



## **“Change the World,” an Italian project at the United Nations**

Marco Piattelli Palmarini (March 30, 2012)



Diplomatici Association takes hundreds of Italian students at the United Nations Headquarters for "Change the World," an international simulation of the UN activities.

The [Diplomatici](#) [2] Association from Catania, Italy, is the first non-American and non-UN affiliated association to ever organize a Model UN, a simulation of the United Nations' negotiation activities. A thousand university and high school students from all over the world are in New York for the "Change the World Model United Nations," taking place from March 29 to April 1 at the UN Headquarters.

600 Italian students are participating in the event, 150 of which come from Sicily. 193 UN Member States are represented in the "diplomatic game," and the focus of the simulation is the relationship between renewable energy and human rights.

The Diplomatici Association is an educational organization composed of university and high school

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students and teachers, and of young professionals. It manages the participation of Italian students to the Model UN and it's the only European educational organization to be accredited for middle school, high school and university level simulation projects.

Founded in 2000 in Catania and originally managing only the participation to the diplomatic games of students from Catania University, Diplomatici currently operates all over Italy. This event is extremely important for the association that, after twelve years of intense activity, was able to bring so many Italian students to the United Nations' General Assembly Hall.

Since 2009, Diplomatici works in association with [United Nations Association of the United States of America](#) [3], the most important American association organizing MUNs.

MUNs are organized to promote and raise awareness among the younger generations of the main international affairs issues the United Nations deals with everyday. They are an occasion for diplomats-to-be to get acquainted with the functioning mechanisms of the UN, learning about the procedures and technicalities the diplomats observe while negotiating.

MUNs are really a hands-on training experience for the students that wish to pursue a career in the United Nations' system: each student plays the role of a delegate from one of the United Nations' member states and has to defend the position of the assigned country, write resolutions and negotiate with the delegates from other states in order to reach shared consensus on the issues promoted, and possibly have his resolution voted and adopted by the Assembly.

There are no losers or winners in a MUN. The simulation is not a competition, but an occasion to develop relational and problem solving skills while practicing team working.

i-Italy attended the opening ceremony for the “Change the World Model United Nations,” gathering the impressions of the participating Italian students.

The ceremony was held in the United Nations' General Assembly Hall and it was attended by Italy's Ambassador to the United Nations Cesare Maria Ragaglini, by NATO Coroner Daniele Cucchi, by Amy Ruggiero from the Education Programs Division of United Nations Association of United States of America, by Claudio Corbino, president of the Diplomatici Association and by Salvatore Carrubba, journalist and president of the association's International Board.

The students were all very excited, and the vast majority of them had never been into the UN Headquarters before. The most senior students were third or fourth year college students of Law, Political Science and International Relations. The Economics, Philosophy and Foreign Languages students were also numerous. The high school students participating in the simulations came from different backgrounds, and they share an interest in the diplomacy-related study fields.

All of the participants were well prepared on the history and activities of the United Nations Organization - also thanks to the intensive training program organized by Diplomatici to put the participants in the condition to do their best during the simulation -- and their questions to the guest speakers of the event were very precise and pertinent. The students were curious about international law and economy issues, about foreign policy issues and especially about the stage of the negotiations for a reform of the UN.

Many of the students consider the experience as a chance to gather more information on the world of diplomacy, and to get a sense of how well it would suit them as a career path.

Ambassador Ragaglini invited the students to be tenacious in their determination to become diplomats: “Never give up and keep studying. A career in diplomacy is tough but it can be very rewarding. You should never get discouraged: if you aim for a career at the UN, your efforts will get you there sooner or later.”

The floor was then passed to Diego Cimino, 21-years old Law student playing the UN Secretary General's role in the simulation, who officially opened the works of the “Change the World Model United Nations.”



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**Links**

[1] <http://440468.6bgr9ubv.asia/files/salaassembleagenun1333145104.jpg>

[2] <http://www.diplomatici.it/>

[3] <http://www.unausa.org>