Dean Bosworth, distinguished faculty, esteemed guests, my dear classmates... Papás, mamás y queridas familias:

It is a great honor and a privilege to address you today. I feel profoundly grateful to share this moment with you, and particularly with our parents, family and friends. The achievement we celebrate is only possible thanks to their support and love in every step along the way. Thanks for being here with us.

**Gracias:** When I was seven years old, my parents enrolled me in English classes. I did not enjoy much getting up early every Saturday during eight years to go to class. At that time, I did not realize that my dad and mom were giving me a beautiful gift: they were handing me the key to access the world.

Unfortunately, they don't understand me as I speak today, as they did not have the opportunity I had. This is the opportunity that 4 out of 10 students graduating today had. Behind every opportunity that our families provided to us, there was a sacrifice. This is a perfect occasion to say thank you for the opportunities we had, but especially for the sacrifices you made for us.

I have not traveled much in my life, but during these two years at Fletcher I have learnt about the world through your eyes. In this process, we have challenged each other's points of views and expanded our vision. Thanks to all of you I leave the school energized to devote my life to an international career.

As students, we have found in the school administration, faculty and staff all the support needed to excel in our work. There is an honest interest in us as students but especially as human beings. The aura of authenticity that surrounds Fletcher starts with you. I am especially
thankful to the Fletcher Board of Overseers, without their generosity and investment in my attending to Fletcher, I would not be standing here today. Thank you.

**Primero:** Today I have three messages I want to share with you. None of which are related to the role of the United States in the world.

The first message is to always remember *why* it is that you do what you do.

Now, I want you all to press the rewind button and think about your first day of school at Fletcher. It was a sunny day of August, just like today. Think about the excitement you felt walking around the Hall of Flags, seeing new faces and becoming a student again. Think about the motivations you had for coming to Graduate school. Why this was so important to you.

Now, press the forward button and come back to this moment. Look around and see how those same faces are now so familiar. Think about the kind of person you are today. Take advantage of this moment to ask yourself if you have found the answers that you were looking for coming into Fletcher.

In our hectic life as graduate students, we get lost in papers and books, and our lives are defined by deadlines. As a consequence, it is easy to forget why we came here in the first place.

When I decided to embark in this academic and financial adventure, I always thought about it as an opportunity to gain new skills and be able to move forward in my career. However, I did not realize that attending Fletcher would also be a profound journey of personal transformation.

In March 2010, 6 months before coming to Fletcher I was working in the humanitarian response in Haiti when my older brother passed away. He was my best friend and my lighthouse. My time at Fletcher has allowed me to heal and reflect about what truly motivates me in life, and what really matters. I have found in my brother’s love the strength to follow my dreams and push my limits.
It is essential in our lives to identify what our motivations are, protect them, nurture them and let them bloom with us. In the world that is waiting for us, deadlines will be part of our daily routine. As Mahatma Gandhi said “Action expresses priorities”, do not let the urgency of the tasks make you forget why it is that you do what you do. **Segundo:** The second message is to share with you all why Fletcher is special.

When I think about the answers that I was looking for before I came to Fletcher, I have realized that I have not found many of those answers. However I have learnt how to ask better questions. Why is this so important? Because when you learn how to ask better questions, the final answer is not as relevant as the process that allowed you to get to that answer. **This** is the beauty of our experience at Fletcher; it is all about the process.

In my mind, at a graduate level competition was fierce, starting with the application process. When I was finally accepted, I truly thought Fletcher was going to be like the **Olympic games of academics**: Top notch students from all over the world brought together to compete with each other for grades and public recognition. But I was wrong. Not about the quality of the students but about the rules of the game. The real competition at Fletcher is not among us, it is with oneself. It is a constant process of doubt and self-improvement.

Instead of finding an environment where I had to be constantly proving myself, I found a place where people genuinely care for each other. **Collaboration** is our golden rule. We help each other to gain more depth in our ideas, we help each other to excel in the quality of our work, and we help each other in dealing with the day to day of life. Why is this important? Because it makes it easy to say I don’t know and be okay with it. It makes us free to ask more, and suddenly, to ask better questions.

When I try to explain why Fletcher is special, I try to imagine that graduate schools are like companies, and programs are lines of production. Imagine that a graduate school is a company that produces high quality graduating students. Depending on the program, each graduating student has a tested set of core competencies. For instance, if
you hire a student from an MBA program, you have the assurance that such a student will perform according to the specifications on the label. As a result, a vast majority of the programs have standardized lines of production, or better said mass production of graduating students in their programs.

At Fletcher, the production process is different. The school offers six programs or lines of production: Masters of International Business (MIB´s), Masters of Arts in Humanitarian Assistance (MAHA´s), Master of Law in International Law (LL.M), Master of Arts (MA's), Masters of Arts in Law and Diplomacy (MALD’s), and the Doctors Philosophy (PhD) program in International Relations. In the production process, students in each program constantly interact with each other, which make the process rich, adding substantial value to the final product. Thanks to these interactions, the labels we get based on our program may be the same, but the specifications of each of us are very different. As a result, the final products are hand crafted unique graduating students.

You don’t become a master when you receive the diploma, you build who you are day by day. It is the quality of the process by which we have built ourselves in the last two years that makes Fletcher so special. **Tercero:** Finally, the third message is about our responsibility to promote social justice

Our stories are stories of opportunities and sacrifices. In spite of this, we are a very privileged group of individuals. Today, only 1 out of 10 people in the world graduates from college. For the other 9 people their stories are specially stories of sacrifices. What is our responsibility for those who have no access to such opportunities? What is our role in shifting uneven relations of power?

The complexity of the challenges we face today in the world, from economic to humanitarian crises is daunting. Promotion of social justice is not about ideologies or creeds. It is about how to put into service of others the talents and abilities we have. It is about promoting equality, solidarity and dignity.

Albert Einstein said that “Those who have the privilege to know have the duty to act.” Today, more than ever in our lives we have the
privilege to decide what to do, where to work, how to use our talents. We had the privilege to know. Now we have as well the duty to act.

Challenging uneven relations of power is not easy. But you are not alone. Every single person graduating from Fletcher today truly cares about making their countries and communities better. Going forward rely on each other, use the Fletcher community to build bridges of understanding and change. Don’t forget that collaboration is a transformative force. We need to work together to change the world. Just as Mahatma Gandhi said, “First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win”. Social Justice needs to win.

In spite of the sadness that comes with the end of our time at Fletcher, I can assure you today that life only gets better.

Muchas gracias, Thank you very much and Congratulations!