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Connecting Communities

Top 7th Grade Student of Miami Beach Participates in Renowned, Invitation-Only Annual Economic & Social Council Youth Forum at United Nations

Ransom Everglades Middle School attendee joins international youth at exclusive New York City event

Miami Beach Resident Will Charouhis, a top 7th grade student at Random Everglades School, received an exclusive invitation to join the elite, 8th Annual Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, which occurred on April 8th and 9th.

The ECOSOC Youth Forum provides a global platform for more than 1,000 young individuals to address the disadvantages of the current trends in globalization, which the U.N. states are not sufficiently sustainable for future generations. Over the course of two days, the forum discussions provided participants with an opportunity to exchange ideas with other youth about what they can do to achieve sustainable development.

Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garces, President of the United Nations General Assembly, addressed Charouhis and other youth at The Institute of Peace, stating: "Young people must be involved in the decision-making." She denounced the fact that: "Youth perspectives are still viewed by some as something nice to have, rather than integral to the discussion."

As the main platform for youth to



share their ideas at the global level, the Forum allows representatives of youth-led and youth-focused organizations and networks, youth advocates and other youth stakeholders to dialogue with Member States, and to explore ways and means of promoting youth development and engagement. Participants take part in brainstorming sessions, interactive speaker panels and discussions with Member States on the annual ECOSOC/High-Level Political Forum themes. The platform

allows youth participants to engage with peers from across the world on important topics affecting the globe, including climate change. During this event, Charouhis met children from Libya and Nepal.

"Climate change is not a future problem for our politicians to debate. It is here now, every day, hurting those all around us, and it's going to get much worse. If we do not act now, it will be our generation who will suffer. We have to stop running from the truth. Climate change is real, and if we don't fix the problem, it will only worsen," added Charouhis. "The youths' ideas from the forum will be brought before the United Nations' Climate Summit in New York on September 23, 2019, where, hopefully, the ideas will be translated into action."

Charouhis plans to attend the September Climate Action Summit 2019. Participation in the forum is by invitation, where youth participants are selected by National Youth Councils, regional youth organizations, as well as youth-led and -focused organizations and networks affiliated with the Major Group for Children and Youth (UN-MGCY) and the International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations (ICMYO).