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**New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party Salutes Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and his Stand and Struggles against US Imperialism**

Yesterday, Venezuela’s President Hugo Chavez succumbed to the cancer that harassed him for two years.The New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party of Sri Lanka sorrowfully mourns his death, and remembers his historic contribution to anti-imperialism in Latin America and the Caribbean, which can be second only to that of Fidel Castro. The Bolivarian Revolution initiated by him changed for better the life of the poor majority in Venezuela and the Bolivarian spirit of anti-imperialist cooperation and defence of the resources of countries against imperialist plunder, inspired several South American countries.

Following his election as President in 1999, he used his position to make fundamental changes to Venezuela’s political structure, including a new constitution assuring the rights of marginalized groups, a highly democratic system of public referenda with mass participation on major public issues, and participatory democratic councils. He pursued in word and deed his vision of Socialism in the 21st Century and, in the process, with popular support overcame military coups, strikes and recall referendums instigated by the US-backed right. By nationalising several key industries, especially oil, he enhanced the government’s financial resources, much of which he invested in the previously neglected health care and education, and thereby achieved a significant reduction in poverty.

Most importantly, Chavez symbolised Latin American resistance to US imperialism, and was a focal point for Latin American solidarity against US domination. He considerably succeeded in bringing together Venezuela, Bolivia, Cuba, Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador and other countries of the region to isolate the US on long-standing Latin American issues such as the US policy towards Cuba and the more recent coup in the Honduras. Also, his principled stand in defending people and countries outside the region, especially Palestine, Lebanon, Iran, Libya and Syria, against the cynical and systematic subversion by US imperialism and its allies was a source of strength for anti-imperialist struggles. Thus his loss will be deeply felt far beyond Venezuela, and Latin America and the Caribbean and, to the vast section of humanity struggling for its rights, the name of Chavez will forever be associated with hope and resistance.

The New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party of Sri Lanka is at one with vast majority of toiling masses of Venezuela in sharing their deep sorrow for their beloved leader and their avowed determination to struggling to achieve the goals of Chavez defined in his vision of a Bolivarian revolution.

May the spirit of social justice and struggle symbolised by Chavez advance ever stronger wherever mankind seeks liberation!

SK Senthivel

General Secretary