



## Edoardo Morgante

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### **WFUNA's contribution to partnerships and solidarity**

Edoardo Morgante, WFUNA Youth Advisory Council Representative for Europe

Honourable Chair, Your Eminence, distinguished Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

I believe it is really important not to take this moment for granted.

I am honoured and feel blessed to be here with you today, and I know that you share my gratitude and enthusiasm.

Indeed, we are extremely lucky, I would even say privileged, to be here.

We have exceptional skills, exceptional tools, exceptional power, and therefore exceptional responsibility towards all those less fortunate.

It is important to always keep this in mind and act coherently on a daily basis.

As WFUNA's Youth Advisory Council Representative for Europe, I cover the European region together with an extremely motivated young woman from Denmark, Mignote Mesfin Nielsen.

The Youth Advisory Council, or YAC, is composed of 9 youth leaders from all regions around the world and in particular, besides Italy and Denmark, from Uganda, Zimbabwe, Malaysia, Bangladesh, United States of America, Mexico, and Venezuela.

Working with such a diverse group of people from different nationalities and cultural backgrounds is incredibly inspiring and never ceases to be eye-opening.

We were all elected in November 2015, with a three-year mandate, by the delegates of the WFUNA Youth Network during the 2nd WFUNA Global Youth Forum, which was held in conjunction with the 41st WFUNA Plenary Assembly in Vancouver, Canada.

Our main responsibility is to advise the Secretary-General of the organisation, Mr Bonian Golmohammadi, on youth issues and innovative solutions.

Most of the work that we have carried out so far has consisted in, and continues to focus on, improving the communications and collaboration between the various members that constitute our network.

WFUNA is a global nonprofit organisation representing and coordinating a membership of over 100 national United Nations Associations, or UNAs, and their thousands of individual members.

Our Headquarters are located right at the heart of the United Nations, at the One UN Plaza in New York City and at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland.

We also have offices in Seoul, South Korea and Brussels, Belgium.

Among a long list of memberships and partnerships, we hold consultative status at the UN Economic and Social Council, the ECOSOC.

Our activity is quite broad and is declined at various levels but has a clear focus on youth.

Hence the centrality of youth engagement and empowerment on WFUNA's agenda and the importance of the YAC.

As its name implies, WFUNA is a federation and its main aim is to facilitate information sharing and foster opportunities that come, or are substantially amplified, when its members share their ideas and energies, and work closely together.

WFUNA organises every year various meetings on a regional and global level for young people to come together, sharing innovative ideas and best practices, as well as collaborating on joint projects.

These include periodic gatherings of the regional UNAs and UNYAs, as well as ad hoc conferences and events.

One of the flagship projects that I had the opportunity to work on was WIMUN2014, the first WFUNA International Model United Nations.

As you know, a Model United Nations is a simulation of the work of the main organs of the UN.

That year we wanted to do something unique by simulating the General Assembly and its commissions in the most accurate and realistic way possible, by providing intensive training workshops taught directly by UN officials, and briefings on important agenda items by UN Agencies.

WIMUN2014 took place in Rome at the Food and Agriculture Organisation thanks to the close and fruitful collaboration between WFUNA and UNA-Italy, made itself possible also by the personal and professional relationship between Eui Yun Kim and myself, who collectively led the organising team on behalf of the two organisations.

That experience was extremely positive and successful and led to great outcomes, both for the Italian UNA and WFUNA.

On one hand, the following year UNA-Italy gave me the responsibility to organise ROMUN2015 (Rome Official Model United Nations), which resulted in the best edition by far of the event with over 500 participants from 60 countries and the adoption of a Youth Road Map on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, which I handed to the Secretary-General of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and transmitted to the then Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Ban Ki-moon.

On the other hand, in 2015 WFUNA organised another successful edition of WIMUN in New York City, as well as starting to rotate a smaller version of the same on a regional basis, organising it already twice in Agra, near New Delhi, India, and this year in Campinas, near São Paulo, Brazil.

Other very interesting projects are the Youth Camp in Seoul, South Korea, and the Human Rights training in Geneva.

I had the chance to participate in both programmes, in Geneva as a trainee, and in Seoul as a trainer.

Even if of course I loved both experiences, spending two weeks explaining to young Korean students aged from 6 to 17 the foundations and the functioning of the United Nations was just priceless.

A true life-experience.

Another cornerstone of our activity is the annual Youth Seminar, which this year will take place in Kampala, Uganda in November. Kampala 2017 will focus on how the WFUNA Youth Network can support the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security, which formally recognised the role that young people play in building peace.

To conclude, one programme that I would like to spend a few more words on is the United Nations Youth Delegate Programme (UNYDP).

I have devoted 6 years to its establishment in Italy and, finally, this year the UNYDP-Italy was launched.

Everything started in Spring 2011, when I together with a couple of friends noticed the existence of this programme while browsing the Internet.

Then we found out that UNA-Germany was providing a training course for launching the programme in those European countries that still did not have one.

Renato Cursi and I did not think about it twice and took a flight to Mannheim.

Since then, together with other members of UNYA-Italy we worked hard, raised awareness, and lobbied the UNA-Italy leadership, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as the Government, particularly the Department of Youth.

After a long time, this year the UNYDP-Italy was finally launched, and Giuseppina De Marco and Tommaso Murè were selected to go to New York City as first youth delegates accompanying the official Italian delegation to the 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly.

It was two weeks ago that they delivered a speech in the 3rd Commission of the GA focusing on the challenges that the Italian and global youth are facing today, with a strong accent on youth unemployment and youth disengagement from the economic and political life, because of the unstable and often frustrating situation that many young people live in today, in Italy and worldwide, with very sad and dangerous consequences for everybody.

The UNYDP has the potential to be a very good programme and a great opportunity for young people to get directly involved in the discussion around the most important issues of our time.

The main risk of such a programme though is to become a way for governments and institutions to reaffirm their own agenda and priorities by using young people to say what they want, and prevent them from raising difficult questions.

But this is precisely what it is all about.

Youth must be involved as a source for development and improvement, not as a way to justify and celebrate the status quo.

So, we need to make sure that these kinds of programmes are implemented in the most appropriate way, to give young people the opportunity to reflect on and discuss the issues we want.

Thank you.