

**Speech by deputy mayor Ingrid van Engelshoven during cocktail party at IB education conference  
27 October 2011**

Ladies and gentlemen,  
Before me I see people from Europe, the Middle East and Africa.  
A beautiful sight.  
It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to The Hague.

This is the eve of a conference on ‘Inspiring Education’ and of the official launch of the IB (International Baccalaureate) in The Hague.

As deputy mayor for education in this municipality, I must emphasise that we are tremendously proud of the fact that the IB has chosen The Hague to settle in.

The arrival of the IB connects us with 3,200 schools in 141 countries. More than 938 thousand students will benefit from this.

*I* also think that the IB and The Hague are a perfect match.  
Our city is used to being an actor on the global stage.  
The Hague is the world’s 2<sup>nd</sup> UN city.  
New York may be home to the headquarters of the United Nations, but the UN court is situated in The Hague – the International Court of Justice.  
The International Criminal Court, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and the OPCW also have their seat here.

I often say:  
In The Hague we grapple with questions of peace and justice 365 days a year.  
We reach out to the world.  
And I am very glad that IB has grabbed our outstretched hand.

That international legal setting calls for our education to become more internationally oriented as well.

In The Hague you can follow legal studies at the highest level.

International programmes have been developed in conjunction with Leiden University.

This has led to a sharp increase in the number of foreign students in our city.

My message to them is: you arrive in The Hague as a stranger, but you will leave it as a friend.

Ladies and gentlemen,

There are many shades to education in The Hague.

There is variety.

And we want schools to be able to keep offering this variety.

There are certain values, though, that we must share.

As far as I am concerned, good education is grounded in good language teaching.

We must challenge young people to get the best out of themselves.

Be ambitious.

We must make young people realise this:

We are going all out for *you*, but we expect *you* to do *your* utmost too.

This kind of commitment from both learner and teacher generates trust and guarantees results.

We must be alive to the opportunities we can give young people.

We *give* you opportunities, but you have to grab them *yourselves*.

At the same time, we need to stay aware of the chances that young boy or girl has on the job market.

To my mind, this is a priority.

Because young people need to be able to stand on their own two feet.

This is only possible if you have a worthwhile school certificate,

One that will help you build a future.

The job market is becoming more and more international.  
Boundaries are fading.  
There are opportunities all over the world, but you must be given the wherewithal to grab these opportunities.  
This, too, is what education needs to give you.

The IB guarantees this.  
It produces inquisitive, intelligent and involved citizens of the world.  
Young people with knowledge, understanding and respect for other cultures.

As I intimated before: IB staff will feel at home in The Hague.  
Together with the educational institutions in The Hague, *we* too want to produce citizens of the world.  
At this very moment I am involved in discussions with the Ministry of Education to realise bilingual education in our international city.

And I have another dream for the future:  
Wouldn't it be wonderful if pupils in regular Hague secondary schools were given the opportunity to study towards the IB certificate as well?

I'm of the opinion that we should have ideals.  
And not only that.  
We should work towards making them reality.

This is good for the future of our children.  
Good for the future of our city.  
And good for the future of the world.

I thank you for your attention.  
And I wish you a very good conference and an enjoyable stay in The Hague, the international city of peace and justice.

