TRIBUTE

WORD OF TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR JOHN DUGARD BY PROFESSOR NICO SCHRIJVER, HIS SUCCESSOR AT LEIDEN UNIVERSITY.

Much to my regret I am not in a position to participate in this conference to honour the work and personality of Professor John Dugard in his beautiful homeland.

Ever since my student days I have been benefiting from the scholarly work of John Dugard. In an early phase of my career I had developed a special interest in the status of Namibia and its resources in international law. I wrote several articles on this as well as an expert report for the UN Council for Namibia. While conducting my research, John’s books on the South West Africa/Namibia Dispute (1973) and Human Rights and the South African Legal Order (1978) were continuously on my desk. Later I also became a frequent user of his standard text book International Law – A South African Perspective. For my classes at the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague and the Free University of Amsterdam I always copied from this book his illustrative graphics on the maritime zones; as far as I know, it is still the only book which depicts these from the air rather than from the land.

The international law community in the Netherlands has benefited very much from John’s presence in our country. Soon after taking up his appointment at Leiden University, John became a highly-respected colleague and a beloved friend in the somewhat closed circle of international lawyers in the Netherlands. Under far from easy circumstances, John managed to give a major push to the international law studies at Leiden University, exemplified by the establishment of the Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies, the offering of an advanced LLM programme in international law (reportedly, one of the best in the world), an admirable number of PhDs and the publication of the Leiden Journal of International Law by Cambridge University Press. Many of John’s graduates obtained a position with one of the international courts and tribunals in The Hague.

In the Netherlands we all highly respect and enjoy Professor Dugard’s rich knowledge of nearly each branch of international law, his wise insights into the rule of law in international affairs – as it stands and as it should be – and all of us could not but be deeply impressed by his dedication to academic research, to academic integrity, to teaching, and to international law advisory services for the United Nations, other international organisations such as the Arab League and the NGO community. John Dugard performed his extremely difficult work as a UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights Situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in an extremely solid, principled and courageous way. Admirably, in his capacity of rapporteur of the International Law Commission he also managed to complete the project on diplomatic protection with the adoption of a substantive set of articles.
Consequently, to serve as his successor at Leiden University is not just a matter of pride but above all a major task. At Leiden we are very happy that we could convince John to conduct an advanced course in public international law for our LLM students upon his return from South Africa in October. I am pleased to note that in this way the academic communities in our two countries continue to benefit from his research and teaching and jointly pay tribute to what may well be called an exceptional shared resource; one which all of us in South Africa and the Netherlands should and no doubt will treasure.

My very best wishes for a successful and enjoyable conference,

NICO SCHRIJVER
Professor of International Law and Academic Director of the Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies, Leiden University