



## All work, no fun or all fun work? - the YDs' two weeks at the UN

The last two weeks have seen an unprecedented number of youth delegates first arrive to and then depart from the hub of contemporary diplomacy: the UN General Assembly. Though we had the times of our lives, it wasn't all just a pastime. Long nights were spent revising drafts and speeches and early mornings filled with G77- or EU-coordinations, meetings in the missions and working breakfasts. Over all the main focus of our work was to strengthen the UN resolution on youth.

The first days were for the most of us a real trip to the wonderland. Majority of the youth delegates arrived just in time for the opening of the 3<sup>rd</sup> committee and those who gave statements on behalf of their countries did so on the first days. In the coming days as expectations gave room to confidence we found ourselves navigating the UN system at ease and got the chance to meet with the Secretary General.

A youth delegate's day usually comprised of a morning meeting either at a working breakfast or at respective missions followed by the morning session of formals. After lunch and/or side-events the youth delegates would follow on the formals or participate in informals.

The preparing and coordination for the youth resolution took its toll on youth delegate's free time as well. Usually after the last formal session one could find a bunch of delegates packed into the conference room at UN Programme on Youth offices. More than a few late nights were spent discussing the approaches different delegations had taken and to debate on what would be the best formulations be, in the viewpoint of world's young people. Climate change as one of the main youth concerns is now stressed in the resolution. Further priorities were i.e. the recognition of the importance of non-formal education and youth-led organisations, gender equality and the integration of marginalized young people.

Still, all work and no fun would hardly be a proper mandate for a YD. After all, we were assigned to represent the youth - in all aspects. But I'm confident it won't be New York's nightlife or the Delegates Lounge at the UN that will be remembered by this years youth delegates' visits. We are happy to see our handprint in the resolution and the work that UN continues to do in favour of a better world for young people. [mn]



## The Youth Delegate's Side Event on Climate Justice and Youth

On Tuesday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, the day of our joint side event had finally arrived. After several last minute changes concerning the speakers we were very happy to be able to welcome H.E. Ms Moses the Ambassador of Nauru, the smallest Member State of the UN at our panel discussion on Climate Justice and Youth.

After an introductory video message by the chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Dr. Pachauri, H.E. spoke on behalf of the Small Pacific Island Developing States. She drew us a lively picture of the devastating consequences of climate change for the population of those states, who are faced with the prospect of their country disappearing and being destroyed by natural disasters, which left everyone in the audience almost stunned. One of the five demands that we presented during the event addressed the question of climate change refugees they must be recognized by the UN through a clear definition, and granted the same rights as other refugees. All five demands can be seen at [www.unyouth.com](http://www.unyouth.com).

The enlightening presentations on the European and the African perspective on climate justice by Jakob Ström (Swedish Permanent Mission) and Yolisa Modise (YD from Botswana) made the discussion with the approximately 60 guests a thorough success.

We thank the German Permanent Mission for its hospitality and the co-organisers: WAGGGS and the European Youth Forum for their assistance. [eb]



## What does it mean to be a Youth Delegate?

In the focus: Switzerland (Tobias Naef)

### What are your top 3 priorities for the UNGA?

We are very concerned about the fact that neither the World Programme on Action for Youth (WPAY) nor the UN Youth Resolutions include migration as a topic on its own. That is why our priorities concern first of all the integration of migration as a new topic in both of them - WPAY and Youth Resolution. We also want the next World Youth Report in 2011 dedicated to the topic of migration to conclude all the facts about youth migration. Furthermore it is very important for us that youth migrants and youth refugees have access to education in the host country.

### How were you selected?

The Swiss Youth Delegate programme is called Youth Rep. It is a project of the Swiss National Youth Council in cooperation with the Swiss Foreign Ministry. In February I had to write a motivation letter and send it together with my CV to the Youth Council. Out of all applicants six were selected for an interview with the project coordinator, the contact person from the Foreign Ministry and a former Youth Rep. After the interview three out of the six applicants were chosen to be the new Youth Reps. One attends the Forum of the Alliance of Civilisations, one the UNESCO General Conference and I attend the UN General Assembly.

### How did you prepare?

In different ways. Together all three Youth Reps appointed a theme and set the priorities for our term. We consulted the Swiss National Youth Council, especially its International Commission. We also consulted the former Youth Reps about their work at the UN and about topics to follow up. Then we did research about all these topics, we talked with the Swiss Youth during visits at schools and during the projects we organised to sensitize them for the UN. Now we have specific policy and are ready for the conferences.

### What is your role in the delegation of Switzerland

I was a full member of the official Swiss Delegation to the 64th UN General Assembly. I had a speech in the 3rd Committee of the GA and actively participated in the lobbying procedure. I also hosted a working breakfast for the UN Youth Delegates at the Swiss Mission to the UN in New York.

## Call for more participation – Youth Delegates met Ban Ki-Moon

Last Wednesday around noon many people that entered the UN-building through the 'delegates only' entrance on the north-west side of the UN building were wondering why 40 young people stood on a stage, talking and waiting – while there was still a gap in the middle of the first line. The explanation is rather simple – the Youth Delegates 2009 were waiting for a meeting with the UN Secretary General.

It turned out, that due to other previous appointments, His Excellency was delayed. But he still took the time to take several group and individual pictures with the Youth Delegates.

Furthermore, the Youth Delegates expressed their wish to have **more Youth Delegates to the UNGA**. Since 1981 Member States have been called to include young people in their delegations. Bogolo Kenewendo, one of the Youth Delegates from Botswana, in particular stressed the need for a better regional balance – a demand that will be covered by the upcoming UN resolution on youth as well.

In his short address Ban Ki-Moon delivered an inspiring speech about responsibility and sustainability that is needed for a better future of our world. Before he had to leave he stressed the importance of Youth Delegates and promised them to continue promoting young people's concerns such as climate change and participation throughout the world. [f.m]

**We'd love to hear from you!** Please contact the editors Christoffer Grønstad (European Youth Forum) and Falko Mohrs (Germany) on [youngnews09@googlemail.com](mailto:youngnews09@googlemail.com).

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