

# *FERMUN 2015*

## OPENING CEREMONY

10.00, MONDAY, 12 JANUARY 2015  
PALAIS DES NATIONS, GENEVA

## *OPENING REMARKS*

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Distinguished FerMUN 2015 delegates,  
Distinguished colleagues,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

- It is a great honour to be here with you this morning for the opening of the third FerMUN conference to be hosted by ITU.
- Let me welcome you on behalf of Houlin Zhao, the ITU Secretary-General, who could not unfortunately be with us today.
- ITU is greatly honoured to host FerMUN 2015, and we are delighted to be able to lend you our facilities for this conference, which this year will be focusing on the Millennium Development Goals, the MDGs, and the sustainable development agenda moving forward beyond 2015.
- It is fantastic to see how the FerMUN conference has gone from strength to strength, and I am delighted to see that there are 600 students and 60 teachers coming here this year from 13 countries.
- Let me give a very special welcome to you all, and especially to the 24 CM2 students who are joining us for the first time – at around ten years old, I think you are the youngest delegates we have ever had at a major ITU conference!

Distinguished delegates,

- I would like to issue a challenge to each and every one of you today – a challenge to come up with concrete proposals and solutions as the outcome of the 2015 FerMUN conference.
- You are the next generation, and we are counting on you to make the world a better place over the course of your lives and your careers, careers which will be starting pretty soon!
- So let me ask you to share with us – and to share with the world – the ways you think we can improve things, especially in the major areas of health, education, and sustainability, but also in terms of gender equality, accessibility, and youth opportunities.
- If our experience with the FerMUN conferences is anything to go by – and I think it is – we can expect you to be bright, innovative and dynamic here at the conference.
- As a representative of ITU, the UN specialized agency for information and communication technologies, ICTs, let me ask you – on top of those fine qualities – to add your skills as young digital natives, and to tell us how you think we can leverage the power of ICTs to deliver real, substantive change in terms of the development paradigm.
- Strange as it must seem to most of you here – the generation of Millennials – when the MDGs were set, 15 years ago, ICTs, on the global scale we know them today, hardly existed.
- Mobile penetration in the year 2000 stood at just 12% worldwide, and only 6% of the world's population was online. Facebook and Twitter didn't exist. And smartphones and tablets had not yet been invented.
- So think what a difference we can make with near-ubiquitous technology – in a world where over 95% of the world's population is covered by a mobile phone signal, and nearly three billion people are online.
- And think what a difference we could make if everyone – everyone on the planet, all 7.3 billion people – were online!

- As many of you may know, this is ITU's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary year – we are the oldest intergovernmental organization in the world – and that means looking forward as much as it means looking back.
- So let me also challenge you individually to consider developing future careers as professionals involved in sustainable development – whether that's within government, within the UN system, or working for an NGO or a business dedicated to the greater good – in particular as so many of you are in the process of deciding what to study at university.
- You have a tremendous future – and it starts right here at FerMUN 2015!

Distinguished delegates,

- Let me close by once again offering you the warmest welcome to ITU's headquarters over the coming days, and let me wish you a very successful conference.

Thank you.

**650 words**