

**Welcome remarks by Ambassador Liliana de Torres-Muga,  
Director of Peru's Diplomatic Academy Javier Pérez de Cuéllar**

**Meeting with Ambassadors of African countries**

*October 15, 2014*

Good evening.

Ambassador Santiago Marcovich, Director General of Africa, Middle East and Gulf Countries at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;

Your Excellencies, Ambassadors of Angola, Algeria, Burkina-Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, Malawi, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, and from countries of other areas;

Representatives from academia, business, press;

My fellow colleagues from the Foreign Ministry;

Dear professors;

Dear students;

Ladies and gentlemen:

Once more, good evening.

Welcome to the Peruvian Diplomatic Academy Javier Pérez de Cuéllar.

We at the Academy are very pleased to host this event, together with the Division of Africa, Middle-East and Gulf countries of the Foreign Ministry.

We are also very honored and glad to welcome the Ambassadors from Africa and from other parts of the world. Some of you are African Ambassadors stationed here in Lima. I refer to the Ambassadors of Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and South Africa. Others are based in several nations and are concurrently accredited to Peru. They represent Angola, Burkina-Faso, Cameroon, Malawi, Namibia and Nigeria.

It is a pleasure to also have at this distinguished audience a number of persons representing several sectors.

As you well know, the African Ambassadors will kindly speak today about their respective countries and on the relationship of their nations with Latin America, in general, and Peru, in particular.. We will previously hear some introductory remarks by Ambassador Santiago Marcovich, Director-General of Africa, Middle-East and Gulf Countries at Peru's Foreign Ministry.

Let us remember that Peruvian-African links date back to prehistoric ages. The fact that mankind first started in Africa has been scientifically explained. Scientists have found evidence of migrations out of Africa since over one-hundred thousand years ago.

In recent times, in 1969 and 1970 Thor Heyerdahl navigated between both continents in his rafts Ra-One and Ra-Two, proving that it was possible for Africans to have come to the Americas, following Atlantic Ocean currents.

Likewise, from the sixteenth century on, Peru and other regional countries nurtured themselves with African and Arab cultures, as reflected in such fields as language, arts, science, letters, music, sports, gastronomy. Therefore, Peru has undoubtedly African roots and the same can be said about other countries of this Hemisphere.

Let me point-out that the Charter of the United Nations, signed in San Francisco, in 1945, only had the signatures of four African countries. At that time colonialism prevailed in the African Continent.

There is a short poem by prestigious Afro-Peruvian writer Nicomedes Santa Cruz, made during those days of submission. In Spanish it reads as follows:

Quote  
*África, tierra sin frío,  
Madre de mi oscuridad,  
Cada amanecer ansío  
Tu completa libertad*  
Unquote

By contrast, now there are more than 50 sovereign African States. Peru actively participated in the decolonization process.

It is known that Peru's Diplomatic Academy bears the name of Ambassador Javier Pérez de Cuéllar. This is a good opportunity to remember that during his ten years as Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ambassador Perez de Cuellar did his best in several regions of Africa on behalf of human rights, against apartheid and colonialism.

Clearly I remember TV images of about 25 years ago, When Mr. Nelson Mandela, embracing Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar, was given a rousing, historic welcome in the General Assembly, packed with over 2,000 people.

Once more, we thank the speakers, whose presentations are eagerly awaited. Our deep appreciation also goes to the audience, for having kindly accepted our invitation to this session of Latin American and Peruvian-African brotherhood

Thank you very much. Merci beaucoup. Muito obrigada. Asante. Muchas gracias.