

HMDC Presents... LEGAL: Opening Speech Outline

HMDC Presents... Opening Speech Outline: Legal Committee: Cyberwarfare Case Studies

THIS IS A MODEL TO LEARN FROM, NOT TO COPY. We use this sample speech for the Republic of Mauritius to hear how a one-minute opening speech sounds, and then we build our own speech for our own country with the fill-in-the-blank outline below. An opening speech is short, so every word has to earn its place.

THE FIVE PARTS OF THE SPEECH

1. **Hook:** One short sentence that makes the room look up, usually a surprising fact tied to our own country or region.
 2. **Our country's stake:** One or two sentences on why this topic matters to our people.
 3. **One key fact with source:** A single number, spoken with its source, that proves the problem is real.
 4. **Our two solutions:** Two ideas we want the committee to adopt, each in one sentence.
 5. **Call to allies:** One sentence inviting the countries that agree with us to work with us in caucus.
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THE SAMPLE SPEECH

Delegation: The Republic of Mauritius. About 145 words, about one minute at a calm speaking pace.

Honourable Chair, distinguished delegates.

In January 2024, all fifty-five members of the African Union agreed on one idea: when a state breaks into another state's computer systems without permission, it breaks the law.

The Republic of Mauritius stands behind that idea. For a small state, the strongest defence is not a cyber army. It is clear law.

Yet, according to the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, only thirty-six states have published how they believe international law applies in cyberspace. Most of the world is still silent.

Mauritius asks this committee for two things. First, help for every state to publish its own legal position. Second, a clear answer on what counts as a cyber "attack," so that hospitals, phone networks and power grids are protected.

We invite our African Union partners, the Pacific island states and Australia to join us in caucus.

Thank you.

Where the facts come from: The African Union idea is the Common African Position, found in the report's "Where the Major Blocs Stand" section (EJIL: Talk!, February 5, 2024). The figure of thirty-six states is from Solution 1 (United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, July 16, 2026). The two solutions come from Solution 1 and from the UNIDIR report on what counts as an "attack" (United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, July 13, 2026). The allies come from the African Union and Pacific Small Island States entries and from Australia's July 22, 2026 statement.

OUR FILL-IN-THE-BLANK OUTLINE

We copy this outline onto a card, fill every blank from our own Country Report and our HMDC research report, and then read it aloud with a timer until it fits inside one minute.

1. **Hook:** "Honourable Chair, distinguished delegates. In ____ (year), ____ (one surprising cyber attack, or one legal promise, that touches our country or region)."
 2. **Our country's stake:** "The delegation of ____ (country) believes that cyber operations harm ____ (hospitals, power grids, phone networks, banks), because ____ (one short reason this matters to our people)."
 3. **One key fact with source:** "According to ____ (publication), ____ (one number that shows the size of the problem)."
 4. **Our two solutions:** "____ (country) asks this committee for two things. First, ____ (solution one, for example clearer law, a treaty, accountability or capacity building). Second, ____ (solution two)."
 5. **Call to allies:** "We invite ____ (the countries or bloc that usually agree with us) to join us in caucus. Thank you."
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DELIVERY TIPS

1. **Explaining one legal word at a time:** Legal debates are full of hard words such as "due diligence" and "international humanitarian law," and listeners on Zoom cannot stop us to ask what they mean. We use at most one legal term in a one-minute speech, and we explain it in plain words the moment we say it.
2. **Saying the source out loud:** We say "according to" and the publication name slowly and clearly, because the chair cannot see our citations, only hear them. One source spoken clearly helps us more than three sources rushed together.
3. **Looking at the camera, not the paper:** On Zoom, the camera is the chair's eyes, so we practise until we can look up for the hook and the call to allies. We keep the card just below the camera so our eyes only move a little.

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