

General discussion on social groups (Item 3B)

Statement by the World Federation of UN Associations

Thank you Madam chair for giving me the floor.

The World Federation of UN Associations fully aligns itself with the statement of the Civil Society Forum.

My name is Claudia Maffettone, and I am the Youth Coordinator for WFUNA. I would like to tell you about our programs and projects.

Under the leadership of our President Hans Blix, we have been conducting annual competitions to enable students to enter into the global debate about how to free the world of nuclear weapons. What we have learnt from this is that there are highly motivated and creative students all over the world who have bold and positive ideas.

One of last year's winners, Wilson Chau from New Zealand has just sent us a message. This is what he says: "In the 21st Century, I believe that the innovative ideas and opinions of young people must be heard by our leaders. Especially since my generation will inherit the Earth in the next ten to twenty years, decision makers should pay attention to youth perspectives on key issues like climate change, terrorism, security, natural resource shortages, human rights, world aid, and disarmament."

Madam chair,

Today's young generation has a unique chance to change the burden of old definitions and to bring new arguments to the table. It is increasingly recognized that the generation coming of age today was "born digital". We are more globally connected than any previous generation and see ourselves as agents of change.

One exciting new initiative is being made to link youth in developing countries together through a new website called BluMail, which offers an email account and lots of links to the activities and programs of the United Nations. It has been created by Sarah Mc Cue. The World Federation is on the Board of Directors of BluMail and we shall be promoting awareness of it during in celebration of the World day for Social Justice.

We are very happy that the United Nations for the first time is holding a global Model UN Conference at the Palais des Nations in Geneva in August this year. The theme is the MDGs – Lifting the bottom billion out of poverty. We strongly believe that youth have an enormous contribution to make to this effort and have been conducting regional Model UN conferences on this theme in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Finally I would like to inform you that the World Federations youth group will be meeting in conjunction with the 39th Plenary Assembly to be held in Seoul, Republic of Korea in August. There are over 50 UN Youth Associations in the world and we will be doing our best to have them all represented at this event. For my part I am briefing the WFUNA Youth Coordinating Committee on the work of this Commission.

Thank you