

Memorial Services for Mr. Luiz Carlos da Costa
Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
21 January 2010

His Excellency, Minister, Celso Amorim, authorities of the Government of the Federative Republic of Brazil, ladies and gentlemen.

Dear family,

It is a great privilege for me to be here, in the brother nation of Brazil, representing the Secretary General of the United Nations.

I am also representing hundreds of Luiz's colleagues and friends who wished they could be here today, in this wonderful city of Rio, paying him a final tribute.

It is a complex honor to say goodbye to Luiz. The sadness of the departure of such a worthy man gets entangled with the joy of having met him, and with the realization that the hope for a better world makes greater sense just because human beings like him exist.

I know that it is banal to look for consolation in moments like this. I know that it is better to face pain straight, as he would have done, and I know that Cristina, Anna Maria and Marianna, more than anybody else, can count on the strength of his legacy. Luiz reached the highest status possible to a human being: that of devoting one's life to good. And he did it in such a way that, for everyone whose lives he touched, he became an icon of humanitarian values. And Luiz touched the lives of many. In Kosovo, in Liberia, in Haiti and all over the United Nations Organization, many women and men have today the privilege of a better life thanks to him.

Luiz served in many key positions during his forty one years in the United Nations. He was both Director of Personnel and Logistics in the Department of Peacekeeping. He served as Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Liberia and Haiti, where last week's tragedy found him.

For years, Luiz was the face of the United Nations to many who desired to join the effort for peace in the world. He selected, welcomed and fostered their development; and many of the best individuals who today keep his legacy alive in diverse parts of the world acknowledge the mark of his style and of his dedication to the values of the Organization to which he devoted his all. Right now, overwhelmed by the magnitude of the tragedy that took his life, we draw strength from his example in committing his life to aiding those most vulnerable.

Being a part of the United Nations, I am conscious that, in order for Luiz to reach the excellence that he achieved, it was necessary for his family to support him and stand by him. For this reason, I would like to convey to you, Cristina, Anna Maria, and Marianna, the strength of the deep gratitude of so many men and women around the world for your generosity and selflessness. I just want to assure you that every daily effort made in the name of peace in the world, every life saved or improved, honors Luiz's memory by keeping his ideals alive.

The people and the Government of Brazil have always been very generous in their support to the cause of peace. What happened in Haiti has hit many Brazilian families. I pay tribute to all of them for the ultimate sacrifice their dear ones have made.

Certainly, in this very moment, from a privileged place up above, Sergio is welcoming his friend Luiz to that final dwelling place they both have earned through their lives of continued devotion to building a better world, a world in peace.