

Opening remarks by Ambassador Liliana de Torres-Muga, Director of Peru's Diplomatic Academy Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, at the lecture delivered to students by representatives from The Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy, Australian National University

May 9, 2012

Dear doctors Pauline Kerr and Andrea Haese, distinguished representatives of The Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy, Australian National University:

Dear colleagues and professors:

Dear students:

This is not only a welcome, but a very warm "Welcome Back," to doctors Kerr and Haese, who for the last 3 days have honored us with their pleasant visit to Peru's Diplomatic Academy Javier Perez de Cuellar.

I have been privileged of having shared with you both, dear Pauline and Andrea, important meetings held here at the Academy and at the Foreign Ministry, attended by officials, academicians, business persons and fellow colleagues of the Diplomatic Service. We also met at the Australian Embassy, with the Head of Mission.

May I say, in my capacity as Director of the Diplomatic Academy, that today's event is quite significant, due to the fact that we have in front of us all the students of this house. It is an audience of young diplomats to be, or, quoting Ambassador Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, "of young diplomats beginning a promising career at Peru's Foreign Service."

We are all eager to receive information from you, dear ladies, about The Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy (APCD). I am confident that the Academy's students will be very much interested in a near future, after a few years with our Foreign Service, to benefit from the courses being provided by APCD.

Same as Australia, Peru is a member of the Pacific Family. I say that because the so called "Family Photo" is the one taken of Heads of State and Governments, when they regularly meet at APEC's Fora. By the way, Peru's President attended APEC's Summit in Sydney, 2007, and the Australian Prime Minister came to Lima for the following Conference.

Peru's interest in Pacific matters dates back to well-before we became APEC's full members, in 1998. It is said that the first non-Asian-Pacific people to catch sight of Australia, or even to disembark on Australian soil, were members of a galleon who in the early 17th century had sailed from Callao, Peru, less than ten kilometres West of where we are now, under the command of Spanish navigator Luis Báez de Torres, with many Peruvian crewmen.

The Strait between Australia and the big Island of Papua New Guinea, is named "Torres Strait," after this intrepid seaman. I had the chance to fly twice over Torres Strait, in the late 1980s, travelling from Sydney to Port Moresby, both ways, to attend an international conference in PNG.

Likewise, during colonial times, many Pacific Islands were discovered for the Western World, having the Port of Callao as the starting point.

In the 1870s Peru signed agreements on trade and navigation with China and Japan, as a previous step for formal relations. Australia and Peru waited until 1963 to establish diplomatic relations. Ten years later, Peru and New Zealand decided to do the same. Before the end of the 1980s, Peru had diplomatic relations with both Koreas, the ASEAN countries, and many Island Pacific nations, with resident and non-resident Embassies.

Yesterday, President Ollanta Humala met Emperor Akihito in Tokyo and today he is proceeding to Seoul. The Presidential visit to Japan and the Republic of Korea is a reflection of the great importance that Peru attaches to the Asia-Pacific region.

Before being admitted in 1998 as an APEC member, Peru had participated in meetings of several other Pacific organizations, such as The Pacific Basin Economic Council (PBEC), The Pacific Trade and Development Conferences (PAFTAD), The Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC), the South Pacific Commission (SPC), today known as the South Pacific Community.

In late 1995, Peru and Australia signed an agreement on promotion and protection of investments. Similar agreements and some others on free trade have been signed by Peru with many regional countries on both sides of the Pacific.

As a result, Peru's trade exchanges, and investments and financial flows from Pacific countries have dramatically increased in the 21st Century. Our close partner Australia is a very good example.

Now, I am gladly giving the floor to doctors Pauline Kerr and Andrea Haese. Subsequently, students are cordially invited, or rather encouraged, to ask questions and to make comments and observations, not only about The Asia-Pacific College, established less than ten years ago at the Australian National University, but also on various matters regarding Australia and the region as a whole.

Thank you.
