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TRIBUTE TO RT. HON. MICHAEL MANLEY  
FROM SECRETARY-GENERAL OF OAS

KINGSTON, March 18 (JAMPRESS):

Secretary-General of the Organisation of American States (OAS), Cesar Gaviria, sent the following letter to Prime Minister P. J. Patterson, paying tribute to former Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. Michael Manley who died on March 6.

"I have the honour to address you on the sad occasion of the passing of the Rt. Hon. Michael Manley, former Prime Minister of Jamaica. The sorrow and the vacuum that millions of people across this hemisphere and the world will feel for the family of this charismatic Jamaican leader, and for the Government and people of Jamaica is immeasurable. This hemisphere owes much to this son of Jamaica.

"Mr. Manley was like a welcoming vessel in which the challenges of diverse professional callings converged to create a complex personality and spellbinding orator, who effortlessly reached out individually and personally to every Jamaican, and earned their respect, even if not the acquiescence of all, for his efforts to transform Jamaica into a country that was befitting of them all.

"For many, this political and spiritual leader of the people of Jamaica, pilot and coffee farmer, World War II veteran and trade unionist, journalist and international businessman, was the saviour who provided hope when all seemed lost. In his own words, "when all seems lost, act." And he acted.

"During his years in Government, Manley entered into a race against time to find social justice for all, and launched many programmes and projects to this end. He established equal pay for women and provided free education for all Jamaicans. He established the National Youth Service and instituted the minimum wage, among other things. His legacy is legendary.

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"Michael Manley was as renowned an internationalist as he was the light of his nation. We, the members of the Inter-American community, all have been the beneficiaries of his full and multifaceted life. Mr. Manley reached out beyond the shores of Jamaica to place Jamaica and the family of the Caribbean nations on the international map.

"Through him, Jamaica was closely aligned with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Non-Aligned Movement, and the Group of 77, all of which boast some or all of the membership of the Organisation of American States. He promoted the New International Economic Order in which developed and developing states would form a new partnership based on full co-operation for their mutual benefit.

"Mr. Manley led the struggle against apartheid in Southern Africa and will always be remembered for his contribution to the improvement of the social and economic condition of its people. His struggle to topple this racist system of government had a positive impact on the efforts of indigenous peoples and minorities in our hemisphere to overturn the discriminatory systems which hindered the full evolution of all peoples through democratic processes. We are grateful to have been able to share the life of this exceptional hemispheric personality.

"On behalf of the Inter-American community, I would like to extend our deepest sympathies and condolences to Mrs. Manley, his children, and to the Government and people of Jamaica, on this sad occasion. It is our hope that the Manley family and the Government and people of Jamaica will find the spiritual sustenance to bolster them during this time, knowing that Mr. Manley lived a full and extraordinary life, which has impacted not only on the people and Government of Jamaica, but also on all the people of this hemisphere and the world."

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