting, challenging and highly enjoyable. I felt particularly lucky to be in a committee which worked extremely effectively, partly thanks to the small number of delegates present in the committee and also overall mandate of the committee. The delegates I found myself working with were all extremely experienced and prepared, factor that definitely influenced the quality of the work of the committee. Due to the high effort every delegate was putting into the conference, both debate and negotiations were extremely interesting with most countries representing their positions well. More than at any other MUN I learned the importance of communication and courtesy at all times during negotiations. At times a simple clarification word was sufficient to avoid a fatal misunderstanding. I found the meeting of delegates from all round the world extremely interesting as I noticed that people's approach to an MUN conference varies from continent to continent and is especially different in the US.

The conference was organised in a way that required all delegates to be extremely professional at all times and the dais respected strictly all rules. I feared this very strict approach would have impeded the smooth functioning of the committee but I found it to have an extremely beneficial effect. I was able to take away many very useful chairing tips on how to stir the work of the committee effectively which I hope I'll be able to put in practise if I will be chairing a conference myself. I was very pleased by the very accurate revision of all working papers by the Chair, which I had never seen at any other MUN conference. Suggestions were made not only on the format but also on the measures the group was proposing ensuring they were viable in all aspects and not part of any existing action. This ensured that any report issued by the committee was accurate and of the highest standard possible. As the Holy See, together with my partner, we found it a little frustrating not being able to vote an a document we had so proudly worked on but it was extremely rewarding, after the long hours of work, to see all the report sections proposed passed.

I found extremely positive the fact that The Holy See was represented by two delegates. Enhancing our teamwork skills we were able to collaborate extremely effectively and follow the work of the whole committee at all times. The work of the committee was also supervised by two members of the UNICEF NY offices who were available for any clarifications on the issues discussed. I found their presence beneficial both for the committee and the individual delegates as they very kindly offered us advice for a future career in UNICEF and on all the opportunities to get involved they offer.

Overall I am extremely enthusiastic about the experience and I would very much enjoy repeating it soon. Other than having notably improved my skills I have now hopefully improved as a delegate especially as I have learned numerous MUN tips and techniques from many delegates. The conference allowed me to interact with young people from all over the world some of them with whom I am keeping in

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contact. I might even see one here in a few years at Essex as he was extremely intrigued by the LLM in Human Rights! A great part of the experience was also lived with the MUNEX delegation as I was able to appreciate how, within the same group; people have very different approaches to the conference and extremely different

views on the topics discussed. The success of our trip was probably also due to the fact that New York, one of the biggest capitals of diplomacy of the world, is an inspiring setting for such a conference.

### **Joaquim Iba Gaye, First Year, English & French Law, UNICEF**

Of the Conference, I will have taken with me two important ideas: the first one being that negotiating and trying to seek consensus is always tough and the second being that such conferences are a way to socialise on a different, yet nevertheless interesting way.

What is tough in negotiating, and trying to reach a consensual solution, is that one has to always remain diplomatic - even when you fundamentally disagree with one another; that is something that I've always found hard to do, given that I have a tendency to enrage easily when I discuss with someone with whom I disagree on every level. Throughout the conference I found it hard not to argue with other delegates, however I managed to stay calm and remained very diplomatic with every one, which was helpful because it gave me the opportunity to meliorate my debating skills, which require calm and diplomacy in order to keep one's head clear and to actually make sense. Negotiating also allows you to become more open to someone else's views thus enabling you to get a better understanding of things. The conference was an excellent way, I thought, of socialising, here I met people literally coming from the world over and Although, it might have been for a couple of days, it allowed me to widen my views and enable me to make ties with different kinds of people, which I appreciated.

On a more personal note, the aspect of the conference I appreciated the most, was addressing to the committee, first of all because it allowed to fight my unease at speaking publicly, and second of all because I've always enjoyed writing speeches, and having the opportunity to speak about something that, I think can have a positive impact, really is important to me, which could explain why I spoke so often during the conference. In all, of all the conference I attended this year, the New York NMUN was by large the best and it really made me appreciate the Model UN experience.