

Speech: For a new future

Welcome to the Residence. Congratulations to all of you on your graduation. Your hard work, and your training at UCBC will stand you in good stead for the future. And I wish you all the very best for that future.

A special aspect of UK Chile relations in the last year was the visit of His Royal Highness, Prince Edward, The Earl of Wessex last September. This included visiting UCBC, and I know many of you had the chance to meet him. During his visit, The Prince also promoted The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation. As you may have seen in the press, yesterday, HRH The Duke of Edinburgh completed his last engagement of his public programme, although His Royal Highness may still attend events alongside Her Majesty, The Queen, from time to time. He is retiring, at the age of 96, after 70 years of public service. An inspiration to us all.

The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award is the world's leading youth achievement award. I have just received a copy of a book, published in aid of the Foundation. This is 'Advice for School Leavers', compiled by Will Jones, and with a foreword by HRH Prince Edward. It seems equally applicable for those of you leaving UCBC. As Prince Edward says "it includes advice from people from many walks of life, on choosing the right job, having the right approach to life in the business environment and getting the most out of both...It is down to you to make the most of ...advice, your experiences ...and to take on the world."

There are many different perspectives in the book, but I would like to quote some of the words of John May, Secretary General, of The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award. He suggests eight "touchstones" to guide his decisions and actions.

- "Respect for others ...do unto others as you would have them do unto you.
- Equity – fairness and honesty in all dealings.
- To do my best – if a thing's worth doing it is worth doing properly.
- Integrity – keeping promises."

I know many of you have been studying Shakespeare and he quotes Polonius's exhortation to his son in Hamlet – "This above all: to thine own self be true." Something my university tutor instilled in me.

- "Carpe diem – or seize the day.
- Self confidence – but a self awareness that mitigates against self importance.
- A youthful, playful, joyful, perpetual curiosity.
- Balance – trying not to be too intense or too earnest or over-demanding of others."

Good principles, which we can all think about, and learn from, including me.

As you go to start your new lives, I hope you will reflect on your time at

UCBC, the inspiration of your teachers and training, and seize the day and the future ahead of you. And in doing so, that you will draw on your unique experiences of the links between British and Chilean cultures, and also be Ambassadors for shared relations between UK and Chile.