Embassy of India
Yerevan
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Opening Remarks at YereMUN 2026 Inaugural Ceremony

[Yerevan State University, 06 July 2026]

- Ms. Arevik Anapiosyan, Adviser to UN Resident Coordinator in Armenia,
- President and Members of YereMUN,
- Dear friends,

Barev dzez and Namaskar!

I am delighted to be here today for the Inaugural Ceremony of YereMUN 2026. I have been associated with your deliberations over the past few years and have been very happy to see the level and quality of participation. The unique feature of YereMUN is that you have the participation of not only University students but also those from high-school. Earlier this year, the Embassy of India sponsored the Speech Contest organized by YereMUN with the specific aim of encouraging and honing communication skills which are at the heart of diplomacy and international relations. A lot of the content which we hear today is AI generated. As we had deliberated at length in March this year, AI should be used only as a tool and not let it dictate the way we think and analyse the world. I hope this would be actively debated during your week-long YereMUN sessions.

2. Today, as we kick off YereMUN 2026, I have been asked to specifically speak on youth engagement, education, the role and relevance of the UN, the importance of fighting indifference and

encouraging youngsters like you to join the diplomatic service a few years down the road.

3. I have been very enthused to see the high turnout in last month's Parliamentary elections – 59%. This was the highest witnessed in Armenia. In India, it is much higher. In this year's State elections (India has a federal system), the turnout was extremely high across the four States where elections took place. But in West Bengal, it stood at a whopping 92.5%! In our general elections in 2024, India's electorate, that is, eligible voters, stood at 970 million! What I am trying to say is that it is very important for young people like you to know about the local and national issues and make your voices heard. One way is of course, taking part in elections. You are not only leaders of tomorrow, but also leaders of today. Across the world, the youth are developing innovative solutions, advocating for human rights, responding to humanitarian crises, and building stronger communities. You are the ones who will bear the consequences of today's decisions — from climate change and AI regulation to conflict resolution and trade agreements. By engaging in diplomacy, you are not just a passive recipient of those decisions but contribute to shaping that future. If you are not at the table, your interests will not be represented.

4. While high-level talks are essential, diplomacy also happens on the ground: in local peacebuilding, intercultural exchanges, cross-border collaborations, and activism. Many of the top politicians in India today, rose from participation in University politics and taking leadership on local issues. The foundation of that leadership is education. Education is much more than acquiring knowledge or preparing for a career. It teaches us to think critically, communicate effectively, appreciate different perspectives, and make informed

decisions. In a world where misinformation spreads quickly and global challenges are increasingly interconnected, these skills are more valuable than ever. Education also helps us understand that the challenges we face do not stop at national borders. Climate change, armed conflict, public health emergencies, food insecurity, and inequality require cooperation that extends beyond any one country. This is precisely why international institutions matter.

5. The UN was established on the belief that dialogue is stronger than division and that cooperation is more effective than confrontation. However, it is essential for the UN to be reformed for it to remain relevant and play the role it was meant to play for preventing armed conflict and mediate peace. For that, it is the need of the hour for the UN Security Council to be expanded so that it reflects the realities of the 21st century and not that of the end of the 2nd World War. The UN has not been able to play any role at all in recent times in either preventing wars or in negotiating for peace. Individual countries are taking on that role. The UN, however, remains an essential platform where nations can work together to address challenges that affect us all.

6. But institutions alone cannot build a better world. Their success depends on people - especially young people like you - who are willing to participate, contribute ideas, and take responsibility. Perhaps one of the greatest challenges which we face today is not only conflict or inequality, but indifference. Indifference tells us that national or global problems are too large, that our individual efforts do not matter, or that someone else will solve them. Yet history consistently shows the opposite. Every significant step toward peace, justice, and progress began because individuals chose not to remain indifferent. Fighting indifference starts with awareness. It means paying attention to what is happening around

us, listening to voices different from our own, engaging in our communities, volunteering, and standing up for the values we believe in. Small actions, repeated by many people, can create extraordinary change.

7. Finally, for those of you who aspire to pursue careers in diplomacy and international affairs, remain curious. Study languages, history, economics, international law, and cultures beyond your own. Do in-depth reading and travel extensively. Develop strong communication skills, seek opportunities, volunteer initiatives, academic exchanges, and internships. Every experience which broadens your perspective, will help you become a more thoughtful and effective leader. Most importantly, remember that diplomacy begins long before you receive an official title. Every respectful conversation, every effort to resolve disagreement peacefully, every act of empathy and cooperation reflects the values that diplomats practice every day. I encourage each of you to stay engaged, continue learning, ask difficult questions, and never underestimate the impact your voice can have. Whether you become a diplomat, a teacher, an entrepreneur, a scientist, or a community leader, your contribution matters.

8. With those words, let me wish you all a very enjoyable, fruitful and enriching YereMUN 2026!

Thank you! Namaskar! Shnorakalutyun!

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