



## Maria Antonieta Castillo Santa Maria

1951 – 2010

Maria Antonieta Castillo Santa Maria, a national of Mexico, started her UN career at the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in Mexico in 2003. Later she served in the Political Affairs and Planning Division in both Port-au-Prince and Mexico City, working almost five years as Administrative Assistant for the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

Known as “Tony” to her friends, Maria Antonieta was diligent and paid close attention to detail in her role within MINUSTAH’S Electoral Assistance Section (EAS). Colleagues noted that “she took great pride in her job, serving as a calm stabilizing presence in the office.”

“Our core has left the EAS family,” recalled one colleague. “We miss you dearly.”

Before joining the UN, she worked as an Administrative Assistant in the Foreign Ministry of Mexico for over twelve years, serving under five different ambassadors as well as working in the private sector in large corporations. Her reason for leaving the previous job was simply that it was “a long lasting dream, to work for the United Nations,” recalled a colleague.

True to her international character, Maria Antonieta wanted to utilize her skills at a mission away from the New York headquarters. “I was very impressed when she told me she would go to Haiti,” said a colleague. “You could tell she wanted a challenge in her life and she wanted to make a difference. She was a very determined lady – something that her calm, quiet attitude and mild manners didn’t show at first sight.”

Charitable by nature, Maria Antonieta sought out local aid organizations in Port-au-Prince and provided them with rice, sugar and whatever support she could. “Tony brought the best of Mexican qualities to MINUSTAH. She was warm, giving, loyal and knew how to have a good time. To me, Tony was home away from home,” remembered one colleague. She was admired by co-workers for her “excellent language abilities [French, English and Spanish] and as someone who read whatever crossed her path.” She also loved swimming, traveling, singing, and opera. She also wrote poetry, intending to have it published one day.

Maria Antonieta was always ready to open her home to whomever needed to stay.

“She was sensitive to and understanding of the issues of others, and always saw the bigger picture. I will remember forever our long chats by the pool and [her] beautiful words about life and future,” said one friend.

“Your smile will forever stay engraved in my heart,” said another colleague.

Maria Antonieta held a Bachelor of Science in Business Management from the University of Maryland. She also received a certificate with honours from the City College of Chicago, and a diploma in Bilingualism (English and Spanish) from Helena Herlihy Hall in Mexico.

Maria Antonieta is survived by her large family in Mexico.