

WFWPI Office for UN Relations in Geneva's virtual Youth Human Rights Forum

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September 24, 2021



WFWPI Office for UN Relations in Geneva hosted a virtual Youth Human Rights Forum on September 24, 2021. This forum was part of the two-month summer human rights internship organized by the WFWPI Geneva Office. This internship program began on August 2, 2021, hosting three international interns who began their journey with WFWPI researching and advocating various human rights issues. The interns were asked to write individual advocacy papers on their choice of interest within the umbrella of human rights and women's rights. At the end of the internship, the Youth Human Rights Forum was hosted, showcasing and presenting their research to global civil society activists.

The event lasted for 90 minutes, hosting our three interns as speakers, along with experts joining the discussion as commentators. Our first speaker was Ilana Axelrod, who presented on the Women Peace and Security Agenda in Latin America. Her detailed reflection of the women situation rooms and recommendations to better advocacy was well welcomed by everyone. Mrs. Svejtlana Jovic, Team Leader at UNIFIL, appreciated her work and added more recommendations such as the importance of civil society participation in the process. Next, we had Ms. Mary Manukura, who presented her work on gender-based violence in Africa. Her reflections on how important it is for men to contribute to the fight against gender-based violence received so much support from the audience. Mrs. Carolyn Handschin, Director of WFWPI Offices for UN Relations, added more light on this from her experience in several projects globally. Finally, we had our final speaker, Ms. Katrine Sietena, who presented on the importance of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) ratification globally. She reflected on how important it is to ratify this treaty, the benefits of CEDAW and why few countries such as the United States, have not ratified it so far. Her in-depth research and excellent presentation skills were applauded by many and the experts who positively added to the discussion. Dr. Shirley Yeung, Associate President of UNESCO Hong Kong, added more suggestions and recommendations on how UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can be incorporated into these tasks.

This discussion was then followed by a QandA session, which received a lot of positive and constructive questions on how to further the research on the issues the young speakers spoke about. Their work showcased the importance of youth empowerment, professional advocacy, global cooperation and much more, inspiring many to actively engage in such crucial issues.

WFWPI Office of UN Relations in Geneva thanked everyone's participation in the event and assured that this is just the beginning. There will be many more internship programs to come, especially the Human Rights Internship, which will be aligned with the Human Rights Council timeline.