

Canberra, April 30th, 2015

Dear Dr Sean Burges,

Colleagues and Friends,

I want to welcome all of you to this celebration of the life and work of Gabriel García Márquez. I will start by thanking Dr John Minns and the ANCLAS team for associating with the Embassy of Colombia for this commemoration.

On the occasion of the first anniversary of the passing away of Gabriel García-Márquez, on the 18th of April, we are going to show “BUSCANDO A GABO”, (“Finding Gabo”) a documentary produced by the Colombian film director Luis Fernando Bottia in 2007 as a tribute to the 80th birthday of García Márquez and the forty years of publication of his novel “One Hundred Years of Solitude”.

This documentary was filmed in Aracataca, Barranquilla, Sucre, Bogotá, Zipaquirá, Cartagena, Mexico City, and Havana, and includes images from the archive of the “Colombian Film Heritage Foundation” (“Fundación Patrimonio Fílmico Colombiano”).

It presents a human portrait of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, as evoked by his friends and members of his family, such as his brother Jaime and his sister, Ligia. It will allow us to have a closer look at special circumstances that define who this great Colombian writer was, and where Macondo and his magical realism originated.

We also will be able to hear testimonials from several intellectuals, such as Carlos Monsivais, a famous Mexican writer and journalist; Alvaro Mutis, Colombian novelist and poet, winner of the Principe de Asturias Award in 1997; Enrique Santos, a prominent essay writer and journalist who was President of the Interamerican Press Society –SIP; Roberto Pombo, currently Director of the prestigious journal El Tiempo and Plinio Apuleyo Mendoza, a journalist and novelist who was one of Gabo's closest friends. Through the documentary, we will also remember the ceremony in 1982 in Stockholm in which García Márquez received the Nobel Prize for Literature.

As it is well known, García Márquez was also a journalist, and quite a polemical one, and a script writer. He had a passion for education and was the founder of two well-known schools: one in Havana, "Fundación Del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano" "Foundation of New Latin American Cinema") and one in Cartagena, "Fundación Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano" ("New Iberoamerican Journalism Foundation").

His influence and teachings in these fields of action will remain in the future generations of film-makers and journalists, and of course his legacy will stay in the minds and hearts of readers all over the world, who will never forget his mythical world of patient lovers, dignified colonels, respected old women and yellow butterflies.

Before we start, I want to confirm that everyone has received a little card with the image of García Márquez; each of them has been numbered in the bottom. As a way to celebrate his life and work, the Embassy of Colombia wishes to raffle off two of García-Márquez wonderful books: “*One Hundred Years of Solitude*” and “*Love in time of Cholera*”. I will ask now, Dr Sean Burges to help me to pick two of the yellow butterflies from this container with the correspondent numbers to select the winners of these books.

We hope you will enjoy the night and will join us for a glass of wine and snacks afterwards.