



MAGYARORSZÁG ENSZ IFJÚSÁGI KÜLDÖTTE
YOUTH DELEGATE OF HUNGARY TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Speech of András Volom at the closing ceremony of ILYMUN 2017 in Lyon, France

Honourable Secretaries-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Delegates,

Today, I came here not only as a young diplomat but as one of you. We are brothers and sisters of the same generation, the generation with the greatest yet unfulfilled potential in the history of mankind. I have a message for you: you can make that word ‘unfulfilled’ disappear from that statement.

I am grateful to the organisers for letting me speak at the very end of your magical journey at this conference. For the past three days you have been learning, negotiating, discussing problems and having insightful conversations. Having talked with you, I believe that you are genuinely interested in creating a better future for the whole of humanity. But I ask you, after you leave this hall, will you actually step beyond your fancy suits and dresses? Will you act for impact or leave our potential unfulfilled? Because talk in itself entails no commitment.

I hope that you will strive not to become people high up who forget how the world really looks like. Instead, get down to the level of grassroots and work hard towards our common goals of peace and sustainability. In fact, that is the only way we can take our chance. A few months ago I met the President of the UN General Assembly, Peter Thomson. He told me that the leadership of youth is absolutely crucial to the fate of our world, since political determination alone will not be enough to shift public opinion in favour of sustainability. He also told me that in 15 years, by the time we should have achieved the Sustainable Development Goals, he will be in his grave. Against all odds, the struggle against climate change, inequality, poverty and violence has begun, but it is only us who can bring it to victory.

Yes, only us, only you - and we can do it! Often, they will say that we are too young, that we are too inexperienced or too idealistic. But believe me, until you are not too young to die for your country as a soldier at the age of 18, you are more than capable of bringing positive change to your communities. I witness and fight these battles every day and the walls of ignorance are high. But the

higher they are, the more determined we should be to make it through. Do not get me wrong, I am not advocating for a “youth-revolution” here. What we desperately need are recognition, youth rights and consequently real intergenerational dialogue and cooperation.

Because, after all, people of different ages have stakes in the very same issues, they just look at it from different perspectives. We need to seek solutions together and quickly, or we will fail miserably.

My friends, the question is what approach will you take?

I have three proposals to share with you:

First, open your eyes. When you are walking on the street and you see some trash flying around do not pretend that you have not seen it. Grab it and put it where it belongs. Look for problems, realise them and then think of a solution. That is where change starts.

Second, trust each other. It is much easier to look for solutions with others. Do not keep your opinion and ideas hidden, share it with others and work together. This will multiply your strength. Similarly, trust those who you help. If you do not believe in them, progress will be dead.

Third, make things happen. Start your own initiatives. Look up the Sustainable Development Goals and check whether your area is doing good on all 17. If you find that your community cannot be further developed, check for other places and other people. There will always be something to improve. Show examples with your projects, because you will serve as role-models for the coming generations.

At first glance, little such steps may seem but they pave the road towards the global recognition of youth in decision-making. The reason for that is simple: say it, and they will hear you, do it, and they will recognise you. If you adopt these proposals, I promise you, we will achieve something tangible and further to that, we will also make the first steps towards flourishing intergenerational cooperation.

But beyond the obvious, why is this important? Often, I heard, in your resolutions you urge the United Nations to do many-many things, while not bearing in mind that fundamentally the UN is a loose collective of member states. If member states are not willing to do something, the UN gets disabled, and that happens way too often. Just think about Syria. I tell this to you, so that you realise the importance of your personal contributions. Without you, the world will change nothing.

And lastly, about the power of Model UN. This is on a more personal note, so I will not read.

Two years ago I was the Secretary-General of BIMUN in Budapest. I have been involved in Model UN before and had incredible experiences. What I am today is generally down to Model UN. Why I am here today, it is also because of Model UN. With one of your Secretaries-General, Pauline, we know each other from Model United Nations. And I believe, that (the fact that) this friendship could create something like this, that I come here and talk with you here today, is absolutely incredible.

And this is something that will grow and grow and grow and create more opportunities for cooperation. MUN really takes you everywhere and enjoy it to the very last bit, but then do not forget to give back. Utilise all these friendships and relationships well, to the betterment of the world that we all live in.

And reach out to others! Because MUN is something that not too many people get an opportunity to take part in. You might have the subjective feeling that it is so but we are such a small segment of the youth of this world.

And as one of your fellow colleagues have said: “the end of one thing is the beginning of another”. I hope that this conference, this experience marks the beginning for you. For a new life, a life in which you are much more aware of what is going around you in your world, in your community.

I thank you for your attention.