

13 March 2013

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremić,  
President of the 67<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
at the Tribute to the Memory of H.E. Mr. Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías,  
President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela**

Mr. Secretary-General,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Representatives,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It was with great sadness that I learned of the passing of His Excellency Mr. Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías, President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. On behalf of the General Assembly and in my own name, allow me to offer my deepest condolences to his bereaved family and friends, the Government and people of Venezuela, as well as to his many admirers throughout Latin America, the Caribbean, and the rest of the world.

On this solemn occasion, it is my hope that we can put aside any personal or political differences, and come together to pay our respects.

History will remember President Chávez a charismatic leader whose progressive policies brought Venezuela's poverty rate down from over 70 percent at the close of the 20th century to around 20 percent today.

Throughout his term in office, he remained committed to the cause of social justice, working hard to improve the lives of Venezuelans, especially the most underprivileged amongst them.

Under his strong leadership, Venezuela made great strides towards fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals, to the lasting benefit of a great and proud nation.

He was a man who came from humble beginnings, brought up in mud-floor house on the cattle-ranching plains of Barinas state. This helped him better understand and feel the pain and privations of ordinary Venezuelans.

While he was a great advocate of the sovereignty of his country, President Chávez was also a strong proponent of the revitalization of the United Nations.

Throughout his political career, he remained a vocal advocate of the Global South a firm believer in the potential of the Non-Aligned Movement and the G-77 to help uplift the developing world.

He was also a driving force behind efforts to deepen Latin American and Caribbean integration. This led President Chávez to be actively involved in establishing or strengthening organizations such as PETROSUR, PETROCARIBE, CELAC, UNASUR, and ALBA.

Excellencies,

As President of the General Assembly, I remain steadfast in my commitment to deepen the relationship between Venezuela and this body with the aim of strengthening the founding principles of the United Nations.

May he rest in peace in the homeland of his hero, Simón Bolívar, from whom he drew inspiration time and again.

Thank you for your attention.