

**Closing Speech  
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President, WFUNA**

**40th WFUNA Plenary Assembly  
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Secretary-General Golmohammadi,

Distinguished representatives of our member United Nations Associations,

Ladies and Gentleman,

The past several days have been challenging and stimulating. You have all worked very hard, as befits the important tasks and goals you have been discussing. Our immediate work is over; we have set our direction for the coming three years.

I have pondered a bit during our sessions and conversations here about a phrase that has been much used but often misunderstood. I believe, however, that the phrase represents a very basic reason for our work and for that of the United Nations. I am referring to "global citizenship."

The idea that we are all global citizens is by no means a new one.

Several ancient Greek philosophers mentioned it in their writings; Socrates was one and Diogenes was another who said he was a "cosmopolitan," which means "citizens of the world" in Greek and was the title he took for himself.

The term was controversial in ancient Greece, where a person was identified as a member of a city-state such as Athens or Sparta, or at most as a Greek.

The concept of identifying with a broader community was seen by some as a rejection of one's own history and cultural traditions.

Today, even as our world has grown breathtakingly interconnected, the concept of "global citizenship" sometimes still conjures up the image of an all-powerful world governance on national sovereignty.

That is no more true than the mistaken notion that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is an attempt to eliminate the prerogatives of individual nations.

Indeed, the whole concept of international law is based on voluntary acceptance of limits on sovereignty in return for an agreed set of international rules that benefit all.

Today, there are several areas where we probably or certainly need to extend the concept of global citizenship to address global problems. Individual nations cannot address the problem of climate change, for example, and the emergence of the responsibility to protect as an international norm is an effort to affirm our duty to ensure that our fellow global citizens enjoy the security that most of us take for granted.

Part of our job as members of international civil society, I believe, is to combine our strength to use global governance to solve global problems - problems that we all face, regardless of the color or design of our passports.

WFUNA has played an important role in several ways in improving the lives of all the members of our global community. As we are all well aware, this Plenary has set our Federation's direction for the coming years.

It has also reinvigorated our devotion to the real principles of global citizenship, which coexist and complement the principles that we adhere to as citizens of our many different nations.

I congratulate you all on your accomplishments here, and I wish you all the best in our joint efforts to make this world more peaceful, secure and prosperous.

As the old saying goes, goodbyes are painful if there will be no more hellos.

I look forward to continuing friendships and seeing you all from time to time.

Before closing, I express my special thanks to the leaders and members of UNA-Brazil, who have worked hard to prepare a warm welcome and a comfortable atmosphere for our meeting.

Lastly but not least, on behalf of all the participants I would like to express our profound thanks to the dedicated members of the Secretariat, as well as our interpreters.

I would also like to say to the Secretary-General that I believe the Secretariat is fully entitled to take a long break, so I think, Mr. Secretary-General, this leaves you alone to attend to matters following the Plenary in New York.

I would also like to thank our volunteers of Ibmecc University, without whom this achievement would not have been possible.

I wish you all the best and a happy journey to your country.

I now declare this 40th WFUNA Plenary Assembly meeting closed.