

Hugo Chávez

5th of March

*Our tribute to your respectful and
solidary effort towards Africa*



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5th of March Our tribute to your respectful and solidary effort towards Africa

Paying tribute to Chávez is our intention with this modest digital publication. After 4 years of his physical absence on 5th March, 2017, we wanted to dedicate hours of work and enthusiasm to select and systematize this information material.

It records some visits, different moments, several episodes, significant speeches, various events and testimonies, as part of the international work of President Chávez to Africa. Those of us who work at the Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in the Republic of Kenya believe it is convenient to systematize some testimonies and evidence of the presence of President Chávez in Africa between 2001 and 2013.

President Chávez since his arrival in the Venezuelan government set up a strategic map where different political elements were defined that would stimulate his international action. He spent hours working to rethink the relationship with and towards Africa. After hearing the recommendations of his advisory teams, he drew up a road map where his effort and passion would be reflected in a strategic relationship that would differ from the different visions and arrogant looks that from the North are conceived for the African continent.

We aspire, hopefully and succeed, with this modest publication highlighting

some substantive elements in the internationalist endeavor of President Chávez with Africa.

Africa knew the humanist, political and internationalist significance of President Chávez. Even though different media corporations tried and still try to minimize what was his gaze, his brotherhood and solidarity action towards this continent. In Africa it was possible to identify that Chávez was the voice of the excluded.

Those who have had the opportunity to live in Africa, we have been able to appreciate the positive influence of Chávez's ideas on different sectors of the African population. We do not exaggerate when expressing that it is known and reflected around the ideas concepts and reflections that Chávez traced to claim the SUR-SUR relationship. In this continent we know the concepts and proposals formulated by Chávez for our times and all that these ideas mean for the construction of a multipolar world, before the exhaustion of unipolarism influenced by the north.

In Africa, the political and pedagogical proposals that Chávez drew up with our people and which served as encouragement in Venezuela to stimulate different impoverished sectors and to face and defeat the neoliberal policies that were applied in Venezuela in the decade of the 80/90.

We have perceived, being in Africa, that sectors of the population (young and old) know and understand the social character of the various missions that Chávez initiated in Venezuela to favor the vulnerable and dispossessed sectors that had been affected by neoliberal policies applied by anti-popular governments. We know from the contact with African students, of knowledge about public policies that have made it possible to democratize access to education and health as examples.

Being in Africa we have been able to corroborate what progressive sectors have read about Chávez's effort to develop and boost the People's Diplomacy as an organic way of strengthening the political relationship for solidarity and mutual relations. Many Africans have learned about the achievements of the integration processes in our Latin American and Caribbean region. It is not strange to hear opinions in academic or student sectors on aspects that are binding on the different projects such as ALBA-TCP, PETROCARIBE CELAC and UNASUR.

It is not strange to be in Africa with different sectors that speak firmly about the Bolivarian Constitution of Venezuela. There are Africans who recognize the leading role that our people play today to further deepen social and political achievements, accomplishments that today are *Inalienable Rights*. Attainments that we have reached as a people and that were sponsored and stimulated by Chávez to be able to form a

new Republic, inspired by the concepts and precepts of our liberator Simón Bolívar.

In Africa today, the turn that our foreign policy took with the presence of Chávez is known that was determined by a strategic positioning with and towards the south. A roadmap was started to define and consolidate plans and postulates that will claim the character of complementary cooperation. As we have witnessed, a new worldview of Venezuelan geopolitics emerged that guided a new dialogue, new premises, new concepts that claimed principles of sovereignty, respect, democratization in international relations. Chávez thus propitiated a proposal of solidarity for the auspices of a multipolar world.

Today Africans know that our legal system enshrines human, gender, environmental and indigenous rights, which make our constitution one of the most advanced in the world. It is known by different sectors that when sponsoring and encouraging the participation of the people, our constitution became an advanced and transforming legal instrument.

Chávez was the architect of the creation and construction of a state able to guarantee social rights that had been denied for many years to the great majority. Africans know that the Venezuelan constitution today claims sovereignty, solidarity among people and self-determination. For the first time we can say that there is a constitution that encourages a revolution.

Undoubtedly, Chávez's personality, his rebellious, contending and sincere way of acting turned the Bolivarian revolution into a hopeful reference, a world reference. Putting yourself next to the poor of the world is not easy and President Chávez did, assumed and demonstrated it. Africa knows this, it could feel it and even interpret it, hence the *deep respect from Africa to Chávez*.

At every moment he insisted on getting close to Africa convinced of our historical roots that some tried to disfigure. He always emphasized *"Africa and South America, let's look at each other again. 500 years ago that road was opened at with chains through pain, today we reopen it with songs of love, friendship, affection and brotherhood"* he highlighted in 2006 during his visit to the Republic of Angola.

We repeat, reiterate, in remembrance of the recognition and influence of the figure of Chávez in Africa, in the world, various bells were orchestrated from

different global information corporations that tried to disfigure, discredit and hide the relevant role of President Chávez and of our revolution. They sought to violate President Chávez's unquestioned prestige without being able to achieve their intention. These propaganda media were wrong to hide and deny that *"the Venezuelan revolution will shine and shines an eternity"*.

With this editorial effort we have proposed, on this memorable date, to refresh some of the proposals for the link and the relationship that Chávez implemented to bring Venezuela closer to Africa. We believe that this editorial proposal is part of a task to pay homage to whom who built bridges of friendship and cooperation, despite so much geographical distance. *To leave to one side so much human misery that swarms in the world against our giant Chávez is our task as revolutionaries that we have to undertake today.*

Prof: Jhony Balza Arismendi
Ambassador of the Bolivarian Republic of
Venezuela in the Republic of Kenya
2017



Chávez Visits Africa

“ Africa and South America, let's look at each other again. 500 years ago that path was opened with chains through pain, today let's reopen it with songs of love, friendship, affection and brotherhood. ”

*Hugo Chávez
2006*



CHÁVEZ IN ALGERIA

August 2000

Venezuela's President Hugo Chávez and his Algerian counterpart Abdelaziz Bouteflika

In 2000, Algeria witnessed the first visit of President Hugo Chávez. The objective of this visit was to revive the relations between Venezuela and Algeria and to invite this country belonging to the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (**OPEC**) to the second summit of this organization that would take place between the 27th and the 28th September 2000 in our capital, Caracas.

From there, the relations between both countries were strengthened because Algeria together with Venezuela, are countries with progressive and revolutionary positions that with other people defended and defend their mineral resources and hydrocarbons. Venezuela and Algeria framed their relations based on strategic foundations of solidarity, pluripolarity, sovereignty and self-determination.

Presidents Chávez and Abdelaziz Bouteflika have been sponsors of principles that reaffirm the South-South cooperation. At that summit, on the 27th and 28th September, 2000, President Chávez said: *"This will not only be an oil*

summit, but also poverty, the international situation and social inequalities are on the agenda".

President Chávez visited Algeria four times: in August 2000, October 2001, May 2006, and September 2009. The high point that demonstrated the level of the relationship between Algiers and Caracas was the Algerian aid granted to Venezuela in 2003. That year, Venezuela faced an oil strike orchestrated by the United States and radical opposition sectors and thanks to the support of the Venezuelan people and the experts that President Bouteflika sent to Venezuela, the oil fields resumed their activities.

There is no better way to illustrate the quality of Algerian-Venezuelan relations than this statement by President Hugo Chávez at the end of the meeting with President Bouteflika in 2009: *"There is a deep friendship between our two people: between Bouteflika and myself. As representatives of our people we share a set of concrete elements of work, we are together in **OPEC** in the Group of 15, and bilaterally we are strengthening this*

relationship, which is certainly strategic, goes beyond our two countries and covers all of Africa and Latin America”.

Likewise, President Chávez expressed his desire to favor the emergence of a pole of power that could allow the construction of a multipolar world, respectful of the self-determination of people: *“For Venezuela and Algeria the energy issue is fundamental. There is an energy crisis, how can we make better use of the great energy resources of the countries of Africa and Latin America in South America? How to face that problem as a sum of factors? The answer is our cooperation in the fields of oil, gas and hydroelectric generation capacity.”*

“As for the financial issue, how to secure financial resources without depending on the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the sometimes

disguised generosity of some countries, the most powerful in the world? How to take advantage of our resources to ensure the finances and financing, the resources we need? For what? That is clear for us: to guarantee social development, the economic development of our people.

Here are some very important issues, how to fill that gap? If you look at the map and you see North America and Canada, the United States, Europe, it turns out that all that ... the North Atlantic is crossed by planes, by ships, by air routes, sea routes, intense trade. But if you see to the South the space between South America and Africa, the Atlantic itself, the Central and South Atlantic, there is a great void. How do you begin to fill that void? Through what? Maritime routes, air routes, tourist exchanges, trade, etc. It is the great challenge we have as people for these coming years”.

Source:www.todochavez.gob.ve



Members of OPEC pose for the official photo



CHÁVEZ IN LIBYA

2001 - 2010

Venezuela's President Hugo Chávez with his
Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi

In 2001 president Chávez visited Libya for the first time; his visit was part of an effort to bring together **OPEC** and Non **OPEC** countries while Venezuela held the presidency of this organization. Later in 2004 Chávez came back to Libya and had the honour to receive the “*Al-Gadaffi International Prize for Human Rights*”. Due to the closeness existent between the two leaders and people, during the visit in 2006 economic and cultural cooperation agreements were signed

2009 marked the 40th anniversary of the Libyan revolution, and President Chávez was the guest of honour during these celebrations in Tripoli and the Special Summit of the African Union. Two weeks later Gaddafi attended the 2nd Africa South America Summit in Margarita Island, Venezuela.

The last visit of Chávez to the Libyan people occurred in October 2010. During the conversation that Chávez held with Gaddafi the main topics were geopolitics, South-South Cooperation and the planning for the 3rd ASA Summit planned to happen in Libya in 2011.

We could say that Africa witnessed the friendship between two characters that have marked the contemporary history, Chávez and Gaddafi. This friendship had as reference the interests of the South-South relation. This relationship was consolidated from the common view to overcome the hegemonic positions that have tried to subjugate Africa.

To illustrate our impression about the friendship of the two leaders we leave you an extract of the article “*Hugo Chávez- Revolutionary Internationalist*” from Carlos Martínez, musician, anti imperialist activist and Socialist.

Hugo Chávez – Revolutionary Internationalist

(Extract)

Chávez recognised the Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi as an important ally in the global struggle against imperialism: someone who had successfully led their country away from colonial dependency, developed an advanced social welfare system (with the highest human development index, highest life

expectancy, lowest infant mortality and highest literacy rate in Africa), and tangibly supported socialist and anti-imperialist movements around the world from Ireland to South Africa, Nicaragua to Palestine, Dominica to Namibia.

Indeed, Chávez visited Libya five times during his presidency. In Tripoli for the 40th anniversary of the Libyan revolution (2009), he declared that Venezuela and Libya *“have the same fate, the same battle against a common enemy and we will win.”* He went on to make an impassioned call for African unity:

“Africa should never again allow countries to come from across the seas to impose certain political, economic, and social systems. Africa should be of the Africans, and only by way of unity will Africa be free and great.”

Just a few weeks later, Gaddafi arrived in Venezuela for his first ever trip to South America. At the Africa-South America Summit held on Margarita Island, Chávez presented Gaddafi with a replica of a sword used by Venezuelan independence hero Simón Bolívar, stating: *“Gaddafi is for Libya what Bolívar is for us.”* It was Chávez’ and Gaddafi’s shared goal to usher in a new era of wide-ranging, meaningful cooperation between Africa and Latin America.

As with Syria, Chávez understood from the beginning what the *‘uprising’* in Libya was all about. While luminaries of the British left such as Gilbert Achcar were loudly calling for a no-fly zone to help get



rid of Gaddafi, Chávez spoke out in defence of his friend and comrade: *“A campaign of lies is being spun together regarding Libya. I’m not going to condemn Gaddafi. I’d be a coward to condemn someone who has been my friend.”*

Venezuela led the calls for a peaceful resolution to the crisis, offering its services several times to help mediate between the Libyan government and rebels. *“Let’s try to help, to intercede between the parties. A cease-fire, sitting down at a table. That’s the path when facing conflicts of this sort.”* Sadly, the rebels and their NATO backers were not in the slightest bit interested in negotiations.

Together with regional allies including Cuba, Argentina, Bolivia, Nicaragua and Ecuador, Venezuela unamiguously denounced the barbaric NATO bombing. *“Libya is under imperial fire. Nothing justifies this,”* said Chávez. Indiscriminate bombing. Who gave those countries the right? Neither the United States, nor France, nor England, nor any country has the right to be dropping bombs... I hope a revolution blows up on them in the United States. *“Let’s see what they do.”* Summing up NATO’s post-Washington Consensus strategy in a very clear and simple way, he stated:

“The empire is going crazy and it’s a real threat to world peace as imperialism has entered its phase of extreme craziness.” And in August 2011, when Tripoli was bombed into submission, Chávez predicted with remarkable prescience that *“the drama of Libya isn’t ending with the fall of Gaddafi’s government. The tragedy in Libya is just beginning.”*

Libya was another issue on which Chávez’s solid anti-imperialism was totally at odds with the first-world liberalism of the western left. Whereas Alex Callinicos, leading theoretician of the embarrassingly misnamed Socialist Workers Party (UK), called on his followers to *“join the Libyan people’s celebrations of the tyrant’s demise”*, Chávez was shaken by the news of Gaddafi’s NATO-orchestrated murder. *“Regrettably, Gaddafi’s death has been confirmed. He was murdered... I will remember him all of my life as a great fighter, a revolutionary and a martyr.”*

Yes, there is a pattern here. Whereas the western left has almost invariably fallen for the demonisation campaigns orchestrated against socialist and anti-imperialist states by the right-wing press, Chávez unfailingly saw through the propaganda and stayed true to his dream of global unity against the empire. In a world of cowardice and fickleness, he stood up and said: *“I am not a coward, I am not fickle.”*

Chávez started from a position of instinctive distrust for the propaganda that comes out of the west. Never did he fall for simplistic ‘evil dictator’ Blofeld-style cat-stroking-supervillain narratives. His whole life and political experience had taught him that the mainstream media is not to be trusted; that the imperialists spin every news item to suit their own interests.

The Venezuelan media is still mainly run by the elite, who hate Chávez, who have always subjected Chávez to racism and classism, who have always spread lies and slander about him. It was easy enough for him to derive from that experience that what they said about the other countries in the ‘*extended Axis of Evil*’ was also probably nonsense.

Meanwhile, which were the countries helping Venezuela out, supporting its policies, supporting regional integration of Latin America? Which were the countries supporting liberation movements around the world? Which were the countries supporting the liberation of Palestine – for example supplying the weaponry for the defence of Gaza? Which were the countries standing up to the US, to Britain, to France, to Israel?

Source: Carlos Martinez, ***Hugo Chávez – Revolutionary Internationalist:***
www.invent-the-future.org
July 28, 2014



CHÁVEZ IN MALI

August 2006

Venezuela's President Hugo Chávez with his Malian counterpart Amadou Toumani Touré

President Hugo Chávez visited Mali in August 2006 to strengthen ties of cooperation between the two countries through the signing of a series of agreements on oil, education, trade and diplomacy. On that trip, Commander Chávez offered President Amadou Toumani the possibility that the Venezuelan state oil company would support Mali in the exploration and development of new oil fields.

On that occasion President Chávez expressed the importance that Africa has for the Bolivarian Revolution to President Amadou Toumani: *"Our struggle seeks to put an end to all forms of modern slavery, an obscure and subtle slavery that is no longer exercised by lashes, iron and shackles, but by the invisible chains of the brutal and perverse mechanisms of slavery. Capitalist exploitation, by alienation, domination, oppression and the commodification of human relations"*.

Among the various issues addressed by both presidents, President Chávez stressed the importance of

developing microfinance to get out of the cycle of poverty. In his eyes, everything had to be *"built around structures that already existed in Venezuela: the People's Bank and the Women's Bank"*.

During his tour of rural Mali, President Chávez had the opportunity to visit one of the social housing projects. President Chávez looked at the buildings and said: *"President Toumani told me that the government subsidizes the construction of every social housing to 50%, that is the key to development"*.

As a result of that first visit by Chávez to Mali, there are currently 17 young Malian students studying medicine, while another 30 young people from that country are studying different careers such as sports training, physical therapy and food management.

On the other hand, Venezuela and Mali worked on the construction of 101 houses for Malian families. This urbanization, which carries the name *"Venezuela"*, has a plaza of Bolívar. Chávez's sensitivity for children, as he

passed through Mali, was reflected in the joint construction of the School "Simón Rodríguez" for 1,300 students in one of the most impoverished sectors of the city of Bamako.

The words of Commander Chávez are memorable during an interview he gave to Mali Radio: *"Our peoples share a common destiny and we must embark on a great union. Unity is not to fight against anybody or against a particular country, but to face the great challenges of this imperialist era, neoliberal and of abuses. It is essential to cultivate the awareness that we are one people to achieve true integration"*.

Finally, in Mali, President Chávez said: *"You know brothers from Mali, that Africans and Latin Americans are a people who live in territory that is face to face, face to face: South America and Africa. . . North America is something else. "*

Source: www.aporrea.org





CHÁVEZ IN ANGOLA

August 2006

Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez
Angolan President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos

With the creation of the Office of the Deputy Minister for Africa of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Venezuela, since January 2005, the relations of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela with the African countries received a new impetus.

In this sense President Chávez outlined and sought to comply with the Africa Agenda, which aims to:

- ***Establish and maintain diplomatic relations with all countries of the African continent;***
- ***Increase the number of diplomatic representations in Our Mother Africa;***
- ***To strengthen cultural relations and trade exchange between the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the African nations;***
- ***And strengthen partnership with the people of the region.***

In this quest to place Africa in the place it deserves for its growing importance and for it to increasingly be perceived as a key player in the

international community, President Hugo Chávez became the first Venezuelan Head of State to take a visit to the Republic of Angola on 31st August, 2006, with a delegation composed of the Ministers of Energy and Oil, Planning, Science and Technology, Information and Communication and their Angolan counterparts.

On that first visit, President José Eduardo dos Santos and President Hugo Chávez signed the Energy Cooperation Agreement in which Venezuela offered to support Angola in the field of oil, with all its potential and experience.

In the words expressed during the meeting of the two delegations, Chávez indicated that African unity is a process that calls attention and *"that stimulates us greatly, and Angola will play an important role in the African Union as it has been doing so far"*.

According to President Chávez, Africa *"comes back on itself, it rumbles on itself, so we feel it."*

He explained that America is changing its political face, and a demonstration of this are the steps that are taking place in the field of cooperation.

Chávez affirmed that in that moment in Caracas the special envoys of the 12 presidents of South America meet. *"We are shaping the cooperation project of the Union of South American Nations, the community of South American nations and we are working hard with Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Guyana and Suriname,"*.

"Here a pole of power, one of those multiple poles, that shape the world of this century from now and to the future," Chávez said.

For its part, the Angolan President expressed that the two nations have a combination of African inheritances, and are important for the peoples when making the agreements.

Dos Santos welcomed President Chávez's initiative in support of countries with fragile economies and the dignity of peoples.

Thanks to the understanding that guided the negotiations between the two countries, President Hugo Chávez announced his government's decision to open the Venezuelan Embassy in Angola, with the objective of consolidating and strengthening friendly relations and Cooperation. A gesture that was well received by the Angolan State, which guaranteed the disposition of that brother government in work to respond with the same attitude, the opening of an embassy in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

The Republic of Angola and Venezuela established official diplomatic relations on September the 26th, 1986, but never established a legal framework for cooperation, which will happen in the near future, since the meeting held in Luanda, the two governments established the said Framework for this purpose.

Source: www.aporra.org



Energy, Minerals and Agriculture



CHÁVEZ IN BENIN

August 2006

Venezuela's President Hugo Chávez and
Benin's President Yayi Boni

On 2nd August, 2006, President Hugo Chávez paid a working visit to Cotonou, Benin and met with his counterpart Thomas Boni Yayi, with whom he inaugurated the headquarters of the Venezuelan Embassy in Benin.

The President of Benin said that he considered President Hugo Chávez a symbol of struggle. Both Presidents were very much in agreement on reaffirming the need to achieve peace in the Middle East, a reform of the United Nations in order to make it more democratic and a representative of the current political and economic configuration of the world and on the need to make concrete efforts to address the major challenges facing developing countries.

The two Heads of State agreed to promote initiatives to strengthen South-South cooperation as a means of addressing these challenges, mainly the persistence of hunger and poverty, as proposed by President Hugo Chávez during his participation in the Seventh Regular Summit of the African Union, held in Banjul, Republic of the Gambia, on 1st and 2nd July 2006, in order to carry out projects such as the Bank of the South, PETROSUR, University of the South and TELESUR.

Since then, following the legacy of President Chávez, Venezuela has been present on several occasions in solidarity, to help vulnerable sectors of Beninese society and other countries, through different humanitarian actions such as donation of school supplies to schoolchildren and social movements that work for abandoned children, as well as the execution of knowledge exchange programs to promote the economic independence of women and the family through small enterprise training

Similarly the construction of a school module in the Municipality of Tori Bossito through the program "*Sponsor a school in Africa*", also the construction of forty homes for families in situation of economic poverty in the population of Seme-Podji of Benin, construction of the Spanish Department "*José Leonardo Chirinos*" of the Abomey University Calavi as well as equipping audiovisual equipment for the teaching of Spanish in this alma mater, also the enjoyment of 19 complete scholarships to Beninese medical students in the Latin American School Dr. Salvador Allende In the city of Caracas in Venezuela.

source: www.benin.embajada.gob.ve



CHÁVEZ IN SOUTH AFRICA

September 2008

Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez and
South African President Thabo Mbeki

In 2008, President Hugo Chávez arrived in Pretoria, South Africa with the objective of strengthening relations with South Africa, fostering cooperation and strengthening the "Southern World". One of the main agreements established with South Africa was aimed at the "Belt of Oil of the Orinoco River". Chávez met with South African President Thabo Mbeki, becoming the first Venezuelan president to visit South Africa. Chávez said that visiting South Africa's land "is to reunite with the roots of our people."

Chávez in his perception of the African continent always maintained: "The Africans were taken to Venezuela as slaves from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, to be used by the Spaniards in the gold mines and in the plantations of cocoa and coffee, among other things. It is estimated that 32% of the population of Venezuela is of Afro-Venezuelan descent, and I am proud to be one of those descendants".

South African Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad said: "We want to build a union of the South and President

Chávez represents a new type of thinking. We want to develop relations between both countries because we think that based on some of the decisions policies taken in Venezuela, here in Africa we can learn from them".

President Chávez and President Mbeki took advantage of their meeting to discuss cooperation within the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 (130 countries) representing the interests of the "countries of the South" in international negotiations.



14th Non Aligned Movement Summit in Havana Cuba



Group of 77

President Chávez told President Mbeki: *"The bipolar world was terrible for the third world and the current unipolar world that is ending is even worse for the Third World."* President Chávez continued: *"Today we are in the midst of a financial, economic, food, energy, ecological and moral crisis. It is a systemic crisis, a general crisis".* That is why, he said, *"it is essential and urgent, because we cannot miss a day and cannot miss a second in the work of uniting us, the countries of the Third World."*

As part of these talks, President Chávez showed interest in South African technology and in its resources to refine crude oil. It was agreed that the South African oil company Petrosa would work with Venezuelan state oil company PDVSA in Venezuelan territory.

President Chávez stressed in South Africa convinced of the cooperation projects that: *"Just as Venezuela sent oil to the United States and other developed countries of the North 100 years ago, now is the time when we begin to send it to our brothers in the South".*

This meeting between the two presidents made it possible to sign other agreements in the areas of culture, economy, telecommunications and industry. President Chávez and President Mbeki evaluated South Africa's participation in the major projects of the *Bank of the South, Telesur and Petrosur*. Projects that President Chávez stimulated in the African continent.

At the end of this historic meeting, President Chávez emphasize the importance of Africa for Latin America and the Caribbean, emphasizing: *"Africa is a mother for us ... we are more a combination of America and Africa than an emanation of Europe."*

source: www.venezuelanalysis.com



CHÁVEZ IN THE GAMBIA

July 2006

President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela
and Gambian President Yahya Jammeh

Commander Hugo Chávez visited the Gambia for the first time in 2006 as a guest of honor, carrying a message framed in the essence of the unity of the peoples of the world. On that occasion President Chávez met, among many leaders, with President Yahya Jammeh.

The year 2017, we celebrate eleven years of the visit of Supreme Commander Hugo Chávez to Gambia, to address the VII Ordinary Summit of Heads of State of the African Union, held on 1st July, 2006 in Banjul, with the Venezuelan leader being the first non-African President to participate in this summit:

"The world is threatened by the hegemony of the American Empire that aims to destroy this planet. Only a united Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa, starting from our conscience, our courage, we can achieve what Simón Bolívar, our Liberator, called the balance of the universe, that is, a Pluripolar World".

President Chávez's speech also included the principles of equality and

multipolarity: *"We believe in equality of races, equality of men and women, we proclaim it and practice it, for we deepen the rescue of our own roots and our America"*.

Since this first meeting between President Chávez and President Yahya Jammeh, Venezuela and the Gambia have maintained relations of fraternity and cooperation, in addition to complying with the agreements of the Africa-South America Summits, to promote South-South cooperation and establish a bridge of communication that unites the people of Africa with South America and the Caribbean. The areas that the two countries have been working on are education, health, energy and agriculture.

In Basic Education, we shared a program designed by the Office of the Vice-Ministry for Africa, called **"Sponsor a School in Africa"**, which was established to raise the life and conditions of schools in Africa. As a result, some schools in Gambia have benefited from this program, receiving supplies, educational materials and repairing their facilities.

In Higher Education, the *"Fundayaccho Program"* has supported many Gambian students, through scholarships in different disciplines, to study higher education in the areas of medicine, information technology, engineering, construction, communication engineer, engineer of systems, etc. Most of the beneficiary students, now professionals, are back and serving their nation.

In September 2012 the construction of the Village of the University of Gambia was completed, with the support of the Venezuelan government. located near Faraba-Banta in the eastern district of Kombo, about 45 kilometers from Banjul, this building, integrated to the campus of the University of the Gambia, provides training in scientific and technological research, in line with the program of this university.

Following the advice of President Yahya Jammeh with the message to people *"Eat what you grow and grow what you eat,"* the Venezuelan government also cooperated in the area of agriculture and food conservation with Gambian farmers went to Venezuela to receive a course training in agriculture and methods of food conservation.

In the field of energy, the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela granted a loan of US \$ 22 million for the expansion of electric service in the Banjul area.

In the area of health, the Venezuelan Government supported Gambian children with heart disease with surgical interventions.



President Jammeh participating in a rice planting exercise with women volunteers in the muddy swamps during a harvest at Vision 2016 farms in Pacharr

The Gambian National Assembly approved the Air Services Agreement. This agreement was aimed, inter alia, at promoting air transport between West Africa and Latin America.

President Gambia Yahya Jamme, always recognized President Chávez's proximity to the Gambian people: *"We must build a bridge of humanity that will cheer the hemisphere South that has been exploited by those living in the far North"*. He also thanked the Venezuelan government for the liberation of the countries oppressed by the great powers: *"We are one and therefore we must work together"*.

Source:www.allafrica.com



Chávez Speaks to Africa

“... While in no way denying our sovereign relations with the Western powers, we must remember that these are not the source of comprehensive and definitive solutions to the problems that our countries share.”

*Letter of President Hugo Chávez,
3rd Africa-South America Summit (ASA),
Equatorial Guinea, February 22nd, 2013*

SPEECH

President Hugo Chávez
at the African Union in
the Republic of
The Gambia

1st July, 2006



Mother Africa

First of all, I would like, from the bottom of my heart, to greet Africa, all the African people, from the north, from the Mediterranean Sea, through these wide central lands, from the east, from the west and from the south of Africa.

In the name of the Venezuelan people, I wish to exceedingly thank you for inviting me to this Summit Meeting, mister Chairperson of the African Union, mister Secretary General of the United Nations, mister Chairman of the Commission of the African Union, misters Presidents, Heads of State, Prime Ministers, Chancellors, Ambassadors and other High Officials and Dignitaries of the governments shaping the African Union.

The first idea I want to put across, along with the greetings and regards, is to pay tribute to Mother Africa. From Latin America, from the Caribbean, we have been strengthening the conscience of our reality, of our history, of our origins, inspired there in Venezuela for the words, the libertarian and revolutionary ideas of Simón Bolívar, Liberator of the Americas.

Simón Bolívar said in 1815, while staying in the sister Republic of Jamaica, through his famous writing "*La Carta de*

Jamaica” (Jamaica Letter), that southern Americans, Americans of dark skin, Americans from the Caribbean and Latin America, are neither Europeans nor North Americans, we are rather a mixture of Africa and Indigenous America. Every day, we are becoming more and more aware of our African roots, of our indigenous roots.

A few days ago, we were sharing with a great friend and brother, President of Bolivia, Evo Morales. We were there in the Bolivian Altiplano (high plateau), in the Tiwanaku, where pre-Columbian culture was settled, where we find the pyramids and the traces of a great civilization that existed in the American continent before the arrival of conquerors, of colonizers and empires. Civilizations such as the Aymara, Quechua, Inca, Aztec and Maya were prosperous original cultures of the Americas. But then, conquest, occupation, colonialism and genocide arrived.

Nevertheless, a mixture with Africa was produced, a mixture with African black race. A mixture of African root depth and Indigenous American root depth; and here we are, half Indigenous, half Africans. Therefore, I have come to pay a tribute to our Mother Africa.

Many times, during childhood, we were told Spain was our Mother Country, we acknowledge this as well, despite of the entire trauma produced by conquest and abuse of colonialism. But, if Spain is our mother, I say Africa is even a greater mother for all of us. Mother Africa.



Precisely, along with Evo Morales, Aymara, President of Bolivia, along with millions of indigenous people, mixed race people, black people – and also white people, since we are not racist. We are not against white people, we believe in racial equality, in gender equality; and we proclaim and practice all this – we are deepening the recovery of our roots, of our America’s real meaning.

That is why, Chairperson of the African Union, President of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadineyad, I want, in first place, to start my speech by paying a homage, from the bottom of the heart of my people, to all Africa and, along with it, to our brothers and sisters of this continent.

Secondly, I shall express our happiness for being invited to be here. We are grateful and honoured since you have invited Venezuela, a country that is conducting a revolution, a country that got tired of being dominated and exploited by North American empire, a country that has said Stop! We have broken the chains, and so we are building a new project. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is free from all foreign domination!

From Venezuela, we bring a message of solidarity with African resistance. Centuries of resistance, since those years when more than 15 million of Africans were taken from here to America, aboard the sadly famous slave ships. Since those tragic years, Africans have been resisting; first, the old colonialism; and now, a new way of colonialism. May Africa receive our word of solidarity and our commitment of being every day even more closer to this continent, in order to search for ways of integration, liberation and development.

When those children, invited to this event, sang those beautiful songs and poems, we felt committed with their love, their faith and their hope.

Together during the third wave: Africa is not poor

Africa is not a poor continent. Africa, as a writer said as he was thinking of Africa and the awakening of that giant, is not poor. How can Africa be poor having oil, diamonds, cobalt, wide forests, all kinds of minerals and, above all, the accumulated, deep and millennial wisdom of its people? Africa is not poor. It is just that colonialist nations applied brutal methods of exploitation, domination and looting.

Our Secretary General, Kofi Annan, talked during his wonderful speech about the waves. (Kofi, you talked about waves, three waves. Well, I was taking notes on those waves). From our point of view, these are waves, brothers; waves, sisters; these are waves, dear Chairperson.

“... we must impel the third wave, and, in that third wave, we must be together: Latin America and the Caribbean, along with Africa, brother continents, sharing the same roots, magic, music and hope.”

After 300 years of colonialism in America, a wave was unleashed: revolution, of independence for our nations. This wave started in the 19th century. 19th century was one of independence of the people and birth of Latin American and Caribbean republics.

During 20th century, this wave arrived to Africa. You, Africans, conducted liberation processes through nationalist, revolutionary and independent movements.

I think now, just like in the 19th century the first wave came to Latin America and the Caribbean; in the 20th century, the second wave came here to Africa, along with the liberation of Africa and the birth of African republics. Now, in the beginning of the 21st century, we must impel the third wave, and, in that third wave, we must be together: Latin America and the Caribbean, along with Africa, brother continents, sharing the same roots, magic, music and hope.

Only together will we be able to change the course of the world. This world is threatened by the North American empire's hegemony, which intends to get rid of the world. Only together, from our conscience, our courage, our will, until we achieve what Simón Bolívar, the Liberator, called *“the universal balance”*, a pluripolar world.

Africa has everything to become a pole of power in the 21st century. Latin America and the Caribbean have everything to become another pole of power. They have everything to stop being dependent in the future, to stop being underdeveloped, slaved and colonized. The world accepts many poles. People in the world are rising up. Therefore we show solidarity with the struggle for Liberation and dignity in any part of the world. Our solidarity with Africa, our solidarity with Iran and the struggle for its independence, against imperialistic abuses.

Does Iran have the right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, as it is doing? Certainly Iranian people have the right!

Our solidarity with the Palestinian people, once again assaulted. People like us, people that resist and fight for Liberation, for settlement, for freedom and equality.

21st Century: The century of Union

So I believe, mister chairperson, this century can be the time for the real union, unity for the African people, for the Arab people, for the Latin American people.

From Venezuela we hoist that flag. Latin America is in the way of Progress because of union, Latin America is resisting the imperialistic project of the United States. Latin America and the

Caribbean have woken up. From Cuba, Jamaica, Haiti, Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Uruguay, Paraguay, Venezuela, people are rising up. The Afro-descendant people, indigenous origin people, are hoisting again the flag of freedom again.

African people are also showing this behaviour: they woke up, and their leaders are conducting them through a process that Latin Americans – as I have always said in Latin America – must learn. On the way you took the first step to become, from the Organisation of African Unity, the great experience represented by the African Union. Together, together!



And I will finish by reasons of time, I would not like to abuse, I almost always take advantage of the time.

Venezuelan proposals for Africa and the South

But the Chairperson has been very precise: *“a brief greeting.”*

Also the Secretary General referred to this in his speech: let's pass from the words to the facts, in Latin America we are applying this method, since integration and union cannot only be built with words and beautiful speeches, we have to dare to build union; and every process of unity affects the imperialistic interests, affects hegemonic interests and affects the interests of foreign companies, which constitute real instruments of colonialism. Latin America progresses.

I would like to propose, and contribute with this idea mister Chairperson, mister Secretary General, friends, fellows, the following:

From Venezuela we have designed some ideas that begin to become real, but those ideas are not only for South America nor for Latin America, I think those ideas can be applied in the South world, in Africa, since you are progressing some projects that could be fused.

An example of this is PETROSUR. Let's create PETROSUR. In Latin America, this experience is being given shape. As you should know, Venezuela has, by reasons of nature, one

of the world's biggest oil reserves. We got tired of feeding *“Count Dracula”* with Venezuelan oil, Count Dracula's fangs looting Venezuelan richness. Nowadays, Venezuela is free and we have recovered the management of our oil. Oil is a powerful instrument for social development, for education, for health, for employment, for agriculture, for the life of people. As oil was used for others to colonize us, now is being used for us to set us free.

Africa has, if I have clear numbers, mister Chairperson, almost 15 percent of world's oil reserves. Africa has large oil reserves. I propose to consider the possibility of designating a coordinating instance for study and execution of oil projects. This instance would be designated by the African Union and the South American Union, which we are about to create (soon we will meet Lula and all our South American and Caribbean fellows).

PETROSUR



For example, there are, here in Africa, foreign companies which either do not pay oil royalties, or pay very little, five (5) percent or three (3) percent. That is looting! In Venezuela, these companies pay thirty (30) percent as oil royalty by each barrel they obtain; and also fifty (50) percent of income tax... And even in that way, those foreign companies earn money! Now Evo has begun to do the same in Bolivia.

What good would make the creation of a commission to articulate oil, gas, petrochemical energetic strategy! Africa and Latin America are energetic powers. Let's put in motion the PETROSUR project and we will experience miracles in the short term. This is about economic independence and the thrust towards development.

Another idea I would like to propose is about the Television Corporation of the South. This already exists in South America, Latin America and the Caribbean, TELESUR. We could link this to Africa. That is the second idea. Specific proposals for making progress, strategic projects for real integration and liberation.

My third proposal to this Assembly is the Bank of the South. I know the African Union has created the African Development Bank, an African financial fund. I consider it is necessary to join efforts between Latin America and Africa and create the Bank of the South. A bank for development, for the poor, for progress. Not a bank to exploit the poor and loot people.

PETROSUR, Telesur, Bank of the South and University of the South.

The University of the South, a project for development, for training our young people, for preparation, for integral development, for training physicians, who are so necessary both in Africa and Latin America; for training petroleum engineers, agricultural technicians, so that they can develop irrigation, technology, medicine systems. Simón Bolívar said: *“Las naciones marcharán hacia su grandeza al mismo paso con que camine su educación”*. (Nations will walk towards greatness at the same pace their education walks)

There you have four ideas I have brought to this Assembly, seizing the wonderful opportunity of your invitation.



And finally, these children sing for us to dry the tears of Africa, these children sing for Africa to become the tree of life.

Ali Primera, a Venezuelan singer, said:

*“llanto con fuego es vapor,
vapor con fuego no es na, se va;
como lluvia volverá
para comenzar la siembra”*.

(Crying with fire becomes steam, steam with fire is nothing, it is dissolved; as rain it will come back to start seeding)

Let's dry, with the sacred fire of our conscience, the tears of Africa, the tears of Latin America. With the sacred fire of our courage and country will, so this, along with the sacred fire of love of our peoples and the crying of our centuries, comes back made rain to start the 21st century's seeding. So Africa can live, so Latin America can live, so Arabia can live, so Iran can live, so the world can live with freedom and equality.

Good afternoon and thank you
very much sisters,
thank you very much brothers.

Source: Embassy of Venezuela in Nairobi





We are Africa... We are South America!

The Lines of Chávez:

The “*lines of Chávez*” was a weekly column that the late President had on the newspaper “*Correo del Orinoco*”. On this opportunity he wrote following the 64th UN General Assembly, in the midst of the international controversy surrounding the military overthrow of Honduran President Manuel Zelaya and shortly after the celebration of the Second Africa - South America Summit (**ASA**) in Margarita Island, Venezuela

This week has been of a doubtless transcendence in regards to the battle of ideas that Venezuela is daily undertaking in the international scene together with the countries of the South. And truly, the battle of ideas was the one carried out during the 64th United Nations General Assembly in New York.

First, I want to highlight that in New York there were no doubts when the time came to condemn the dictatorial regime in Honduras. The whole world, except the sombre State of Israel, demands the return of the heroic president Zelaya – who, with decision and courage, returned to his motherland – and the re-establishment of democracy in that sister nation, glorious in its resolve and its indeclinable popular resistance.

Nevertheless, verbal condemnation no longer suffices. Honduras finds itself in a gloomy hour: it is up to us to demonstrate with composure if we indeed

are brothers of this brave Central American people. To delay a response is to give death a licence to roam free.

At the time to take stock, I found three interventions in this United Nations General Assembly as memorable as fundamental: I refer to those of Muammar Gaddafi, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and Evo Morales.

Gadaffi stressed the impossibility of delaying anymore the need to re-launch the UN: I endorse, point by point, all his considerations on the organization and working of the Security Council and also on the leading role that must be played by the General Assembly.

Lula emphasized the need to re-base the international economic order on new foundations. We fully coincide with him in that the world cannot continue to follow the same rules and the same values dictated after World War II.

Through the voice of Evo once again we could hear the wisdom of the native people: lucid and moving was his defence of the rights of Mother Earth in relation to the grave threat represented by climate change. And with all reason he proposed that developed countries should recognize the debt they have with the planet.

Venezuela went to the United Nations to remind the world that if it really aspires to change, as evidenced by the mood that flooded this Assembly though diverse voices, it should count on the people of Our America and the Caribbean.

I want to go back to what was the central argument of my intervention on Thursday 24th September: there is a revolution in South America, in Our America, in the Caribbean, and it is necessary that the world sees it, assumes it and accepts it because it is an irreversible reality. Moreover, it is a revolution that goes beyond ideology: it is geographic, geopolitical; it is a revolution of time, a moral revolution; it is a required revolution.

This required revolution is large and will keep growing as time passes. It is large because of the time that it carries inside: it is large because of the space it covers.

I do not want to conclude these thoughts on the 64th United Nations General Assembly without making reference to the intervention by president Obama. Even when recognizing some alarming voids and inconsistencies in his speech – for instance, not even one mention of Honduras – his language is very different from that of Bush. However, the verbal difference that he has set with his predecessor must be translated into a consistent praxis. But first he must solve the duality that up to this date characterizes his performance.

“It must be said that this distortion of reality has the purpose of perpetuating the discourse and praxis of the most brutal forms of domination: ... They choose not to recognize African strength and its rich cultural heritage ...”



If Obama is willing to accompany us in the creation of a new world order marked by understanding, sense and respect, he is welcome: if he lets himself be pressured by the Pentagon – that State within a State – and resigns himself to follow the same eternal imperialist script, then he will pass into history as the man who had the chance to give a sound contribution to the cause of humanity and chose to take himself out of the way because of fear to face, with the rest of nations, the challenge of building a world without imperial hegemony, or what is the same, in conditions of equality and in peace.

The historians in the 20th century falsified the African continent, filling it with the same false conceptions that have been reiterated by the media. They sold us perverse ideas, such as that history began in Africa with the European presence; that Africans are, because of their race, inferior, violent and ignorant; that they are lazy because they haven't been able to make good use of their natural resources; that they have not been able to build modern states because they have preferred to be dependant and backwards. It must be said that this distortion of reality has the purpose of perpetuating the discourse and praxis of the most brutal forms of domination: yesterday by the colonizers, today by transnational capital. They choose not to recognize African strength and its rich cultural heritage because the producers of lies still harbour ambition and the abuse of new forms of colonization.

I cannot fail to remember what was said by the martyr president of Congo, Patrice Lumumba, on 30th June 1960, when the independence of his Motherland was proclaimed: *“We are proud of this struggle, of tears, fire and blood, to the depths of our being, since it was a noble and just struggle, an indispensable struggle to end the humiliation and slavery that was imposed on us through strength. This was our destiny during 80 years of colonial regime; our wounds are still too fresh to be able to separate them from our memory”*.

Paraphrasing Lumumba, we want to add: in 2009 the wounds are still to fresh. The memory of Africa is an immense wound.

It is easy to state that the future of Africa depends on Africans and then ask them to forget colonialism and imperialism: Mother Africa cannot forget, just like our America cannot forget. Nobody can be a master of his own destiny if he forgets.

Because of all this, South America today rises, opens its arms and builds closer links with the African people, because it understands that, on both sides of the Atlantic, blood, history and hopes are the same. ***This has been the spirit that prevailed in Margarita during the Second Africa – South America Summit: the spirit that encourages us to look for the political, social and economic union with the whole of Africa,*** having as our horizon

the new multipolar world order that we are forced to forge if tomorrow we want to intone the common hymn of true justice and authentic fraternity in the planet.

Africa and South America are essential in order to establish a new universal balance, and this goes through fusing our wills and set ourselves common and viable goals. A new, common and shared strategic map was born in the Summit.

Let me say it with an ancient Senegalese proverb: *“He who desires honey has the courage to stand up to the bees. We want the sweetest honey for our children and the children of our children. Courage is what we have in excess: together we shall move forward despite the bees”.*

From Margarita. We will prevail!
Hugo Chávez

Source: Newspaper *“Correo del Orinoco”*
27th September, 2009



While in no way denying our sovereign relations with the Western powers, we must remember that these are not the source of comprehensive and definitive solutions to the problems that our countries share.

Letter of President Hugo Chávez,
3rd Africa-South America Summit (ASA),
Equatorial Guinea, February 22nd, 2013

Brothers and Sisters,

Please receive my most fervent Bolivarian greeting of unity and solidarity, filled with all my joy and hope for the progression of this long-awaited Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of South America and Africa.

From the bottom of my heart, I truly regret that I cannot be physically present to reiterate my irrevocable commitment to the unity of our nations once more, in a sincere and everlasting embrace. I am there with you, however, represented by the Chancellor of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, comrade Elías Jaua Milano, whom I have asked to convey the deepest expression of my love for these continents, which are more than brethren, united by inseparable historic ties, and destined to move forward together towards their full and absolute redemption.

I say this from the depths of my consciousness; South America and Africa are one single people. The depth of the social and political reality of our continent

can only be understood, within the womb of the vast African territory, from which I am sure that humanity originates. And from Africa, originate the components and codes that make up the cultural, musical and religious syncretism of our America, creating a unity between our people that is not only racial, but also spiritual.

Similarly, the empires of the past, guilty of kidnapping and murdering millions of daughters and sons of Mother Africa, as a means of feeding an exploitative slave system in their colonies, implanted the seeds of African warrior blood and fighting spirit in our America, which produced the burning desire for freedom. Those seeds germinated and our land engendered men as grand as Toussaint Louverture, Alexandre Pétion, José Leonardo Chirino and Pedro Camejo, among many others, resulting in the initiation of an independentist, unionist, anti-imperialist and restorative process in Latin America and the Caribbean, over 200 years ago.

Then in the twentieth century, came Africa's libertarian struggles. Her independences, her new neocolonial menaces, her heroes and martyrs: Patrice Lumumba, Amílcar Cabral and Nelson Mandela just to mention a few.

Those that conquered us in the past, blinded by their hunger for power, did not realise that the barbaric colonialism they imposed on us would become the catalyst of our first independences. Thus, whilst Latin America and the Caribbean share a past history of oppression and slavery, today more than ever, we are the children of our liberators and their heroic deeds. We can and must say with conviction and resolve, that this unites us in the present, in a vital struggle for the freedom and definitive independence of our nations.

I won't tire of repeating that we are one people. We are obliged to find one another, going beyond formality and discourse, in the same feeling of our unity. Together we must dedicate ourselves to creating conditions that allow us to rescue our peoples from the maze they were thrown into, first by colonialism and then by the neoliberal capitalism of the twentieth century.

For this reason, I wish to now recall two great fighters for South-South cooperation, the former Presidents of Brazil and Tanzania, Luiz Inácio 'Lula' da Silva and Julius Nyerere respectively, whose contributions and efforts over time enabled the formation of this great forum for solidarity and complementary cooperation, such as ASA [1].

However, the times that we are currently living in oblige us to give our deepest, most urgent consideration to the effort needed in order to transform ASA into a truly productive apparatus for sovereignty and development in social, economic, political, productive and environmental spheres.

It is in our continents that sufficient natural, political and historical resources can be found, which are necessary to save the planet from chaos that has been brought about. We must not miss today's opportunity provided by the independentist sacrifice of our forefathers, to unify our capabilities to turn our nations into authentic centres of power which, to quote our father Simon Bolívar the Liberator, would be greater for their freedom and glory than for their extent and riches.

Always resonant in my soul and conscience are the words of the incommensurable Uruguayan General José Gervasio Artigas; '*We cannot expect anything, if not from ourselves.*' I believe that this deeply profound thought contains a great truth that we must accept, with absolute certainty.



“Among the main objectives of the various imperial invasions and bombings ... were impeding the process of consolidating unity among African peoples, and consequently, undermining the progress of their union with Latin American and Caribbean people.”

Our South-South partnership must be an authentic and permanent joint effort that must thwart their plans for sustainable development of the Global South, of our people.

While in no way denying our sovereign relations with the Western powers, we must remember that these are not the source of comprehensive and definitive solutions to the problems that our countries share. Far from it, some of them have neocolonial designs on us that threaten the stability we have begun to strengthen our continents.

Sisters and brothers, for this Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of ASA, I want to evoke the spirit of fraternity, unionism and will power that drove the development of that wonderful Second Summit on Margarita Island in Venezuela, which allowed us to unanimously take on the commitments of the Declaration of Nueva Esparta. With much faith, I sincerely hope that here in Malabo we might achieve the same momentum and performance of that extraordinary moment for our unity process, the Summit of 2009, as demonstrated as much by massive appeal as by the quantity and substance of the agreements reached.



Today from Venezuela, we renew our firmest commitment to strengthening the Permanent Secretariat of the Strategic Presidential Table of ASA and its main tasks and functions, so as to accelerate the pace of consolidation in our institutional framework, and thus achieve greater efficiency in our collaborative work.

With much pain and regret, I am sorry that our work, formally initiated in 2006, has been interrupted by the imperial forces that still seek to dominate the world. It's neither by luck nor by chance, and I say it with full responsibility, that since the Summit on Margarita, the African continent has been the victim of multiple interventions and attacks by Western powers.

Among the main objectives of the various imperial invasions and bombings, dismissing any chance for peaceful political solutions to internal conflicts that began in some African nations, were impeding the process of consolidating unity among African peoples, and consequently, undermining the progress of their union with Latin American and Caribbean people.

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, neocolonial strategy has been to divide the world's most vulnerable nations, so as to subject them to an enslaving relationship of dependency. For that reason Venezuela was radically opposed to the foreign military intervention in Libya from the outset. For that very same reason today, Venezuela reaffirms her absolute rejection of all NATO interventionist activity.

Facing the extra-regional threat to the advancement and deepening of our South-South cooperation, I quote the words of Bolívar in his letter from Jamaica in 1815; *'union, union, union, must be our ultimate slogan'*. In this Third ASA Summit held in our sister Republic of Equatorial Guinea, our Government renews its absolute willingness to progress in the work required to strengthen our partnership in areas that I personally suggested during our last summit, on beautiful Margarita Island. Energy, education, agriculture, finance and communication remain our priorities, for which we reiterate our approach to making progress in concrete initiatives such as PETROSUR, the University of the People of the South, or the Bank of the South, just to mention a few.

In the area of communications, from Venezuela we propose that TELESUR, the effort we have succeeded in developing in conjunction with other South American countries, be coordinated with Africa from these latitudes, in order to enable it to meet its main function:

to connect the people of the world to one another and to bring them the truth and reality of our countries

Finally, I want to reaffirm my wish that the results obtained in this Third ASA Summit will allow us to gain our definitive independence, living up to modern demands and as the Liberator would say, bringing the greatest amount of happiness for our people.

I am thoroughly and absolutely convinced that we will succeed in this cause of centuries, entrusted to us by our liberators and martyrs, the millions of our women and men given up in sacrifice for their total and absolute liberty. I quote the words of the infinite Father once again, our Liberator Simón Bolívar: *'We must expect a lot from time; its vast womb contains more hopes than past events, and future events must surpass those gone by.'*

Let us march then towards our togetherness and definitive independence. Paraphrasing Bolívar once more, I say; let us form one homeland, one continent, one people at all costs, and everything else will be tolerable.

*Long live the South American
and African union!
Long live ASA!
Ever onwards to victory!
We will live on and we
will succeed!*

Commandant Hugo Chávez Frías

Source: Embassy of Venezuela in
Nairobi

Some Lessons from Chávez's Leadership

“A lesson that can be learnt from Chávez's Venezuela is that it is possible to distribute a nation's wealth to benefit the majority of its people, especially the poor.”

Professor Penina Mlana

Commander Hugo Chávez

Reflections from Tanzania.



Professor Penina Mlama
Mwalimu Julius Nyerere Chair in Pan African Studies
University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is thousands of miles away from the United Republic of Tanzania yet the ideals, development policies and strategies of its late President Hugo Chávez find resonance with the people of Tanzania.

The two countries share a history of great challenges in freeing their citizenry from the shackles of poverty. They also share a history of struggles against the forces of capitalism and imperialism bent on controlling the natural resources of the world and subjugating its people to economic exploitation and social oppression.

These struggles are not unique to Venezuela or Tanzania since the same situation is found in many parts of the developing world. What is unique to Venezuela and Tanzania, however, is that the two countries had Presidents who had incredible courage and commitment to fight the forces of exploitation and oppression and to stand up for the rights of their people, particularly the poor. These are the late President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela and the late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere of Tanzania.

Tanzanians could easily identify with President Hugo Chávez's policies and development interventions because of some obvious common grounds with what was happening in Tanzania under Mwalimu Nyerere's leadership. President Hugo Chávez's unrelenting stand for social justice, liberty, peace, equality and solidarity and his fight against poverty and social exclusion earned him many admirers in Tanzania and other parts of Africa.

In terms of development directions, President Hugo Chávez and President Mwalimu Julius Nyerere were both admired for being bold enough to do the unthinkable. In times when the world was divided into two cold war ideological camps, capitalism of the West and Communism of the East, Hugo Chávez and Julius Nyerere dared to formulate their own ideologies that they believed were best suited to the development needs of their countries. Bolivarianism and Socialism of the 21st Century by Hugo Chávez and '*Ujamaa na Kujitegemea*' (African Socialism and Self Reliance) by Mwalimu Nyerere were bold declarations

that developing countries could come up with their own ideological positions and chart out development paths outside the tenets of the dominant ideologies of the Western or Eastern blocks.

Tanzanians could understand Hugo Chávez's massive effort to improve the lives of the poor masses of Venezuela through the Bolivarian missions, communes, communal councils and worker- managed cooperatives. These could be likened to Tanzania's Ujamaa villages, village councils, farmers' cooperatives whose aim, in both cases, was to improve the economic and social welfare of the majority poor. The same was true for Venezuela's land reform because in those times, all Tanzanian citizens had equal access to land. However, President Hugo Chávez's bold step to redistribute 5 million acres owned by powerful landowners was particularly admirable.

The massive government investment in the provision of social services, especially education and health and its consequential remarkable improvement in the literacy rates to 95.4% percent for males and 94.9% for females by 2007, school enrolment to over 90% at all levels of education by 2014 and the drop of malnutrition from 21% in 1998 to 6% in 2009 was very impressive. It was indeed, a lesson that Tanzania's similar efforts in eradicating illiteracy and malnutrition could, potentially also achieve high rates of improvement.



In an Africa that is today steeped in corruption and mismanagement of countries' natural resources by a few people, mostly from the ruling elite, a lesson that can be learnt from Chávez's Venezuela is that it is possible to distribute a nation's wealth to benefit the majority of its people, especially the poor. People engaged in struggles to eradicate poverty in African countries have an explicit example in how the oil wealth of Venezuela, under Hugo Chávez, was distributed, leading to a drop in poverty from 49.4% to 25.6%. These are indeed, statistics of hope and inspiration not only for Tanzania but the whole developing world.

Another leadership trait which President Hugo Chávez shared with Mwalimu Julius Nyerere and which also earned him many admirers in Tanzania was his fearless stand against imperialist powers and big nations that attempted to undermine his efforts to improve the welfare and dignity of his people.

Similarly, President Hugo Chávez's staunch belief in the solidarity of nations and his tireless efforts to bring together Latin American and the Caribbean States rang a bell in Tanzania, where Mwalimu Nyerere similarly devoted his life to Pan Africanism, the Organization of African Union and especially the liberation struggles of Southern Africa.

The examples discussed above show that despite the distance, Venezuela and Tanzania share a common history in the struggle to better the lives of their people. And in all this, President Hugo Chávez will always be remembered as a great source of inspiration and encouragement to all people engaged in the pursuit of peace, equality and social justice.

Source: Publication of the Embassy of
Venezuela in Kenya, 2015

Great Men Never Die



Bah El Mad Abdellah
Ambassador of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic
in the Republic of Kenya.

Like all great men, the memory of the late President Hugo Chávez Frías remains alive as if he is still physically present among us. He is quiet alive indeed, with his achievements, his example, his heritage and his clear-cut positions and stands against colonialism, imperialism, injustice, aggression and lack of respect to the poor and weak countries and peoples.

The Saharawi people, as most of the people of the South, have always looked to Commander Hugo Chávez, as their own son. A real leader, who dared to speak out against injustice inflicted to them and to others everywhere. A comrade and a brother, who said it clear and loud in front of everyone when he declared that: *“Venezuela is and will always stand with the cause of the liberation of the Saharawi people”*.

And the great man honored his vow of course. Venezuela has not only strengthened diplomatic ties with the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, it has proactively supported the legitimate struggle of the Saharawi people to full independence and freedom in all

international fora. The Bolivarian Republic continues this support to the Saharawi people and continues extending its political support to the Saharawi authorities in the United Nations and elsewhere.

The special relation that the glorious son of Latin America built between the two people can only get stronger because Venezuelans and Saharawis are now, more than ever, sharing a strong common ground: A heritage of brotherhood and solidarity built by a historical leader and maintained by a Venezuelan people and authority that inherited great values and sense of justice.

Hugo Chávez was clear cut in his position in favor of the Saharawi people’s freedom. He refused to succumb to any sort of pressure or concessions on the subject and maintained a principled support to the right of the Saharawi people to self-determination and independence.

This is just one reason why the Saharawi people have always looked with pride and deep respect to this man and great leader who did all what many other leaders would even fear to think about

doing, in order to protect the poor, and empower them. They were proud of his courage in taking back control over the national petroleum company *PDVSA*, as a very strong proof of sovereignty and real political independence, to use the oil revenues to build and invest in the social services that Venezuelans so badly needed, marking thus a new era for his country.

The Comandante had to lead the free and proud Venezuelan to achieve miracles in education, reducing inequalities, creating jobs and income, ameliorating health care, providing food security and social support and services leading to an amazing progress in all levels of Venezuelans' lives.

Under his leadership another revolution was waged to develop and empower the human resources. And the achievements are beyond imagination if we compare the different facts and figures in the country's statistics in poverty, education, health and others before and after his leadership.

Saharawis are also proud about Venezuela's success to really profit from its rich resources to become one of the rare countries with very low debts, high petroleum reserves and high savings. El Comandante Chávez should have received all imaginable awards for this achievement, but of course the Occident wasn't ready to admit its defeat and continued waging its own war trying to distort truth about Chávez and his political and economic successful leading example.



Yet, a great man is even greater when he inspires others. And that is what Hugo Chávez did supporting other great leaders in Latin America such as the Legendary Comandante Fidel Castro and others, to build together a real union and solidarity. It was thanks to Chávez's determination that Latin America has started to build the basis for a truly independent region with political integration organizations such as the Bank of the South, *UNASUR*, *CELAC*, *PETROSUR*, *PETROCARIBE*, *ALBA*, *MERCOSUR*, *TELESUR* and thus have demonstrated to the rest of the world that there are, after all, political economic and social alternatives to the failing Western ones.

*“Venezuela is and will
always stand with the
cause of the liberation
of the Saharawi
people”.*

And the dream continues. Because the loss of the great man does not mean that we lose his heritage. In fact, we cannot allow this to happen. We have to fight together to maintain alive his dream of achieving freedom, dignity and complete independence for all peoples, to allow them to live together in peace, mutual respect and solidarity. It may sound like a simple dream but a difficult one to

achieve without struggle, determination, integrity and perseverance. Those are the teachings Hugo Chávez conveyed to us through all his actions and positions, and those are the tools we need to use to keep the dream alive.

From the Saharawi Republic we all look proudly to Hugo Chávez, and his deeds have earned him a deserved and special place in our hearts, our history and our future for ever.

Source: Publication of the Embassy of Venezuela in Kenya, 2015

People of the south in Solidarity With the Saharawi



Hugo Chávez: A Great Leader and Hero for Venezuela and Humanity.



Koigi wa Wamwere,
Kenyan politician, Human Rights activist.

Hugo Chávez may be dead but his spirit is alive and inspiring to universal humanity that is struggling for a better world.

Irrespective of how briefly he was in power, Hugo Chávez was a great leader of Venezuela and a venerable hero for humanity, very much in the same class with Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, Simón Bolívar, Nelson Mandela, Abraham Lincoln, Kwame Nkrumah, Mao Zedong and Thomas Sankara.

Hugo Chávez came to power almost against insurmountable odds because he was one of the rare men and women whom history blesses the world with to lead and serve great causes of humanity armed with a brave heart, visionary mind and a humane disposition. It is a terrible tragedy that a great man like Chávez died so young, leaving the planet poorer for good leadership and so much good work to be done.

Enlightened masses of Venezuela and the world admire Hugo Chávez because he understood that to serve and liberate his country and people he had to embrace socialism and solidarity with

progressive humanity. In making this choice, Chávez knew he was putting himself on a collision course with the rich class of his country and American imperialism, but he had no choice. Genuine liberation will always involve fighting against forces of entrenched oppression and exploitation.

In fighting poverty, Hugo Chávez was more than Robin Hood and Don Quixote. He understood that poverty cannot be fought with individual efforts alone, charity, philanthropy and crumbs that trickle down to the poor Lazarus from the feasting table of the rich. Nor can poverty be fought with capitalism or development aid of imperialism. If capitalism or imperialism could eradicate poverty, all countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia would be in the First World since most are capitalist.

Where capitalism has failed to deliver development as in Latin America and Africa, Chávez knew socialism was the only viable alternative. Pursuing a socialist path of development both Hugo Chávez and his successor Nicolas Maduro Moros have striven with great success to feed, educate, house, empower and dignify the poor while eradicating poverty by giving people a share of national wealth.

As a leader of Venezuela that had suffered from slavery, slave trade and racism, Chávez never hesitated to condemn racism, racial discrimination and exploitation that had for a long time divided Venezuelan society into rich and poor, black and inferior, white and superior. Chávez must be congratulated for seeking liberation, equality, empowerment and integration of the poor and black sectors into the mainstream of Venezuelan society.

Leading a country that is a producer of oil, Chávez gave a good example of how a poor country can manage a valuable resource like oil for the benefit of all in society. Elsewhere, black gold has become the curse of the poor that are oppressed and impoverished by a resource that should otherwise liberate and enrich them. Since the Venezuelan leadership has avoided this trap, it can advise Kenya that is now producing oil on how best it can be turned into an instrument and catalyst of development.

As a revolutionary, Hugo Chávez was not a greedy or selfish leader. Having enjoyed solidarity from countries like Cuba, revolutionary Chávez developed Venezuela into a country that supported Cuba with oil and countries like Kenya with university scholarships. I only hope that Kenyan students who are studying in Venezuela will not only study medicine and other courses but will also learn how to make good leaders some day.

As for President Uhuru Kenyatta, one hopes he will learn from Hugo Chávez how to manage Kenyan minerals and oil for the benefit of all Kenyans rather than sell it off to a small elite of Kenyan leaders and foreign companies which are currently producing oil.

Recently American President Barack Obama conceded that American government's economic warfare, sanctions and blockade against Cuba for the last 50 years had not worked and US will normalize relations with Cuba. This American change of policy towards Cuba is most welcome.

Ironically, as America is normalizing relations with Cuba, she is imposing economic sanctions against Venezuela as if Obama's country must have an enemy in Latin America. All progressive people who support sovereignty and the right of every country to choose its own ideology must support the right of Venezuela to protect her sovereignty and socialism as an ideology of her own choice.



Kenya-Venezuela Friendship and Solidarity Committee

If America has normalized political and economic relations with her Cold War enemies of Russia, China, Vietnam and now Cuba, there is no reason why she cannot respect the sovereignty, independence and right of Venezuela to have leadership and economic system of her own choice. Ultimately, justice for Venezuela, which wants peace with America and the rest of the world, is justice for the whole world.

*Long live the spirit and leadership
of Hugo Chávez.*

Source: Publication of the Embassy of
Venezuela in Kenya, 2015

Remembering Hugo Chávez:

A legacy that lives on in Africa



Yves Niyiragira
Executive Director of Fahamu, publishers of Pambazuka News.

On the evening of 5th March 2013 as I rested in my room at Le Ndiambour Hotel in Dakar, Senegal, after a long flight from Nairobi, Kenya, the previous day, I learnt about the terrible news of the departure of President Hugo Chávez.

With this news coming barely 18 months after the brutal assassination of Muammar al-Gaddafi, leader and guide of the Libyan revolution, by imperialist forces, it seemed as if all revolutionary leaders were leaving us. Indeed, on the 3rd August 2013, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was also ending his term in office. The fight against imperialism and neo-colonialism seemed lost, with those three leaders no longer able to defend and present to various international fora the voices of the people of the Global South from the Americas to Africa and Asia.

As we commemorate the third anniversary of the passing on of President Chávez, it is a good opportunity to reflect on his leadership, but also on his vision of a world where ordinary people have the power to build a society whose purpose is not to serve the interests of the top one per cent of the planet's population, but the

basic needs of the masses. It is also an opportunity to remind our leaders that they have the responsibility to serve their fellow Africans and not the interests of multinational companies and other imperialist interests. Commemorating Chávez's departure serves as well as a wake up call to young African people, as the welfare of the entire continent depends on their socio-economic visions and the decisions they take now and in the future while managing Africa's resources.

Lessons From Chávez's Socio-economic Policies

During his 14 years as leader of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Chávez was always wickedly criticised by Western powers because of his socio-economic policies that were designed to serve the masses. Indeed, in the eyes of Western powers, any policy that does not serve their interests is criticised from the start and attacked from all sides. With his vision of *La Patria Humana* or "*Humane homeland*", Chávez launched a revolutionary programme he called "*social missions*", basically transforming all government agencies and ministries into missions to serve the needs of the people.

Describing the social missions, Chávez said, *“The missions, which I consider of strategic importance, must be a way for the creation of a new social state. We come from a bourgeois state. That state served the interests of the bourgeoisie, and even until today, special interests that oppose the revolution infiltrate the state. The missions should become an instrument to boost the transformation of the bourgeois state into a social state of rights and justice. The missions should generate a new spirit of service, where plenty of voluntary and creative work is performed; where public servants would act differently, with a new social and socialist spirit”*.

The new public service that President Hugo Chávez envisioned is one with the spirit of service and the wellbeing of the whole society at heart. That was an immense project because changing the mentality of the public service, which is responsible for the implementation of government policies, means changing the mentality of the whole society. Employees of the public service are members of the society and they needed to have that vision of a *“social state of rights and justice”*.

Another key element of Hugo Chávez’s social missions is the concept of La Patria Humana itself. Apart from being a vision for Venezuela, the concept of La Patria Humana is very important to look at. If one were to ask any citizen of an African country about the feeling of belonging to their country, how many would consider their country as *“a humane homeland”*? It can be argued that some would respond

that they feel rejected and abandoned by the land in which they were born. That type of segregation against certain categories of people in the same country is what Hugo Chávez rejected with the concept of La Patria Humana, so that every Venezuelan feels proud of their country because they have a place and value in the society and they can have access to resources for their vital needs in that country. The vision of La Patria Humana embodies a social state where justice is applied equally and where all citizens can enjoy their individual and collective rights. It also represents a society where ordinary people can and are able to build a different world from the one we currently live in.

Social missions meant that public servants had to change their approach to public service. Rather than reinforcing a culture of corruption and misuse of resources that is not unusual in many government departments and ministries across the globe, Chávez envisioned changing those ministries and departments into service centres where the first priority would be the welfare of the society in general.

As mentioned in the introduction of this article, the commemoration of the third anniversary of the departure of Hugo Chávez is an opportunity to reflect on how some of his legacies can be applied in African contexts. A policy such as that of social missions is urgently needed in many African countries. It is needed because in many African countries there is lack of a sense of total belonging among certain communities within any given African



country. One reason could be the fact that colonisers geographically drew many African territories (empires and kingdoms) into countries that are not nation-states.

As a result, the basic sense of belonging slowly disappeared after independence and gave way to regionalism, tribalism and ethnic divisions within one country. In some cases, one could see that public servants are happy to serve individuals from their region, community or ethnic group but lack the motivation for doing the same to others even if they all belong to the same country. Therefore, the vision of social missions to make sure that everyone gets the same rights and services from the public service and feels respected and valued in their own country is what is needed to also transform African public services.

Another key lesson that we learn from the policies of President Hugo Chávez is his approach to the management of natural resources of Venezuela. Natural resources whether it is water, land, timber, natural gas and oil among many others can be sources of endless national and international conflicts. Such resources belong to the people of where they are.

Unfortunately, natural resources, especially those in African countries barely benefit African people. The African continent has witnessed numerous conflicts that resulted from disagreements on how to use resources of certain countries such as Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone and Somalia just to name a few. Most of those conflicts whether they were a result of internal actors or foreign ones, were fundamentally a consequence of disagreements on the equitable use of natural resources. Even some conflicts in Africa that appeared to be religious in nature or based on regional and ethnic tensions always had a hidden reason to do with equitable use and access to the available resources in that country or region. In many cases, a certain category of people wants to accumulate wealth and use all the resources alone to the detriment of the rest, often the majority.

The fact that Hugo Chávez championed for a fair share of Venezuelan resources did not go well with those who were used to taking more than their share. Social services such as housing for marginalised people, access to health care for the poor and affordable schools for the vulnerable people were part of the main vision of La Patria Humana aimed at ensuring equitable share of the country's resources and opportunities.

Unfortunately, in many African countries, such programmes do not exist and the most vulnerable members of the society are left to suffer with limited or without any state support at all. If African countries are to learn from the socio-economic policies of President Hugo Chávez, they will have to start from correcting social injustices that we currently see, ranging from deplorable housing in informal urban settlements that we see in many African cities where vital sanitation services are nonexistent.

Other vital social services that are almost a given to the middle class and wealthy neighbourhoods of African cities are also absent in those informal urban settlements. Furthermore, there are the poor and marginalised segments of society living in rural areas and who are most of the time very far from centres of power and authority. Those ones are almost not a priority for the ruling classes and their wealthy supporters except when they seek for their votes. That state of affairs is totally unacceptable and if not changed, African countries will never be able to build societies where *“ordinary people are able to form a new social order”* that President Hugo Chávez was fighting for.

In my view, it is an urgent challenge to every member of the society, so that everyone in any African society feels the calling for public service. It is not just a responsibility of the leaders, but

“It is not to say that there are no enough resources in Africa to fund the work of the AU, but the AU’s top leadership has not made it their priority to mobilise African people for that noble cause ...”

but also that of every citizen because members of society, who are you and I, are the basis to forming and leading the *“social missions”* that we seek to have in African societies.

The other important lesson from President Hugo Chávez that is worth mentioning here is his ability to *“resist foreign influence and interfere”*. Chávez’s strong position against imperialism and neo-colonialism brought him the fury of the top champions of those two infamous world policies to the point that he was characterised as an enemy of a number of Western countries.

Perhaps the biggest opposition to imperial domination and pressures was Chávez’s idea in 2004 to establish the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (*ALBA—Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América in Spanish*) as a group whose objective was to promote social, political, and economic integration of Latin America and the Caribbean. **ALBA**, which means *“dawn”* in Spanish, was conceived by Chávez to be an alternative to the United States of America-led Free Trade Area of the Americas so that member states did not have to always rely on the US for their progress.



That strong position of the ALBA member states is what is needed for Africa. The creation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963 was an important beginning to resist colonialism, but the OAU was unable to help Africa fight against neo-colonial policies. Indeed, the transformation of the OAU into the African Union (AU) was an attempt to strengthen the continental organisation to be able to deal with post-independence challenges. The AU is yet to achieve that goal because one of the main steps that needs to be achieved is to be able to fund the work of the AU internally. It would be impossible for the AU to claim that it is an independent Pan-African organisation that is able to resist any foreign influence whereas it is still unable to generate enough resources to fund all its activities.

It is not to say that there are no enough resources in Africa to fund the work of the AU, but the AU's top leadership has not made it their priority to mobilise African people for that noble cause. And AU member states that are supposed to contribute funds for the work of the continental organisation, some of them do it is required, but others do not contribute their dues and even when they do so, their contributions are very little compared to their capacities and usually come in late. As such, AU members' inability to adequately fund the activities and plans of the AU gives the impression that they do not believe in its vision of seeking *“total political and economic emancipation of African people”* wherever they are.

Of course, in the same way the United States of America did not want to see the success of ALBA, there are foreign powers that do not want to see the success of the AU. A strong AU means a strong African continent of more than a billion people, or more than one seventh of the world population that can, if united, be a very strong force in international affairs. In the same way it needed a courageous leader, Hugo Chávez, to establish ALBA, it will require bold leaders to transform the AU into an organisation that can ensure political, social and economic emancipation of the African people. Any other plans of the AU or other African regional economic communities contrary to that do not serve the interests of African people, but those of the ruling elite and their supporters.

Implementing Chávez's Political and Socio-economic Policies In Africa

A professor of International Relations once told me that revolutionary leaders such as Simón Bolívar, Hugo Chávez and Thomas Sankara among others are very rare and that in some cases it might take centuries before another similar leader emerges—in reference to Hugo Chávez coming almost after two centuries after Simón Bolívar.

Nevertheless, their legacies live on forever. As was mentioned at the beginning of this article, the commemoration of the third anniversary of the passing on of President Hugo Chávez serves as a good opportunity for Africans to reflect

on how his political and socio-economic policies can be useful in African contexts in order to establish socialist states that serve the needs of the majority. This article proposes three main conditions that are necessities for those policies, or some of them, to be successful in Africa. These having visionary leaders, strengthening African solidarity and working on true South-South cooperation. They are detailed in the paragraphs that follow.



① Africa might not currently have leaders such as Thomas Sankara, Julius Nyerere, Nelson Mandela, Kwame Nkrumah and Gamal Abdel Nasser, but Africans can learn from their exceptional leadership to be able to deal with current challenges that are face continent. In order for Africa to nurture and develop such kind of leaders, there is need to include, in the civic education curriculums, the history and achievements of those visionary leaders so that younger generations can learn from them and embrace them as role models.

In addition, instead of only learning about the history of the West and their leaders who colonised Africa, Africans should learn about leaders such as Simón Bolívar, Ernesto Che Guevara and Hugo Chávez who vehemently opposed imperial and neo-colonial agendas and fought for the emancipation of the people of the Global South. For that to happen, the education system in Africa has to change because the current curriculum is part of a broader system that

looks down upon other types of knowledge and civilisations.

Visionary leaders that we aspire to have in Africa have to be nurtured from a younger age, which means that basic education needs to focus on the history of Africa and its exceptional leaders before colonisation and after the independence era. That way potential leaders can grow up appreciating the various leadership talents of Africans and strive to emulate them. It is also essential for eminent African leaders to establish mentorship institutions where they can mentor and develop leadership skills of emerging leaders. Another key element is to develop writing by eminent African leaders so that they can disseminate their thinking through writing. They might not be able to reach everyone in mentorship centres, but their writings can be accessed centuries after they have gone.

② The second condition for implementing political, social and economic policies of Hugo Chávez — that focus on building socialist states that are able to transform state entities into social missions to serve the masses — in Africa is strengthening solidarity among

African people. Solidarity among African people is not only achieved through political pronouncements, but also, and mostly, through promoting free movement of people and skills in Africa, cultural exchanges, intra-African trade and social cohesion among African people. Doing the above reinforces the fact that Africa is not some mass of land with geographical demarcations, but one people. This would in turn influence government policies so that they do not focus on closing their borders and arming themselves allegedly to protect themselves from their “*dangerous*” neighbours, but focus more on investing in social services to the benefit of their citizens and their neighbours.

Using the example of trade in Africa, the AU estimates that the share of Africa in global trade is only at 3 per cent, an insignificant proportion given the wealth of the continent both in terms of population and natural resources. Nevertheless, that statistic would not be worrying if the percentage of trade among African states were standing at a very high level. The reality is that Africa’s trade is highly externally oriented with relatively low level of intra-regional and intra-country trade. Intra-African trade stands at around 13 per cent compared to approximately 60 per cent, 40 per cent, 30 per cent intra-regional trade that has been achieved by Europe, North America and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations respectively.

These statistics demonstrate that there is a certain level of fear and

indifference among African countries. That state of affairs heavily influences national policies, which in many cases tend to be very protective and nationalistic in nature as opposed to being welcoming and Pan-Africanist.

Strangely, African countries constantly believe that their neighbours are their enemies; they do not give priority to developing social states; they instead focus on developing militaristic states to be able to supposedly defend themselves against the aggression from their “*bad*” neighbours. That kind of thinking needs to stop because it discourages regional and continental integration, which are key ingredients for developing social states whose first priority is the welfare of their people as opposed to focusing on building strong armies to defend their borders.

“...the passing on of President Hugo Chávez serves as a good opportunity for Africans to reflect on how his political and socio-economic policies can be useful in African contexts in order to establish socialist states that serve the needs of the majority.”

Finally, encouraging cultural exchanges and movement of African people from one country and region to the other helps to lessen unfounded fears that neighbouring people and countries are enemies. That in return helps to change the priorities of governments from building militaristic states to developing social states as described.

③ The third condition is the promotion of strong alliances of the people of the South, commonly called the Global South. I propose to spend some time on the Global South because the promotion of the emancipation of the people of the Global South was the biggest agenda of President Hugo Chávez. The Global South generally refers to the less developed countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America; a region that is geographically wide, culturally differentiated and politically diverse. A number of Global South countries still suffer from the domination and exploitation of countries from the North (West), but there is increasing momentum within the Global South to resist that domination together with other global challenges such as the negative consequences of global climate change, control of diseases, review of the effectiveness of international financial aid, the fight against radicalisation and nuclear non-proliferation among other important global issues.

Hugo Chávez's initiative to create ALBA was not the first attempt to bring together countries from the South, he was only contributing and revamping almost stalled initiatives. As a group of countries that share a common history of having been colonised by people of other races and having been since left at the periphery of world affairs, the Global South's first initiative to engage in efforts leading to the emancipation of their people was probably profoundly evidenced at the Algiers, Algeria, during the Ministerial

Meeting of the **Group of 77** in October 1967 where all members, united by common aspirations, determined to pursue a joint agenda of political, social and economic emancipation of their people. In addition, the idea of a Global South as a political bloc became strong at the United Nations General Assembly summit of 1975 when a resolution on development and international cooperation was passed. Cooperation of the countries of the South (or South-South cooperation) was seen in form of political, economic, social and environmental and technical domains and able to take place at bilateral, sub-regional and inter-regional levels (Agbu, 2010).

Mawdsley (2011) analyses South-South cooperation in the following words: *“The assertion of a shared experience of colonial exploitation, post-colonial inequality and present vulnerability to uneven neoliberal globalisation, and thus a shared identity as ‘Third World’ nations; an explicit rejection of hierarchical relations between states, and a strong articulation of the principles of respect, sovereignty and non-interference as well as an insistence of win-win outcomes of South-South development cooperation and mutual opportunity among others, is what defines the cooperation among countries of the political bloc of the Global South”*.

Gore (2013) also believes that South-South cooperation is rooted in *“complete equality, mutual respect, mutual interest as well as respect for*

national sovereignty” in the framework of shared experiences and sympathy towards the enhancement of “collective self-reliance of developing countries”. Furthermore, de Carvalho (2014) explains that South-South cooperation can be conceptualised as those arrangements between countries of the Global South aimed at adjusting actions and behaviours, frequently performed by focusing on reducing international inequalities. That cooperation is also aimed at promoting joint actions that target similar domestic challenges and or joint work with the objective of exerting a higher impact on the international system.

The above brief description of Global South cooperation was the main motivation behind the establishment of regional blocs such as ALBA and continental organisations such as the AU. However, there is still a lot to be done for all those regional and continental blocs to work together for the common good of the people of the South. Since structures are

already there, the onus is on the people of the South to push their governments to seriously work towards the emancipation of the people of the South and increased influence by the Global South in international fora in order to change existing systems that heavily favour countries from the West.

If the existing organisations from the South such as the AU are unable to achieve their desired objectives, progressive leaders may think about creating new ones the same way President Hugo Chávez established ALBA because the Free Trade Area of the Americas was serving the interests of the few.

The idea of countries of the South coming together to fight against global imperialism is very appealing. But to see that vision actualised needs visionary leaders such as Hugo Chávez. Africa being one of the biggest blocs of the Global South should champion that vision because Africans would benefit more than others. Indeed, among countries of the



Global South there are some that are also using the same imperial strategies to dominate other countries of the South, especially those in Africa. Since African countries are exploited by both the North and leading countries of the South, it is impossible for them to think about developing social states because their priority is on protecting their sovereignty. As such, Africans have more to gain by encouraging other countries of the South to live by their commitments of being “members” of the Global South so that they can both fight the bigger threat of global imperialism.

CONCLUSION

This article joins other voices that are commemorating the third anniversary of the departure of President Hugo Chávez. In the 14 years that he was in power, he championed various social causes aimed at helping the most vulnerable people of Venezuela. Some of the most important of those policies are social missions that were meant to transform the entire public service.

Unfortunately, changing the whole public service is not an easy task and in the middle of that transformation there were abuses of power and resources by some officials. Considering the positive side of Hugo Chávez’s social policies, this article uses the commemoration of the third anniversary of his departure to propose how those policies can be useful for Africa and the conditions that need to be met for that to

happen. The conditions are the development of visionary leaders, the promotion of African solidarity and working towards effective cooperation among countries of the Global South. Finally, the article proposes to use the opportunity of remembering Hugo Chávez as a way of also celebrating exceptional African leaders and making sure that their leadership skills are passed on to younger African generations.

The article recognises that there might be different views and opinions about the legacy of President Hugo Chávez, but it is hoped that it has contributed one or two ideas to the broader debates of building a world that cares for the most vulnerable people in society. The author strongly believes that the vision of establishing social states is what Africa needs to be able to respond to the vital needs of its more than one billion people.

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Source: www.Pambazuka.org



Through the Eyes of Chávez

*“When I am no longer there,
look for me in the eyes of the children,
look for me in the eyes of the poor.”*

Hugo Chávez

Before and after Hugo Chávez

*Intervention by Reinaldo Bolívar
Deputy Minister for Africa of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela
before the African Representatives at the UNHRC, Geneva 2016*

President Hugo Chávez, Historic leader of the Bolivarian Revolution and Paladin of the Southern causes was very clear in his policies. He said it with devotion: We come from Africa and we should look to Africa.

In 2005, President Hugo Chávez restructured the Venezuela Foreign Ministry and created the Deputy Ministry for Africa. From there on began a Bolivarian and humanitarian diplomacy to bring us close to our “*Mother Continent*”, as Hugo Chávez called Africa.

In this framework the “**AFRICA AGENDA**” was created from the Venezuelan Foreign Policy. This agenda is based in the great cultural and historical similarities between Africa and Venezuela. And it paves the way for the reunion between the Venezuelan people and the African people.

In the Africa Agenda the need of helping each other and complementing each other is clearly expressed. The cooperation with Africa is in the center of our foreign policy.

Venezuela has its strengths in education, health, knowledge, energy resources, which we make available to our African brothers and sisters. Africa, as you well know, has its strengths in agriculture, mining, regional organization in political, financial, environmental areas among others which are examples to the world.

The African Agenda is founded on the constitutional principles: in the 2001 – 2007 Nation’s Economic and Social Development Plan; in the 2005 – 2013 Simón Bolívar Strategic Plan; and in the 2013 – 2018 Homeland Plan.

Its great goals are:

- ★ To boost multi-polarity in the international community. Which translates into promoting the configuration of a more balanced world system.
- ★ To consolidate and diversify international relations, strengthening the South – South Cooperation.
- ★ To contribute in the promotion and protection of human rights, supporting the regional peace process.

The number of Venezuelan Embassies in Africa increased significantly. Venezuela opened 10 new Embassies in Africa to have 18, and become the third Latin American and Caribbean country with largest presence in the African Continent. And with their aid and personnel we serve Africa as a whole.

Today we have 18 Embassies, with ambassadors committed to the Bolivarian Revolution. Many of them happen to be of African descent, since in our country almost 55% of the population is recognized as having African descent.



Our Embassies in Africa have allowed to increase, to the highest level, the bilateral contacts, official visits, signing of agreements and exchanges.

Many agreements have been signed with all of the African countries, in order to develop cooperation and exchange programs in education, culture, sports and health areas.

In 2005 there were 30 agreements. Today, we have more than 500 agreements in energy, oil, education, mining, agriculture, science and technology. And a brotherhood has been created amongst African and Venezuelan cities.

In 2006, Venezuela brought together the first Joint Commission with a sub-Saharan African country: Gambia, setting a milestone

milestone in Venezuelan diplomacy that had turned its back to the African Continent.

That same year, President Hugo Chávez Frias was the first non-African President to participate in an African Union Summit. It was in Banjul where he proposed the South Poles, through the creation of a Bank of the South, a University of the South, a television of the South (TELESUR) and an oil company of the South (PETROSUR).

In 2009, President Chávez held in Venezuela the II South American – African Summit, with the participation to the highest level of representatives of 66 countries.

There the Margarita Declaration was drafted, which gathers all of the desires of the peoples of the South in many cooperation areas. The commitment was acquired to complement its natural resources, which are the most abundant on the earth.

With Chávez and the Bolivarian Revolution, lead today by President Nicolas Maduro Moros, Venezuela turned to Africa.

In our universities there have been fields of study created on Africa and the African Knowledge Center was founded, which is the only one in Our America.

Venezuela has developed the solidarity program ***“Sponsor an African School”***, aimed to avoid school dropouts.

The program provides school supplies to thousands of boys and girls; and provides aid to teachers and families. It had repaired and rebuild schools. And it is complemented with the International Scholarship Program that Venezuela grants to African, Asian and Latin American students. Thousands of youth

coming from brother countries of the South study in Simón Bolívar's Homeland.

This program is present in 28 African countries and has benefitted more than 300 thousand boys and girls.

Around 500 students coming from 22 African countries study in Venezuela. And more than 400 youths have studied in Algeria. And soon a group of Venezuelan engineers will travel to South Africa to specialize in mining.

Venezuela has received boys and girls coming from Africa to be treated and have surgery related to heart diseases.

Venezuela, through CEDEAO programs and the Cuban participation contribute in the fight against malaria.

The Bolivarian Government with the support of the FAO, carries out in 10 African countries an ambitious rice and other crop planting programs.



*Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations*

President Chavez created an African Fund and asked the rich African and South American countries to join this effort.

This Fund has helped many countries in emergencies such as floods, droughts and other natural disasters.

Our Government boosts these solidary policies that are born from the Venezuelan soul, with its deep African roots.

We are with African, because we are brothers! Our Revolution is not a threat to anyone, as certain imperial voices claim.

Our Revolution is hope. We have a diplomacy based on peace and stand for the full enjoyment of human rights for all, without any sort of exclusions or discriminations.

The Venezuelan struggles for independence, sovereignty and self-determination are the same as those of the African peoples.

Thanks to the solidary support of the African governments and people, today Venezuela is part of the UN Security Council; the Human Rights Council and the ECOSOC.

This upcoming November 1st 2016, Venezuela will have its second Universal Periodic Review. I respectfully ask you to participate in Venezuela's UPR, giving your support in this important review for my country.

This is a new opportunity to reaffirm the commitment of all of our Governments, with the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedom.

I would like to reiterate the importance of the UPR as the United Nations most important mechanism for the promotion and protection of these rights.

We reiterate our commitment with genuine dialogue, cooperation, international solidarity, which are the founding pillars of multilateralism and the labor of the Human Rights Council.

We restate our firm and unhindered solidary commitment with the people and Governments of Africa. We still have a long road ahead of us, but we are on the right path.

New challenges await us and we must remain together. On behalf of the Bolivarian Government and the Venezuelan People, thank you very much.



Action Plan for the Eradication of
HUNGER AND POVERTY
Comandante
HUGO CHÁVEZ FRIAS

Long Live Africa!
Long Live Venezuela!
Long Live the peoples of the South!

Source: www.saberesafricos.net
14th October, 2016



SPONSOR A SCHOOL IN AFRICA PROGRAMME

“We hope that the children that today are beneficiaries of this project ‘sponsor a school in Africa’ will tomorrow be the ones who guarantee a durable friendship between Africa and Venezuela...”

“Thank you very much for allowing us to enter in your hearts. Our only request is for you to make an effort to keep and care for the (school) so that many more generations can also benefit...”

Intervention of Ambassador Jhony Balza
at the inauguration of Museno Primary School in Kenya
2016

*Embassy of Venezuela in Algeria
concurrent to Saharawi*



Algeria



Saharawi



Simon Bolivar High School in Tindouf

Embassy of Venezuela in Mali



600 Beneficiaries
2009



700 Beneficiaries
2009



Mali



2015

*Embassy of Venezuela in Benin
concurrent to Ghana, Ivory Coast and Niger*



Benin



200 Beneficiaries
2012



1,200 Beneficiaries
2013



Togbin Daho primary school
286 Beneficiaries
2016



Ghana



500 Beneficiaries
2016



2016



Niger



2013



2013



Ivory Coast



Bon Berger Primary school
2016



Bon Berger Boys Orphanage
2016



Nigeria

Embassy of Venezuela in Nigeria



Kits 5,100 Beneficiaries
2013



2013



Kits 5,000 Beneficiaries
2014



Kits 5,000 Beneficiaries
2015



2015

Embassy of Venezuela in Congo



Congo



2012



200 Beneficiaries
2016

*Embassy of Venezuela in Namibia
concurrent to Botswana and Zimbabwe*



Namibia



Grammas Primary School,
200 beneficiaries
2013



Fidel Castro Primary School,
200 beneficiaries
2013



Faith Primary School,
400 beneficiaries
2014.



Botswana



Gantsi and Kabakae Primary School,
400 beneficiaries
2016



Zimbabwe



Maulana Primary School,
400 beneficiaries
2016

*Embassy of Venezuela in South Africa
Concurrent to Swaziland, Comoros and Seychelles*



South Africa



Bela Bela Primary School,
2015



Mahlasedi Secondary school kitchen
and restrooms
2016.



Swaziland



2016



2016



Comoros



2015



Seychelles



Embassy of Venezuela in Kenya



Kenya

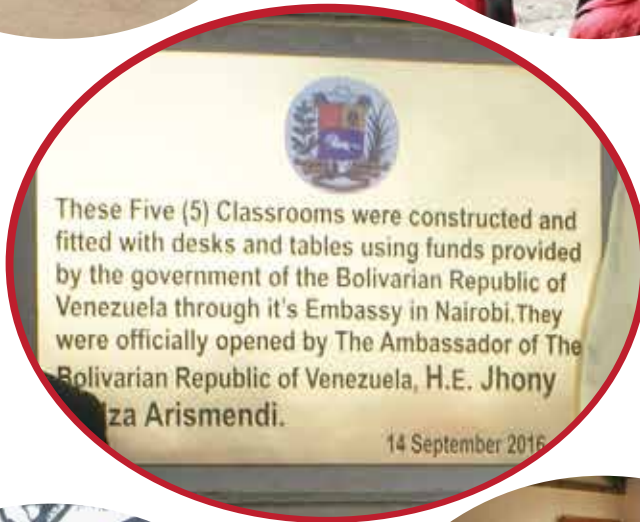


CCM Angaine Primary School
400 Beneficiaries
2015





Kenya



Ilbibil Township Primary School (Kajiado County, Kenya)
Additional Classrooms, Desks and Chairs, Blackboards and Bookshelves.
901 Beneficiaries
2016



Museno Primary School (Kakamega County, Kenya)

11 Classrooms, 14 Toilets, Perimeter Fence, Classrooms fitted with Desks, Chairs, Blackboards and Bookshelves.

1,048 Beneficiaries

2016



“ ... This has been the spirit that prevailed in Margarita during the Second Africa – South America Summit: the spirit that encourages us to look for the political, social and economic union with the whole of Africa.”

Hugo Chávez
2009