

Opening Ceremony: UWC Maastricht
11 October 2013

In the presence of HM King Willem-Alexander

Remarks by Sir John Daniel
Chair, UWC International Board

UWC Expanding and Diversifying

Your Majesty; Head, Pupils and Staff of UWC Maastricht; Distinguished Guests; Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am honoured, as Chair of the International Board of the United World College movement, to present greetings to this ceremony.

I speak for the three international bodies through which the UWC movement works collectively to increase its worldwide reach and reputation: the Council, the Board and the International Office in London.

This gathering of the UWC clans includes the heads and chairs of each of the 12 UWC institutions as well as representatives of alumni and national committees. May I pay a special tribute to the National Committee of the Netherlands for its outstanding contribution to the UWC movement?

The Council and the Board are meeting here in Maastricht at an important time for the UWC movement. My daughter and son-in-law attended UWC USA in the 1980s and it has been a pleasure to reacquaint myself with the ideals and reality of UWC since my appointment as Chair this year.

We are a small organisation in world terms: just twelve institutions and a total of fewer than 8,000 pupils – less than the enrolment of one small university. Yet, thanks to the power of the UWC ideal and the reputations of its thousands of alumni, the acronym UWC is widely known and respected globally.

For many years what we now call the UWC movement was just a loosely linked network of institutions sharing common ideals and collaborating with over 100 national committees for the admission of new pupils.

Atlantic College founded the network 51 years ago. Institutions in Singapore and Canada emerged in the 1970s and were joined in the 1980s by the Waterford Kamhlaba School in Southern Africa as well as UWC USA and UWC Adriatic. In the 1990s we welcomed Li Po Chun UWC in Hong Kong, UWC Nordic and UWC Mahindra. In this century the addition of UWC Costa Rica, UWC Mostar and UWC Maastricht completed the present set of 12 institutions.

Happily, growth in numbers has been accompanied by the steady development of our sense of the UWC as a collectivity. With no loss of pride in their individual identities, the UWC institutions have shown an increasing willingness to work together for the greater good of the movement. The fruits of this mutual trust are evident in our discussions here in Maastricht, which focus on growing the number and diversity of our institutions.

We shall also review what makes the UWC movement distinctive. Because imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, UWC ideas are now common currency in education generally. The International Baccalaureate, a UWC creation, is now offered in thousands of schools. Community service is part of many national curricula. Pupils in the public schools in my home city of Vancouver are as diverse as you find in the UWCs.

We should rejoice at this evidence of our impact. But it should also inspire us to pioneer the developments and ideas that will define the next generation of international education. UWC Maastricht, which we celebrate today, will be an important locus for that work.

Your Majesty, it gives us great satisfaction that in this assembly you represent not only our host country as Head of State, but also the UWC movement as a most distinguished alumnus. We thank you for your splendid support since your time as a pupil at Atlantic College and we are very proud to add an institution in the Netherlands to the UWC network.

It was a privilege for me to travel here with your Majesty on the Royal Train, which had as its passengers many donors who have already given generously to UWC Maastricht. However, I am delighted to say that on the train they contributed another € 200,000 to add to the € 100,000 given by alumni. Peter I give you this extra € 300,000 for scholarships with a ceremonial handshake. Congratulations.