

WELCOMING REMARKS BY JOAN ANDORFER, PRESIDENT OF
IDDA
2017 WMOAS – APRIL 10-14, 2017 HALL OF THE AMERICAS
WASHINGTON, DC

A VERY WARM WELCOME TO EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU;
I AM SIMPLY DELIGHTED TO SEE SO MANY OF THE FUTURE
LEADERS OF THE HEMISPHERE HERE TODAY-FROM EVERY
CORNER OF THE HEMISPHERE.

FROM CANADA TO ARGENTINA, FROM CALIFORNIA TO
RHODE ISLAND AND FROM THE CRUCIBLE OF VENEZUELA,

I CONGRATULATE YOU ON THE JOURNEY YOU HAVE TAKEN
TO SIT HERE IN THIS GLORIOUS HOUSE OF THE AMERICAS.

MY REMARKS MUST SERVE TWO MASTERS THIS MORNING:
THE FIRST HOPEFULLY AMAZINGLY INSPIRATIONAL;
THE SECOND TRAGICALLY MUNDANE, BUT NECESSARY.

I PROMISE TO KEEP BOTH BRIEF SO THAT THE 2017
WASHINGTON MODEL OAS CAN BE TURNED OVER TO THE
PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY GENERAL.

I'D LIKE YOU TO THINK FOR A MOMENT ABOUT WHERE YOU
ARE SITTING:

IN THE VERY CHAIRS USED BY OAS DIPLOMATS, FOREIGN
MINISTERS AND PRESIDENTS. IN THE VERY ROOM WHERE
TRANSFORMATIONAL AND SIGNIFICANT TREATIES AND
CHARTERS HAVE BEEN DEBATED AND APPROVED.

THIS IS A TREMENDOUS AND SINGULAR OPPORTUNITY THAT THE OAS AND ITS OFFICIALS HERE TODAY, VICTORIA ABALO AND AMBASSADOR PRINCE, HAVE AFFORDED YOU: THE CHANCE TO CREATE AND DISCUSS NOVEL AND COMPELLING SOLUTIONS TO THE ISSUES THAT FACE US TODAY.

SO YOU WILL BE DEBATING, DIPLOMATICALLY, IN A DEMOCRATIC FORUM, IN A BUILDING OF TREMENDOUS HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE.

IF YOU ARE READING THE NEWS, IT SEEMS THAT THE WORLD IS INCREASINGLY INTOLERANT OF THOSE PRINCIPLES: DEBATE, DIPLOMACY, AND DEMOCRACY.

THE THREATS TO THESE PRACTICES AND IDEAS ARE GLOBAL, UNPRECEDENTED IN THEIR REACH DUE TO TECHNOLOGY, AND PROMISE TO UNDO THE PROGRESS MUCH OF THE WORLD, AND THIS REGION, HAS MADE TOWARD PEACE AND PROSPERITY.

AS THE PHILOSOPHER MONTESQUIEU SAID:
“THE TYRANNY OF A PRINCE IS NOT SO DANGEROUS TO THE PUBLIC WELFARE AS THE APATHY OF A CITIZEN IN DEMOCRACY.”

SO WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT? WHEN I WAS LATE FOR A MEETING WITH THE BOLIVIAN AMBASSADOR ONE YEAR, HE BRUSHED AWAY MY APOLOGIES, EVER SO DIPLOMATICALLY, BY SAYING:
“YOU ARE EXACTLY WHERE YOU ARE MEANT TO BE IN THE UNIVERSE.”

YOU ARE ALSO.

AND SO, IT IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT FOR YOU, AS YOU SEEK TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE AT THIS MODEL, AND IN THE FUTURE AS A PROFESSIONAL AND A CITIZEN OF A DEMOCRACY, TO DO THE FOLLOWING:

LEARN: I KNOW YOUR FACULTY HAVE DONE A GREAT JOB SO FAR, BUT IT IS AMAZING HOW MUCH YOU CAN LEARN IF YOU THEN

LISTEN TO YOUR COLLEAGUES THIS WEEK; WITH AN OPEN MIND AND AN AGILE ONE SO THAT IT MAKES FERTILE GROUND FOR YOU TO

IMAGINE: AS ALBERT EINSTEIN SAID: “LOGIC WILL GET YOU FROM A TO B. IMAGINATION WILL TAKE YOU EVERYWHERE.” SO USE THE INFINITE RESOURCES OF YOUR BRAIN BOX TO

ACT: IT IS ALL FOR NAUGHT IF YOU CANNOT SUGGEST A PLAN OF ACTION.

SO, IT IS MY HOPE FOR YOU, USING YOUR TALENTS AS A DIPLOMAT IN THIS DEMOCRATIC FORUM TO DO AS MICHELANGELO DESCRIBED HIS WORK:

“I SAW THE ANGEL IN THE MARBLE AND CARVED UNTIL I SET HIM FREE.”

I WISH EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU A SUCCESSFUL MODEL THIS WEEK AND HOPE YOU CARRY THIS EXPERIENCE FORWARD INTO YOUR LIVES.

AND NOW FOR THE TRAGICALLY MUNDANE PART OF MY REMARKS:

1. THIS BEAUTIFUL, AND OLD, BUILDING NEEDS YOUR RESPECT. SO BE KIND TO HER AND TO THE PEOPLE WHO

WORK HERE. MOVE WITH PURPOSE TO WHERE YOU NEED TO BE AND PLEASE BE SURE YOUR SESSIONS TODAY AND TOMORROW END AT 4:50 AND YOU HAVE LEFT BY 5 PM. WE DO NOT WISH TO OVERSTAY THE GENEROUS WELCOMNE THE OAS HAS AFFORDED US.

2. PLEASE GUARD THOSE NAMETAGS FROM ALL MANNER OF HARM. YOU WILL NOT BE ADMITTED TO ANY FUNCTIONS EITHER HERE OR AT THE FAIRMONT HOTEL WITHOUT THEM.

3. ON WEDNESDAY FROM 6-8 PM, WE WILL HAVE A DIPLOMATIC SOCIAL -- COMPLETE WITH A DJ AND APPETIZERS. PLEASE INVITE YOUR COUNTRY MISSION REPRESENTATIVE TO JOIN US. AND PLEASE ARRIVE PROMPTLY. I HAVE ASKED THE CHAIRS TO END WEDNESDAY'S SESSION AT 4:30 TO ALLOW ENOUGH TIME TO CHANGE INTO PARTY ATTIRE.

4. PLEASE CHECK IN ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA FEEDS TO ENRICH YOUR EXPERIENCE. ALL THE DETAILS ARE ON OUR WEBSITE AT WMOAS.ORG.

5. THE SECOND AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES WILL BE MOVING TO THE F STREET BUIDING AFTER THIS SESSION. THE CHAIRS AND RAPPORTEURS WILL BE WAITING OUTSIDE TO LEAD GROUPS THE FEW BLOCKS TO THAT FACILITY. AND THERE WILL BE COFFEE ON THE GROUND FLOOR SO PLEASE TAKE IT UPSTAIRS WITH YOU.

WITH THESE REMARKS CONCLUDED, I NOW YIELD THE FLOOR TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE 2017 WASHINGTON MODEL OAS. I WISH EACH OF YOU SUCCESS THIS WEEK TO DO AS MICHELANGELO AND SEE THE ANGEL IN THE MARBLE AND CARVE UNTIL YOU SET HIM FREE.

THANK YOU.