

My experience at United Nation Youth State Conference 2025
Delegate for Nicaragua

1. Introduction

The UN Youth State Conference is an overnight event that brings together students from across NSW to explore topics in international affairs and law, and global politics. The conferences combine a range of workshops, speaker panels, case study explorations, and signature UN Youth activities such as Interactive Problem Solving and model UN debates.

MUN stands for Model United Nations, an academic simulation of the United Nations where students (called delegates) represent different countries or organizations in a simulated UN committee. Participants debate global issues, conduct research, negotiate with other delegates, and try to draft and pass resolutions to solve these problems, gaining skills in diplomacy, public speaking, and international relations.

In the course of debate, students:

- Deliver speeches to the Council to persuade other teams of their country's point of view;
- Lobby and negotiate with other teams in caucus time;
- Amend the resolution to suit their country's agenda;
- Ask questions to other countries (like Parliamentary Question Time);
- Vote on the final resolution

Within the UN Youth program, my leadership, problem solving, and interpersonal skills were developed through lobbying and negotiation during debate with other participants. As the delegate for Nicaragua, I had to answer its political landscape in relation to the three resolutions proposed.

2. Itinerary

Day one

- Workshops

Three workshops were run in small group settings focused on governance, economies and diplomatic relations, using interactive activities to build participants' MUN skills.

- Speaker panel

The Panel included;

Dr Mokhtarul Wadud, Senior Lecturer in the School of Economics at the University of Sydney. He has a deep understanding of politics and the economy, having earned his Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Wollongong in 2001, with a dissertation on trade agreements and productivity growth in the textiles and clothing industries of Australia and Bangladesh.

Chris Holley, an Activity Leader with Amnesty International Australia. He has been involved in both international and domestic human rights campaigns since he joined the anti-apartheid movement as a school student over 40 years ago. Chris has worked as a human rights campaigner both in Australia and internationally.

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Georgia Cam, a sessional academic and tutor at Macquarie Law School and the Faculty of Arts. She is also a youth researcher for the UNFCCC, focusing on youth inclusion and multilateral solutions to global crises, and served as a Youth Special Rapporteur for the Summit of the Future.

Ashwini is a Year 12 student and 2025 UNICEF Australia Young Ambassador who is deeply passionate about youth engagement, advocacy and social justice. She has actively participated in the School Strike for Climate, the Central Australian Immersion and debates competitively.

- Interactive Problem Solving (IPS)

Interactive Problem Solving (IPS) activities by UN Youth Australia are hands-on, simulated experiences that place young people in the roles of diplomats and stakeholders to tackle complex global crises. Split into three, the cohort were given positions as; the World Bank, America, South Korea. This simulation immerses participants in intricate international scenarios, requiring quick thinking, strategic decision-making, and negotiation skills to develop innovative solutions for multifaceted global challenges.

Day two

- Committee Debate 1 / How to MUN (The question of digital economy)

In Committee 1, delegates debated digital economy policies, focusing on cross-border data flows, support for local businesses and regulation of multinational digital firms.

- Committee Debate 2

In Committee 2, delegates debated reducing global military spending, promoting economic interdependence and pausing arms exports to Ukraine until reforms supporting peace and development are implemented.

- General Assembly

In the general assembly, delegates debated using foreign-aid incentives and targeted tariffs as alternatives to sanctions, requiring UN Security Council approval for sanctions and establishing an external ombudsperson to review their necessity, impacts and alternatives.

3. Research on Nicaragua

Political Structure

Constitution and government: Consolidation of power for President Daniel Ortega and his wife, Vice President Rosario Murillo through changes to constitution

Division of power: 2025 constitutional reform eliminated separation of powers: legislative, executive and judicial all one

Stability: Current dictatorship maintained through centralised control

Policy of present government: Loss of democratic principles, human rights violations, suppression of opposition restrictions on free speech

Economy

Major trading partners: Largely U.S followed by neighbouring countries; Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador, Costa Rica (main exports - Coffee, beef, sugar, gold, silver)

Membership of Economic and Trade organisations: World Trade Organisations (WTO) and several regional and international economic organisations

Degree of self-sufficiency: 90% of food produced domestically but limited industrialisation means international reliance for technology and manufactured products

Views on world problems

Membership of blocs: Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the Central American Integration System (SICA), the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

Membership of international organisation: United Nations, Organisation of American States (OAS) however withdrew from UN Human Rights Council

Human rights record: Stripping of Nicaraguan nationality from political opponents, arbitrary arrests, limits on civil society, unlawful killings, enforced disappearance, torture

Cultural factors

Ethnic groups: Mestizo (mixed), white, black, indigenous

Religions: Christian (84.4%), no religion (14.7%)

History

General: Indigenous inhabitation, Spanish conquest, 1821 independence

Last 50 years: Somoza dictatorship, Nicaraguan revolution, Sandinista government (Ortega elected under this party)

Recent events: Protests against the government, allegations of electoral fraud, international sanctions

Defence

Dependency on other Nations: Small military w/ dependence on allies for equipment and training

Membership of Alliances: Not a member of NATO - focus on national sovereignty and non-intervention, Allies with Venezuela, Russia

Geography

Bordering countries: Honduras to the north, Costa Rica to the south, the Pacific Ocean to the west, and the Caribbean Sea to the east

Geo-Political considerations: Anti-U.S. and Pro-Russia/China Stance, Strained relations with Costa Rica, Reliance on Chinese investment, US and EU sanctions

4. Final reflections

“Over the weekend, I had the incredible opportunity to attend the UN Youth NSW State Conference as a delegate for Nicaragua. This was my first time participating in Model UN, and it was an eye-opening experience that challenged me to think critically about global issues, engage in diplomatic debate, and connect with like-minded young people from across NSW and the ACT. Networking with other delegates was a highlight and only further reaffirmed the power of youth engagement in political dialogue for me.

Proposing an amendment to a clause for the first time was a daunting but rewarding experience that pushed me outside my comfort zone. The process of navigating parliamentary procedure, articulating my position, and defending it against counterarguments was exhilarating and reinforced my passion for policy and advocacy.

A huge thank you to Jack Preller and the entire team behind UN Youth New South Wales for running such a well-organised and impactful event.

I can't wait to take what I've learned into future conferences and advocacy work!
hashtag#UNYouthNSW hashtag#ModelUN hashtag#YouthInDiplomacy”
- LinkedIn post March

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