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UNIVERSITY**

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## ***African Ambassador, Prof. Peter Katjavivi, Pioneer of Namibian Independence, is New Chair of UNU Council***

Namibia's Ambassador to Belgium and the European Union, a former academic who spent almost three decades helping lead an underground struggle to end apartheid in Namibia and gain its independence from South Africa, is the new chair of the United Nations University Council.

Amb. Peter Katjavivi, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Namibia, was elected UNU Council chair at its recent meeting in Tokyo. He succeeds Prof. Vappu Taipale of Helsinki, Director-General of Finland's National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health.

Amb. Katjavivi has served on UNU Council since 2002 and his appointment to the chair comes at a critical period. He will play a vital role in the process to install a new UNU Rector. Incumbent Hans van Ginkel of The Netherlands is due to retire in September 2006.

Amb. Katjavivi, 64, became committed to his country's liberation (Namibia was annexed by South Africa after the Second World War) as a teenager during forced removals in 1959 to the apartheid-built township of Katutura on the outskirts of the capital city Windhoek.

He left Namibia in 1962 to further his education and participate in the underground struggle. In exile he was engaged in political work for the South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), for over 27 years, holding the following positions: Deputy Representative in Tanzania (1966-8), SWAPO Secretary for Legal and Economic Affairs (1960-1976), Member of the Central Committee (1976-83), and Secretary for Information and Publicity (1976-1979). He also

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represented SWAPO at international bodies and gatherings that contributed to the eventual emancipation of the Namibian people.

He later studied at Oxford University and obtained a DPHIL with a thesis on “*The Rise of Nationalism in Namibia and its International Dimensions*”.

He served in parliament immediately after independence in 1990 before being appointed Presidential Advisor on Higher Education and founding Vice- Chancellor of the University of Namibia in 1992, where he played an instrumental role in the transformation of the former Academy to the new university.

Delighted by his latest appointment, Amb. Katjavivi notes that it was an honour not only to himself personally, but to Namibia and Africa in general.

“United Nations University serves as a think-tank for the world body in vital areas such as policy relevance, knowledge, globalisation, peace and security among others,” he says. “In this connection, I was particularly pleased by UNU's important contribution to the peace and security area of research for the UN system, in particular its most recent input to the UN Secretary General and High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, a document that constitutes the main platform for the recommendations of the UN reforms.”

UNU Council meets annually to formulate principles and policies which govern the activities and operations of the Tokyo-based institution. Among its many responsibilities, the Council oversees the research and training carried out through UNU's worldwide network of centres and programmes and approves the University's budget.

### **United Nations University**

Established by the U.N. General Assembly in 1973, UNU is an international community of scholars engaged in research, advanced training and the dissemination of knowledge related to pressing global problems. Activities focus mainly on peace and conflict resolution, sustainable development and the use of science and technology to advance human welfare. The University operates a worldwide network of research and post-graduate training centres, with headquarters in Tokyo.