On Campus

Presidential Perspectives

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Photo by Michael Dames

This past fall, Columbia hosted an especially impressive and diverse list of international heads of state and dignitaries at its annual World Leaders Forum. Speakers included Kosovar president Atifete Jahjaga, Croatian president Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic, Colombian president Juan Manuel Santos, Mozambican president Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, Chilean president Michelle Bachelet, Rwandan president Paul Kagame, Maltese president Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko, Bangladeshi prime minister Sheikh Hasina, East Timorese prime minister Rui Maria de Araújo, and former Australian prime minister Kevin Rudd.

“These women and men challenge us with their views,” Columbia President Lee C. Bollinger said in his opening remarks at a two-part series on global governance. “And it is fair to say that you, Columbia students, never shrink from the job of

challenging our honored guests who are here. This is a unique and indispensable opportunity for you, the students, to learn about a global society that we must never take for granted."

President Poroshenko's arrival on campus on September 29, just hours after he addressed the UN General Assembly, drew a small crowd of protesters and counter-protesters. During his Columbia speech, he discussed the challenges of leading a nation that has recently faced social conflict and economic instability. He emphasized "powerful anti-corruption reform, decentralization, and constitutional reform" as a way to "safeguard peace and promote democracy."

The World Leaders Forum, which was created by President Bollinger in 2003, takes place during the UN General Assembly meeting in New York City, and addresses key economic, political, and social questions facing the world today.



Guide to school abbreviations

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