

**UWC Congress
2016-10-18**

Welcome by Sir John Daniel, O.C.
Chair, UWC International Board

Colleagues and friends of the UWC movement - good morning!

It is my great pleasure, as Chair of UWC's International Board, to welcome you to this Congress, which must be the largest gathering of the global UWC community ever held.

It is not yet four years since the previous Congress we held in Cardiff in February 2013. But the Board decided that it was important to gather the UWC community together again to celebrate the good things that are happening and to prepare for an even rosier future.

To mention just three developments since the Cardiff congress:

- Four new institutions, in Germany, Armenia, China and Thailand have joined the UWC network and more applications are in the pipeline.

- We have put in place new structures to strengthen the work of our vital National Committees. These will be an important focus of the Congress.

- Last year Jens Waltermann was appointed Executive Director of the International Office. He is building strongly on the foundations of greater cohesion and collaboration across the movement that were put in place by his predecessor, Keith Clark.

My primary role today is to thank all the people who make this event possible.

First and foremost - thank you all for coming. Your presence in such numbers - over 600 of you - demonstrates the huge commitment that UWC inspires.

Second, it is a great pleasure to welcome here Ms Debora Serracchiani, President of this Region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia, and Benedetto della Vedova, the Undersecretary of State. We thank both the Region and the Government of Italy, for being represented here today and for their strong support to UWC Adriatic and the UWC movement generally over many years.

We thank UWC Adriatic for being the hosting college and for its pivotal role in organising the event. Its pupils welcomed you here and will perform for you later.

This is a time to express our gratitude not just to the many volunteers who have contributed to the organisation of this event, but more broadly to the thousands of volunteers across the world without whom UWC could not function.

A big thank-you also to the sponsors and supporters of this Congress, whose generosity you are enjoying.

I leave you with the slogan of this Congress: “connect – challenge – celebrate”.

Please live this slogan tirelessly during the coming days: connect with each other and with new ideas and developments, challenge the ideas in the strategy and each other's views on

controversial issues. In that way we can expand our shared vision of UWC. And finally: celebrate the achievements of UWC as a foundation for a splendid future.

Enjoy yourselves!