STATEMENT AT THE OPENING OF THE MODEL UN CONFERENCE

SIMULATION OF THE SESSION OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL ON THE SITUATION IN YEMEN

27 August 2015

Tehran, Iran

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UN Resident Coordinator
On behalf of the UN in Iran, I am pleased to greet you all at the opening ceremony of this Model UN Conference in Tehran.

Our purpose today will be to simulate a session of the UN Security Council on “The situation in Yemen”.

This event has been organized jointly by the International Studies Journal and the UN Information Centre in Tehran.

It is also supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Tehran Peace Museum.

First of all, I would like to extend my thanks to the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Araghchi for joining us this morning. Also to the teams from the International Studies Journal, led by Dr. Zakerian, the Tehran Peace Museum, and UNIC – especially our UNIC Interns – for organizing this event.

Thanks also to you, dear participants, for your continuing interest in the work of the United Nations and for your enthusiastic participation in this Model UN Conference.

I would also like to specifically thank the Honourable President of our Model Security Council, Ambassador Bagher Assadi who has very graciously agreed to lead, moderate, and chair today’s proceedings. He brings to this role vast experience.

A review of the past hundred years shows that conferences like this are, most likely, an outgrowth of simulations of the League of Nations that date back to the 1920s.

Today, the popularity of Model UN continues to grow. It is estimated that the number of participants exceeds 400,000 students – worldwide – every year – at all educational levels – from primary school to university.

Indeed, many of today’s world leaders in law, government, business and the arts have – in the past – participated in Model UN as students. This includes UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon himself.

But today our subject is “The situation in Yemen”.

The subject you have chosen is challenging. It is complicated. And it is important.

The current state of affairs there – and its immediate impact on our region – is being actively discussed across many forums in the United Nations. So, I am sure that during your research and work on position papers you have learned a great deal.
I understand – and appreciate – that you have spent a lot of time this summer, during your vacation, researching and preparing the positions of the countries which you will represent in the UN Security Council session today.

I know that you took this task seriously. Many of you have come from different provinces in Iran. You have been actively engaged in the team discussions. You have already shared your knowledge and information with your country delegates and your Security Council members. This has been an excellent example of team work.

For this reason, I am confident that – through this body of learning and reflection – done in preparation for today’s event – you will also have come to understand what huge efforts and resources are being invested by world leaders – and the UN – in attempting to resolve the conflict in Yemen.

All of us need to continue to try to find ways to help the people of Yemen. Especially those who have fled their homes – and their war-stricken country – in search of a safe haven for their families. Both within Yemen and in surrounding countries.

So, in the final analysis, I believe you will have come to develop in three ways from the opportunity offered by this unique Model UN experience.

First you will have a better understanding of one of the main human security challenges facing our region.

Second, you will have come to learn more about the procedures and rules of the UN bodies. And the values of the United Nations.

Finally, you will have improved your skills in negotiation, communication and consensus-building.

All three, but especially the last, will be useful in your future careers, no matter where life leads you.

I have confidence that even if you do not become diplomats, you will use today’s experience – and the experience of preceding weeks – in your future professions and jobs. And I congratulate you on this.

Please allow me to end with a quote from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon. He uttered these words during a similar Model UN Conference:

- “Your participation in the Model UN comes at a time when the international community increasingly recognizes the power of young people to change our world.”
• “I count on you to use the negotiating skills you learn in this Model UN to help navigate the real-world problems we face.
• “Join forces with like-minded individuals and groups to promote understanding and generate positive change.”

This is exactly what UN tries to do in Iran, as well as so many countries in the Middle East. And the world.

Empower youth – because you are the future generation. The one which will decide the fate of our beautiful, endangered planet.