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National Model United Nations in Erfurt, Germany 2019  
(24th November ~ 1st December 2019)

Introduction

My experience at the National Model United Nations commenced last November with eager anticipation and a small tint of anxiety: it was my only second time joining the Model UN event, in an unfamiliar environment with new faces. Moreover, I have never left my country to participate in this particular event, so I was also very excited to experience Germany alongside. In this short report, I would like to introduce some of my discoveries and learnings I gained through the escapade, and reflect back on my own overall conduct.

NMUN Germany - Content

Model United Nations (or MUN for short) is an educational simulation activity where students act out as representatives of diverse nations and replicate actual UN meetings. Through discussions and speeches, “ambassadors” propose their own national interests (based on actual national/political stances) and ideas, and cooperate together in order to solve various international issues existing in this world today. The activity requires prior research and position paper preparation (information management, analysing skills), and general communication skills (e.g. confident speech delivery, debating techniques for negotiation/compromises). It also is a worthy experience to comprehend the complex situations of the modern world first-handedly.

In this NMUN event in Erfurt, I participated as the representative of Senegal, under the organisation International Atomic Energy Agency - the main topic of the meeting was the effective and safe usage of nuclear power. As a former French colony on the very end of West Africa, Senegal did not suggestively seem to have a negative response in utilising nuclear energy; we declared our stance as “supporting the utilisation, yet deeply concerned about its security and underdevelopment of technology in handling it”. Hence, we paired up and joined the Working Group that approached the matter in a similar manner. All of us cooperated in thoroughly looking through each proposal - triple-checking for overlaps, excessively biased sentences, and misleading phrasings - and corrected each other’s grammatical errors. As a result, our final resolutions were successfully admitted.



Above: Photo taken on the final day; members of our working group (Erfurt)

### What I gained this trip

Through this trip, I believe I have attained incomparable practices; I was able to boost my self-assured sides (e.g. English language skills), and furthermore, improve my weak spots (e.g. immediate information processing, communication and deliberation). Below, I would like to describe my two largest, valuable findings within the stay.

#### (1) Consideration and respect for others

Consideration must be my biggest personal gain from this event; as yet as an inexperienced newbie, I embarrassingly admit myself back then as an evident stutterer, frowning with self-disappointment in my clumsiness and slow understanding. This NMUN experience was no exception, and I recognised my possible points for improvement. However, the reason I was able to pull it off until the end was solely due the unlimited kindness of the surrounding people: ranging from subtle support (e.g. checking each other's

grammatical mistakes, complimenting each other after speeches, and listening carefully and respecting each other's voices) to evident physical assistance, which I remember as my biggest regret during the stay.

On Day 2 of the meeting, I was absent for the afternoon, due to poor physical conditions. Caused due to jet lag and insomnia, but most importantly, my lack of organisation and health management skills, I was met with an uncomfortable headache, which made me struggle to focus that morning. Irritated with myself, I acknowledged my faint-heartedness and irresponsibility for leaving the meeting early and leaving my fellow partner on her own; in addition, she substituted for me one speech I was supposed to commit sometime later. Other group-mates also worriedly cared about my physical condition, checking out for me once in a while. The heartwarming cooperation and bond between each other had triumphantly performed the successful exchange of information (of which I was in charge of) within the group, despite my frustration and apologetic feelings towards them; I felt more than granted and respected. With only one member, one cannot proceed a discussion, let alone a Model United Nations discussion; I was able to complete it all thanks to the compassion and teamwork I received from others.

## (2) Discovering new locations (Senegal; Erfurt)

This Model United Nations trip also expanded my geographical world and has definitely enlightened me to new international and cultural knowledge. For example, when I was first assigned the nation of Senegal, honestly admitting, I did not know anything about the country. Now that I have studied and represented the country, I now have a much clearer vision of what Senegal may be like, and also somewhat feel a sense of connection towards the place too.

The same can be said for the city of Erfurt itself as well; located in Central Germany right in between Berlin and Frankfurt, I had never come across the name before flying there. However, that mindset changed dramatically after exploring the local area - we were vouchsafed the opportunity to tour around for the first three days of our stay, and learned about the city's historical background, circulating the catastrophes during and after World War Two. For example, the documentaries illustrating the lives at the Buchenwald Concentration Camps did hurt our hearts, yet informed us about the political mindsets of back-then Nazi Germany. Without this trip, I most likely would not have known anything about Erfurt nor Weimar, hence I am glad I was able to learn about the region, and develop respect and love towards the place.



Above: Photos of the Buchenwald Memorial and the Concentration Camp gate (Weimar)

### Conclusion

This one special week in Erfurt was definitely one experience I will never forget; in addition to being able to reconfirm my weaknesses (e.g. health management), I gained far more knowledge and experience than I had expected before arriving at the destination. I would like to continue updating myself with international issues and conflicts, and keep striving to improve myself for the next coming NMUN.

And lastly, to sum up this paper, I would like to show my largest appreciation to everyone who had supported me throughout my journey to Erfurt: Professor Neil Cowie, my two fellow Okayama University colleagues (including my partner), all staff and organisers of this year's NMUN, other participants from across the globe (also consisting of my friends from Notre Dame Seishin University!), my university itself for permitting me to partake in this event, and my parents for willingly sending me to Europe.