

Excellencies,
Dear delegates:

Good morning and a warm welcome to Vienna.

I am delighted to meet you all here today. When I see you, I see a group, full of motivated young people, burning for their ideas and their passions.

It is my distinctive pleasure to thank Her Excellency, Executive Director Ms. Waly, for the great cooperation between the UNODC and the Sovereign Order of Malta, especially concerning this inspiring Youth-Initiative.

I believe, not all of you know about the worldwide activities of the Order of Malta. It has been existing for more than 950 years and is the oldest humanitarian entity worldwide. We are neutral, impartial and nonpolitical and have diplomatic relations with 109 States and Permanent Observer status with the United Nations and other International Organizations. The Order's number one priority is the protection of public health and the assistance for people in need, who are affected by diseases or suffering from miserable living conditions. We are also very active in the field of Human Rights, the prevention of human trafficking, and global migration.

The big chances and challenges of today make it necessary to support the most important and valuable treasure we have. It is you – our Youth! The Order of Malta has committed itself to empower young people and to provide them with the necessary tools for their future. We are glad, that delegates of all continents have been invited to participate at the Youth Forum. During this forum, you have the opportunity to create and strengthen a common network of interests. You have the responsibility and chance to act as multipliers in your home countries, communities, in your environment among your peers at schools and at your universities and colleges.

Take your ideas, your concerns, and your excellent projects and make them public. Let everybody know about them. Use all modern means and technologies of your generation for content sharing. Use social media and create a network where you share your posts, where you like and support the ideas of each other and where you can efficiently comment on it. If you work closely together during the Youth Forum as well as beyond you are given excellent opportunities to make intercultural progress happen and be one step closer to your and our goals. Also, even if you are confronted by opposing wind, do not hesitate and make your voices be heard.

Dear delegates, I invite you to believe in yourself, after this forum, you are all ambassadors of goodwill for a peaceful and more sustainable future for today's and for future generations.

It is my pleasure to invite you all for lunch tomorrow and I wish you all the best and great success for this Youth Forum. Thank you!