

# REPORT ON THE 15<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE



~ NATHANIEL WARE ~

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## INTRODUCTION

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In recognition that international cooperation and cross-cultural understanding is requisite to solving many of today's most pressing global challenges, Civics Concepts International organises biannual International Youth Leadership Conferences. Taking place in Prague, Czech Republic, these Conferences offer participants the opportunity to discuss controversial issues of international importance, partake in simulations of numerous world organisations, and network with similar-minded youth from diverse backgrounds and geographic locations.



The 15<sup>th</sup> Conference took place in January 2008, which I was privileged to attend. It brought together ninety-six people from over thirty different countries, setting the stage for a week of informed, passionate, and productive debate. These debates took the form of simulations of various international organisations – The United Nations Security Council, The International Criminal Court, and the European Parliament.

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## UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL SIMULATION

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The UN Security Council simulation involved delegates representing either one of the five permanent member states (the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States, France and China) or one of the ten non-permanent member states (who are elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms). The topic under discussion was Iran's uranium enrichment program. Debate centered on the threat that Iran poses to regional and global stability, the relative merits of alternative courses of action, as well as the alleged hypocrisy of some signatories to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Through a lengthy negotiation process, the complexity of international security issues, and the difficulty of achieving unanimous support from the permanent members of the Security Council, became increasingly apparent.



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## INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT SIMULATION

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One of the more challenging aspects of the Conference was the simulation of the International Criminal Court, an international tribunal established in 2002 following the ratification of the Rome Statute (1998) by sixty member states. The pre-trial simulation involved debate on whether Germain Katanga (from the Democratic Republic of Congo) should be tried for crimes against humanity and war crimes. This required extensive knowledge of the Rome Statute and the application of international law. It was successfully argued by the prosecution that there is sufficient evidence to establish substantial grounds to believe that Germain Katanga is criminally responsible for the war crimes of enlisting and conscripting of children under fifteen years of age. As such, it was held that Katanga should stand trial.



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## EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT SIMULATION

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The third and final simulation of the Conference involved delegates representing various parliamentary groups during a mock session of the European Parliament (which along with the Council of the European Union forms the legislative branch of the European Union). Debate revolved around the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme (the largest regional trading scheme in the world), with delegates proposing various changes to the Scheme. These proposed changes included introducing centralised allocation of permits (as opposed to national allocation plans), including additional greenhouse gases into the Scheme, increasing the number of permits that are allocated through an auctioning process, and providing greater incentives for manufacturing firms to establish in Europe so as to offset the cost of compliance with environmental regulations. The merits of these suggested changes were hotly debated, with compromises needing to be made in order for motions to pass.



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## CONCLUSION

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In addition to the educational value of these three simulations, the Conference proved valuable because it enabled participants to network with like-minded individuals from across the globe, gain a greater understanding of different cultures, and recognise the importance of international diplomacy when it comes to addressing many of today's most pressing social, economic and environmental problems.

As such, I would recommend the Conference to those students intending to pursue a career in politics, international relations, international economics, or law. Not only would they increase their knowledge of the international affairs, but they would also be able apply theoretical understanding to practical situations, which is of immense value.



*For those students considering attending an International Youth Leadership Conference, or those who are interested in learning more about the subject matter covered at the 15<sup>th</sup> IYLC, please feel free to contact me via email ([nware@student.usyd.edu.au](mailto:nware@student.usyd.edu.au)) and I will endeavour to provide you with additional information.*