

Stockholm Congress Panel Report: Youth Panel

Your Majesty the Queen,

Mr Rapporteur General,

To all the chronologically advanced delegates and to you, my fellow young people, good afternoon.

Six months ago, I received a phone call asking if I wanted to participate in a workshop for children where we will be consulted so that the adults who would be going to the regional consultation for this World Congress would be prepared to bring the thoughts of children. I was excited about it and so I went. We had lots of fun and games, and lots of discussions too. Before the workshop ended, all of us children participants wrote down 3-4 names of those whom we think could voice out the children's thoughts and ideas effectively and who do we think would be successful in their own fields, say 10 years from now. Little did we know that the winners would be sent to the Bangkok consultation. The same experience also happened to the Brazilian youth delegates; they were elected by their fellow youth leaders. Then we became part of the planning at national level and then next came the regional level.

We went to the Asia Pacific regional consultation in Bangkok, Thailand, and presented the Philippine situation through a theatre presentation and we participated in all the workshops. We were so happy because we felt appreciated and respected by the adult.

And then, eight days ago, we arrived here in Stockholm and met the other youth delegates. We had a workshop the very next day to prepare for yesterday's youth panel. It was both fun and frustrating working with the other youth. Of course we all had different ideas and different ways of saying it but, in the end, we all understood each other and came out with yesterday's panel. During the workshop we surfaced our expectations for the whole Congress and these were: that we will learn a lot about the experience of others; that we can share our ideas; that the adults will listen to us and that something concrete will come out of this Congress and of course that all this be coupled with fun.

Yesterday's youth panel was a shining moment for all of us. This was what we've been waiting for. We presented several issues but in all of those we called upon all the governments and all the adults to change their wrong attitudes towards us children and for everyone to recognize the abilities of the children and youth and to let us participate in all undertakings that are supposed to help us children. We all think that the youth panel was successful; most of our expectations were met. If only you'd seen the traces of relief and happiness in my friends' faces, you wouldn't help but smile too. Everyone felt great, happy and glad that something beautiful came out, even if we had short time for preparations. Actually we were having some problems before in putting all these things together and most of us wanted to go back home, and everybody was always tired. But last night was different. We were all happy at the dinner prepared by the Red Cross Youth for us, where we ate Mexican food and danced some Samba. I feel like that was the only time since the Congress started that everyone had genuine and real fun. You should have heard how everybody sang happy tunes as we walked down the road that would lead us to our home here in Sweden, the boat M/ Rygerfjord.

So anyway, we would just like to thank you all for listening to what we had to say. But we do hope you do more than listen. We posed a lot of challenges to you yesterday and we do hope that you would face them all. I would like to end here and give the floor to my fellow youth delegate, Vio, to tell you more about our hopes after the World Congress:

We, the youth delegation, have gathered here to deal with the darkest problem that is spreading worldwide. We have been given a word in this world. We valued and used this opportunity to protect other children like us. We address these to you as government representatives, NGOs and individuals. *Listen* to what children have to say, and *believe them*.

The entire youth delegation has one important hope for the close future: that your actions shall be as large as your promises.

We thank you for uniting the youth around the world. Because of you we, the children, have bound together as a force defending our rights. We represent the future, and the future is prepared to fight the world's darkness.

Our question for you is:

Can you fight the problems of today so that they won't be repeated tomorrow?

And can you give us the better world that we all dream about?

If you support us today, we will be able to support your grandchildren tomorrow.