

Question: The first World Festival of Youth and Students was held 70 years ago. Young people were brought together by their belief that friendship and sincerity can thaw the ice of mistrust. What is the main message of the 19th World Festival of Youth and Students? What is so important about it?

Sergey Lavrov: Strangely enough, I think the message of this festival is the same, that friendship and mutual trust must thaw the ice that has accumulated in international relations. Young people can thaw this ice through such events as this festival.

Question: Over 30,000 people from 188 countries have attended this festival. These are widely different people from different countries with different political systems, cultures and religions. What has brought them all together?

Sergey Lavrov: A desire to communicate based on mutual respect. It is not just this festival but the world at large that is a complex maze of various religions, cultures and civilisations. We must view this cultural and civilisational diversity as our common wealth and as the basis for prosperity and development in all spheres of life in all parts of the world.

The young people who have gathered in Sochi and other cities of Russia comprise a representative cross-section of the global civilisation, which is why we hope that when these young people take up the reins in their countries, including in foreign policy, we will no longer see the deplorable events we see on the international stage right now.

Question: The festival participants discuss many problems that we have to cope with today. What should they do right now so as to start changing the world for the better?

Sergey Lavrov: Well, I will have to repeat myself. They need to learn to listen and understand each other better as well as, most importantly, to draw conclusions from the fact that people differ from one another in this multiform world. Ensuring the prosperity of one part of the world, no matter whether you describe it as the “golden billion” or in some kind of different terms, through the plight and poverty of a vast group of other regions is impossible and unacceptable. A stable world with a sustainable global economy in all its segments in the West can be only ensured through collective decisions based on a balance of interests rather than the domination of the interests of some over the interests of others. This is the essence of current developments and our foreign policy. We are promoting an agenda that focuses on unification rather on appointing a leader whom everyone else will have to bow down to.

I am sure that the spirit of this festival together with the atmosphere that its organisers have created here can promote this very well. I wish all of you taking part in this festival good luck.