

YOUNG DIPLOMATS FORUM



Young Diplomats Forum, 2-6 September 2013, Ankara - Turkey

The First Young Diplomats Forum kicked off in Ankara from the 2nd - 6th of September 2013. The weeklong Forum was a gathering of 100 young leaders from over 70 countries. The forum tackled different topics in the field of international affairs from the perspectives of young leaders.

Hosted in Turkey, the Forum added the Turkish angle into the debate. The main topics discussed were:

- Diplomacy in the 21st Century
- Public and Cultural Diplomacy
- The EU Common Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
- Track II Diplomacy
- Digital Diplomacy
- Diplomacy in the Middle East
- Global Energy Security

The participants came with a wealth of diverse backgrounds, cultures, experiences and knowledge that added a unique dimension to the Forum. Delegates had the opportunity to network and build contacts between established and young diplomats.

Speakers included:

- Ambassador Murat BILHAN, Vice Chairman, Turkish Asian Center for strategic studies
- H.E. Vika M Khumalo, Ambassador of South Africa to Turkey
- Julika Luts, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Estonia in Ankara
- H.E Drazen Hrastic, Ambassador of Croatia to Ankara, H.E Genci Mucaj Ambassador of Albania to Ankara
- Ambassador Béla Szombati Deputy head of the EU Delegation to Ankara
- Dr. Sylvia Tiryaki, Deputy Director, Global Political Trends Center
- Rebecca Doffing, from the US Embassy in Ankara
- Michael Miller, Head of Political Section of the EU delegation in Ankara
- Mr Cengiz Kamil Fırat, Head of Department of the General Directorate for Europe at the Ministry of Foreign of Affairs of Turkey
- Mr Ufuk Gezer, Head of Department of the General Directorate for Policy Planning at the Ministry of Foreign of Affairs of Turkey

The Forum hailed a success gathered 100 bright individuals committed to global understanding and diplomacy as the way of conflict resolutions. In addition, the forum has successfully achieved its mission in:

- Encouraging global interaction amongst young diplomats and leaders
- Raising awareness of different perspectives vis-à-vis different topics in international affairs among participants
- Promoting appreciation of differences in opinions in international affairs matters
- Boasting diplomacy in its traditional way and its track II as the way for conflict resolution
- Drawing a picture of the future of diplomacy from the young leadership perspectives

- Creating lasting friendship amongst young participants from across the globe

Participants Reflections

"The forum brought together more than seventy nationalities - including conflicting nationalities like Israel-Lebanon, Palestine, Pakistan-India, Iran-Iraq and the rest of the Arab countries - under one roof to sit and sleep, and on one table to eat for one week. Indeed, such diversity generated hot discussions, and sometimes, uneven comments.

The friendship, which we built during the whole week, was one of the unforgettable parts of the life. The forum, undoubtedly, provided a professional as well as social networking for good. In a nutshell, I would love to be part of the forum in any form, a speaker or a participant, in future"

Malik Hammad Ahmad, Director, Institute of Peace and Diplomacy-Islamabad

"Young Diplomats Forum was an amazing experience. As an Israeli, it was inspiring to meet young leaders from countries like Pakistan, Morocco, Libya and Iraq, and discover that everyone has a common dream of peace and better future for our region. I had the honour to represent my country at the multilateral international arena, and the friends I made will stay with me on my way forward."

David Gurevich, 32, Haifa, Israel

"I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the organisers for the success of the Young Diplomats Forum (YDF). This weeklong event enhanced my interpersonal skills and my knowledge in topics tackled from a diplomatic perspective". The YDF allowed me to meet brilliant young diplomats and students in international relations and take back new friends and contacts for my future endeavours."

Carina Pilo - Diplomat, Cameroon

"I got invaluable knowledge, skills, insights and transformative perspectives about diplomacy. The peaceful, respectful and responsible nature of discussions and interaction at the forum is an example and an assertion of our identity as young people as borderless generation that is keen to build a better world for all ."

Raphael Obonyo, External adviser and a member of the UN Habitat's Youth Advisory Board

"Perhaps the best international conference I have ever attended! It was an enlightening experience and through the YDF I have met some of the most brilliant young minds on earth and made what I know will be lifelong connections and friendships. The quality of the presenters and their experience was world class and

has certainly taught me a lot. The YDF experience has shown me what it takes to be a diplomat and has broadened my horizons by allowing me to make a presentation based on the Caribbean region, providing exposure and experience on the international stage. I would recommend the Young Diplomats Forum for any student or young professional interested in international affairs and diplomacy."

Rommel St.Hill, Attorney-at-Law/International Trade Consultant, Barbados