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## **United World College Thailand applauds its first graduating class**

*On Saturday 20 May, United World College Thailand (UWCT) held its first graduation ceremony. This was an auspicious occasion; not just for the Class of 2017 graduates and their families, but also for the teachers that started their journey with them in August 2015.*



The evening opened with the Thai King's anthem and was followed by a few performances; an African djembe drum performance by Grade 11 students and a traditional Thai dance by Primary School students.

The opening speaker was Secondary Principal Marshall Hughes, who was followed with an address by graduate Bushra Shaikh. The evening reflected how the experiences of the Grade 12 students UWCT have enriched their outlooks, on both the world around them, and the paths that each of them will follow as they look towards life after school.

UWCT was honoured to have had Ayesha Khanna as the guest speaker for the evening. Ayesha is a graduate of Harvard and Columbia University and was an inspiring presence at the ceremony. She shared some advice with the graduates, and reflected on the lessons she has learned throughout her life. She left the graduates with a strong message that, “we are in the 'Age of Collaboration', not the 'Age of Competition'.”

The ceremony ended with Bushra Shaikh presenting a framed pledge signed by the entire Class of 2017. Each graduate has pledged to make an annual contribution to the school’s scholarship program, in order to enable more young people the opportunity to receive a UWCT education – an extraordinary gift to the school and its future students.

Teachers and staff congratulate the class of 2017 on the completion of their IB Diploma; noting that each individual has left a memorable mark within a grateful UWCT community.

Some of UWCT’s 2017 Graduating Class offered their thoughts and reflections on their experience at the school and their hopes for the future.

“The journey that I undertook at the United World College Thailand is one full of memories and experiences. I lived in an international community where I sat, talked, ate and connected with people from all around the world. It was as if I got a new family over here with the friends I found and the relationships that I built. There were many ups and downs, however I got to learn a lot from them. This was a journey of change with many new life experiences; experiences that led me to become the person I am today, who I am proud of,” said graduate Hem Lata Nayal.

“UWCT gave me a family in the form of students, teachers and mentors who showed me new perspectives and encouraged me to be fearless in pursuit of my dreams. I am very sad leaving my home but I know this is what I had been preparing for for the past two years. To the people who helped me during my time here, I would just like to say thank you for always being there. UWCT taught me how to embrace diversity and resolve conflict to make sustainable peace, which will stay with me no matter what I am doing in the future,” said graduate Bushra Shaikh.

Congratulations to the UWCT Class of 2017 graduates:

Santosh Acharya

Ebba Amby

Kusum Basnet

Vitalii Bolshakov

Tanakit (Kim) Booranarek

Ariya (Anya) Chaloemtoem  
Rosa Dabulu  
Kaya Freeman  
Gavin Grendon  
Wen Xiu (Susan) Guo  
Sei-kashe (Sei) M'pfunya  
Jyoti Mangain  
Hem Lata Nayal  
Andrew Pearson  
Karan Rana  
Varangsiri (Pleng) Ratthanapiyathipbodee  
Bushra Shaikh  
Nhi Tran