



This is a generation like no other in a century. In a short period of time, it had to overcome a global financial crisis and a pandemic. While every class is special in its own way, I believe that yours is particularly special. You are not only a symbol of humanity's capacity to learn, improve and endure, but also to overcome.

These times have reminded us of two unavoidable truths with which all generations, old and young, will have to live for years to come: firstly, that the nature of our most pressing challenges are global; and secondly, that it will be only through cooperation that we will be able to tackle those challenges. Centuries ago, the English poet, John Donne, put these unavoidable truths in more beautiful words, which I paraphrase: "No human is an island, entire of itself."

The magnitude of the current pandemic has made us all feel similarly vulnerable. While during the past months we have managed to appreciate the importance of collective global action, we have also witnessed the lack of it. We have learned that selfishness is not the way, it will only aggravate the global threats that humanity is facing. We will not be able to find the answers that we urgently need to our common problems in the exercise of freedom without responsibility and a strong sense of community.

The experience and knowledge that this generation of graduates has acquired over the past months are some of the most powerful assets that we can count on to tackle the most pressing global challenges. From avoiding new pandemics to fighting climate change and defending democracy around the world. From discovering new technologies to cure diseases to writing new international covenants and setting up the most promising start-ups. As I said before, this is a generation like no other in a century because of the obstacles they had to face, but also because they are one of the most educated and technologically-advanced generations of students in history. You are smarter and you are stronger.

I dearly hope that you use that knowledge wisely. That you use it to create and not to destroy. To share and not to accumulate. To include and not to exclude. I am confident that whatever you decide to do in the future, you will carry with you the spirit of hard work you forged in these adverse conditions and the lessons you learned on the importance of cooperation among human beings as a condition for their survival.

In sum, that you can realize the truth that "no human is an island, entire of itself."

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laura'.

Laura Chinchilla Miranda
Former President of Costa Rica