Honourable presidency,

Distinguished guests and speakers,

Dear fellow secretary-general,

Hardworking executive staff members,

Esteemed Student Officers,

Respected MUN-Directors,

and dear, dear delegates,

It is my sincere pleasure to welcome all of you to the 26th edition of Haarlem Model United Nations. I am incredibly proud to host 600 delegates in this beautiful Sint Bavo Church in Haarlem. It is wonderful to see so many talented and driven delegates gathered here to discuss, debate, and solve some of the most pressing issues the world is facing today.

Last year, HMUN was restricted due to the coronavirus. Therefore, this year, we set the objective to double the number of participants and double the number of schools. It was an exciting challenge for our executive staff to manage the organisation that came with this expansion. After a year of hard work, I am proud to say, that we have achieved our objective and are indeed welcoming 600 delegates from many countries, ranging from Turkey to Norway and from Greece to France.

Now, let me get to the theme of this conference: ‘Power: what makes the world turn around?’ This is the question you will be focusing on this weekend.

Some of you might immediately think of political power, the power that an institution or an individual may hold over another person…

Others amongst you may think the theme is about physical power, power as an energy source. And how we can globally meet the demand for energy, while our world population and the world economy are continuing to grow and are faced with climate change?

Actually, these two concepts are both relevant. Our theme: ‘power what makes the world turn around?’ is multifaceted. And indeed, the two concepts are more intertwined than it might seem at first glance. In our world today, energy is of such vital importance for our lives and livelihoods, that having and providing energy, often equals, having political power.

Just imagine how rapidly our world is changing due to these concepts. It was February 2022 when at SGHMUN, a conference we organise for the younger delegates of our school, in the Security Council we were discussing the threat of Russia possibly planning to invade Ukraine. And what impact it would have on power in its two meanings: would the Western democracies bundle their powers to stand by the defending nation? And how would the European energy market be disrupted? Unfortunately, only a few days later, our hypothetical discussion became a brutal reality…

In the coming days, you will be debating important issues related to power. And it might feel far away, or even irrelevant, to be discussing these global diplomatic issues. You might assume, I am not able to make a difference, not in the same way that a diplomat or world leader can do. But let me humbly disagree. I truly believe that the power lies with us, the next generation of leaders. We have the power to make a difference in our world. And this conference will equip us even better to realize our ambitions for the future, by immersing ourselves in the today’s challenges.

Now, let me wish all of you a wonderful and enlightening weekend. I wish you the power to change how the world turns around.

Thank you!

*I yield the floor to the presidency.*