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END OF THE YEAR MESSAGE FROM WFUNA SECRETARY-GENERAL BONIAN GOLMOHAMMADI

As we approach the year 2012, it is important to highlight a key takeaway from this year: our role as a global advocate does not stop with the closing of the year, but continues on into 2012 and beyond.

The year 2011 can be defined by many leading movements and notable accomplishments. One in particular, the Arab Spring, demonstrated the ability of our global youth to mobilize and raise awareness for the world to take notice and act. WFUNA understands the potential our youth possesses to enact change, and is inspired to view such progress in the area of youth empowerment and activism.

In the area of human rights, the Human Rights Council adopted in March of this year a Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training. This adoption signifies that awareness of basic human rights is essential for the creation of a global moral order. WFUNA hopes this progress will continue in order for human rights to remain at the forefront of the global policy agenda.

The 66th session of the General Assembly, held in September, opened the forum for discussions on land degradation and sustainable development, non-communicable diseases and other pertinent issues. In closing, on Thursday, September 22nd, a High-level meeting was held in celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. This action works to advance the fight against racism, discrimination and xenophobia throughout the world.

Most recently, the United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Durban, South Africa resulted in the "Durban Platform for Enhanced Action" in which countries agreed to come to a binding agreement by 2015 to cut greenhouse gas emissions. Parties also agreed to the creation of a second round of commitments for the Kyoto Protocol. Understanding that civil society played an important role in these agreements, the energy surrounding these talks will carry over to the Rio+20 conference scheduled to be held next year in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Here at WFUNA, our staff members, interns, and volunteers have contributed their work and efforts to enforce a framework that promotes human rights, peace and security and sustainable development. On August 2, 2011, WFUNA celebrated its 65th Anniversary and was congratulated by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon on our momentous occasion. As we reflect upon these past formative years in WFUNA history, it is exciting and rewarding to recognize our potential as an international member of civil society, working to encourage global participation at all levels of our global community.

Some exciting accomplishments for WFUNA include the launch of our Responsibility to Protect (R2P) program in three partner United Nations Associations (UNAs) countries: UNA-Armenia, UNA-Georgia, and UNA- Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). In May 2011, WFUNA held a four day capacity building workshop in Yerevan, Armenia with delegate attendees from UNA-Armenia and UNA-Georgia. The following week another capacity training was held in Kinshasa, DRC with attendees from UNA-DRC. These trainings aimed at raising awareness on the Responsibility to Protect norm while also highlighting ways to engage and educate surrounding communities in conflict prevention. In addition, WFUNA has created five toolkits dedicated to engaging four key groups on conflict prevention- civil society organizations, academic community, media and politicians.

Furthermore, as part of a three part series to commemorate the memory of Former UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, WFUNA held its first Dag Hammarskjöld Symposium in Nairobi, Kenya on June 7, 2011. WFUNA partnered with the Embassy of Sweden and the United Nations Information Centre to host this two part forum. This Symposium focused on firstly, the involvement of the Former Secretary-General in the area of conflict prevention, and secondly on debates surrounding the Responsibility to Protect norm.

On December 1st of this year, WFUNA, the Research Center of the United Nations and International Organizations from Beijing Foreign Studies University, Embassy of Sweden in Beijing, and the United Nations Association of China led the second Dag Hammarskjold Symposium in Beijing China. Both Symposiums helped to advance the debates surrounding conflict prevention while celebrating the work and dedicated life of Dag Hammarskjold.

WFUNA held a 4 day Human Rights Youth Training in Geneva this past June at the Palais des Nations for UNA staff and members between 18-25 years old. Our first ever Human Rights Youth Training produced great results in educating youth on United Nations related initiatives and on becoming their own United Nations advocate, tying in greatly with our theme, "So, you want to be the next High Commissioner?" WFUNA plans on hosting future human rights trainings for a variety of target groups.

This year marks the first year that WFUNA has hired a Youth Program Officer and is hard at work in developing our Youth Seminar Series and youth network. In October 2010, our first seminar series was held in Oslo, Norway hosted by UNA-Norway, and the second took place in June of this year in Buenos Aires, Argentina hosted by UNA-Argentina. The goal of our Youth Seminar Series is to provide a network for youth in which they can access information and develop skills to further their own United Nations related goals and missions. Stay tuned for our third seminar series to be hosted next year, 2012.

WFUNA has great plans in store for 2012. We will be hosting our 40th Plenary Assembly in Brazil where representatives from our UNAs will meet to elect new leadership and decide upon our priorities for the next three years. Also, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 2012 where engaged world leaders and civil society members will discuss the progress and challenges surrounding the concept of the green economy and sustainable development.

WFUNA is also happy to announce that our Executive Committee has approved the establishment of 6 new UNAs: Bahamas, Indonesia, Gabon, Namibia, Sao Tome and Principe, and Zimbabwe. The status of these UNAs is currently in process and will be finalized at our 40th Plenary Assembly next year.

With the arrival of 2012, WFUNA hopes to further its presence as a world actor, committed to strengthening and increasing the effectiveness of the United Nations while continuing to address pressing global challenges. Here at WFUNA we understand that it is our action, not our inaction that we should choose to define who we are as global citizens.

I wish you and your families a happy holiday season and a joyous New Year!

Sincerely,



Bonian Golmohammadi
Secretary-General