



19 January 2010

**H.E. DR. JAVIER PEREZ DE CUELLAR, AN EXTRAORDINARY DIPLOMAT**

I wish to join millions across the globe in congratulating His Excellency, Dr. Javier Perez de Cuellar on his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. The People across the world have reason to celebrate the remarkable journey, the "Pilgrimage for peace" as accurately depicted by the title of memoir of this exceptional and extraordinary diplomat. The annals of history have recorded with kindness, the role played by Ambassador Javier Perez de Cuellar from 1944 when he became a career diplomat at the age of 24 to a top UN diplomat as Secretary-General of the United Nations, an organization he had participated in its Preparatory Commission before it was formed on 24 October 1945.

Ambassador Javier Perez de Cuellar has distinguished himself as an exceptional diplomat serving his country as Third Secretary at the Peruvian Embassies in France, the United Kingdom, Bolivia and Brazil and then promoted as Counsellor and Minister Counsellor while at the Peruvian Embassy in Brazil. The experience and diplomatic skills he gained in the early years of his diplomatic career had prepared him well for more challenging diplomatic duties. There is no shred of doubt that throughout his diplomatic career he demonstrated courage, determination and commitment to answer beyond the call of duty. Ambassador Javier Perez de Cuellar served with distinction as his country's Ambassador to Switzerland, the Soviet Union, Poland, Venezuela and Permanent Representative of Peru to the United Nations. Ambassador Javier Perez de Cuellar also availed himself to work for a peaceful solution as Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Cyprus from July 1974 to December 1977. He also served as Personal Representative of the UN Secretary-General on the situation relating to Afghanistan from April to May 1981. This track record demonstrates a diplomatic career of dedication to numerous efforts for peace to save humanity at the maximum hour of need.

I have come to know Ambassador Javier Perez de Cuellar as a man of principles and his firmness that, no doubt helped him greatly in steering the UN through the cold war conflicts and other crises that erupted the same year he assumed the leadership of the United Nations, such as the Falkland Islands conflict between Argentina and the United Kingdom and many others.

No other challenge will shape the legacy of this legendary diplomat than the challenge he faced in finding a peaceful solution to Namibia, which in itself had a positive impact for the whole of Southern Africa. We in Namibia, vividly recall the role Ambassador Javier Perez de Cuellar played in the decolonization process of our country. When he assumed office as United Nations Secretary-General, Javier Perez de Cuellar immediately placed the question of Namibia high on his personal agenda. I personally worked closely with him to ensure the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 435 (1978) for the holding of democratic elections in Namibia. In this, Ambassador Javier Perez de Cuellar personally approached the question of Namibia from a sense of duty as opposed to subjective expectation, without losing sight about the need to implement the process in the best interest of the people of Namibia. To this day, the people of Namibia have a very high regard for Ambassador Javier Perez de Cuellar for the manner in which he directed the United Nations to fulfil its sacred responsibility toward the decolonization of Namibia and achievement of independence on 21 March 1990. His proudest act as he states in his memoir was when he administered "the oath of office to Sam Nujoma as first President of an independent Namibia".

As Ambassador Javier Perez de Cuellar turns 90 and spends his time in retirement, it is now the right time to acknowledge his numerous professional achievements, which all deserve to be recorded in the most glorious golden chapters in the annals of human history. The world owes a special moment of gratitude to the Republic of Peru and its people for allowing its most favoured son to have undertaken a pilgrimage for peace in the trouble world in various capacities. Today many parts of the world are less troubled and building peace, thanks to his tireless contribution to conflict resolution and security in the world.

I therefore wish Ambassador Javier Perez de Cuellar personal good heath, strength and energy to enjoy his retirement with a sense of fulfilment and happiness.

  
Sam Nujoma

FOUNDING PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

