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**world views**

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**United Nations**

**Global Youth Look To United Nations for Enlightenment and Empowerment**

**By RIMA ABDELKADER**

*UNITED NATIONS, 24 August 2006* -- This past week, the Friendship Ambassadors Foundation (FAF) hosted the 3rd Annual Youth Assembly at the United Nations from August 16-18, 2006 with a Leadership Training extension from August 19-23, 2006.

The Youth Assembly is an annual gathering of altruistic individuals and young leaders from around the world at the UN Headquarters.

Arriving from 50 different countries, about 500 young people, from 16-28 years old, attended the Assembly at the United Nations.

NYU Freshman Shelley Yang said, "The Youth Assembly is an incredible idea. It informs us about today's problems and how we can be a part of the United Nations for a better world. They train us to be better leaders."

Like the other students, Yang enjoyed learning about the UN's Millennium Development Goals, which was promoted during the Assembly. The MDGs include eradicating hunger and poverty, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability and developing a global partnership for development.



Every year, the Assembly enlightens and informs students and young professionals on global and local issues affecting the globe, and offers them unique networking opportunities with international groups in hopes of empowering them to take on leadership roles in their communities.

"Once this Assembly is completed, I will go to my community and inform other students about this organization's goals and on today's challenges," Yean-Tying Liaw, graduate student from Northeastern University said.

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Cornell University sophomore Sheena Winwen Chen said, "It's a chance to improve yourself and learn about how we can face the world in the future."

Participants had the opportunity to engage in high level UN staff involvement, a wide variety of workshops and seminars, music and theatre events, unique networking opportunities, a tour of the UN headquarters, special events and sightseeing and a post conference leadership training at Pace University.

The Leadership Seminar following the Assembly included a five day intensive training, featuring lecturers from Pace University, UN advocates and FAF experts.

Long Island University student Aysha Amin said she attended the Assembly to "help the world." From the first day of the conference, she said, she was immediately motivated by Youth Assembly at the UN Secretary General Dr. Valdov's anecdote of a woman who transformed an idea into tangible action.

"It's about implementing action," Kevin Hsu, junior at Northwestern University, said.

Youth Assembly at the UN Secretary General Dr. Elaine Valdov said, "The Youth Assembly brings together young people from around the world who are greatly inspired to be the change agents in our world, creating a better world for all. Together we can make a difference."

All participants resided at Pace University, Manhattan for the entire program and optional, post-program activities. Sponsors included permanent missions to the United Nations, NGOs and United Nations Agencies.

"The Friendship Ambassadors Foundation (FAF) is a nonprofit, cultural services agency with international affiliations and representation. FAF promotes intercultural exchanges that reduce tensions, increase mutual understanding, cooperation, reconciliation, and the ability for cultures to meet in meaningful ways; the foundation also believes that Cultural Tourism can be a resource for communities seeking locally managed, sustained growth and development." For more information, check out [www.faf.org](http://www.faf.org).

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(Rima Abdelkader is a recent graduate from Pace University and a freelance journalist living in New York City.)

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