



THE CARTER CENTER



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**NDI-CARTER CENTER OBSERVERS APPLAUD PERU'S PROGRESS
TOWARD CREDIBLE ELECTIONS**

Lima... March 9, 2001 Peru's interim government has established the necessary conditions for a free, transparent and legitimate election, according to a team of election observers from the National Democratic Institute and The Carter Center who visited Lima this week to assess the election process and offer recommendations. Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter will lead 30 election observers to monitor the vote for a new President and Congress of Peru on April 8, 2001.

The pre-election delegation's report praised Peru's interim government for re-establishing public trust in state institutions and guaranteeing the neutrality of the armed forces and police. "The international community is deeply supportive of democratic elections in Peru," noted delegation leader Dr. Arturo Valenzuela, who was special assistant to former U.S. President Bill Clinton and Senior Director for Inter-American Affairs at the National Security Council. "Election authorities have worked around the clock to put in place the necessary safeguards for honest and competitive elections, and with continued support from the Peruvian people they can meet remaining challenges," Valenzuela said.

The delegation report listed ten steps Peruvian authorities have taken since January to prepare for the vote, including providing television time to all political groups, setting up regional electoral offices, and initiating a voter education campaign. The mission's chief elections expert, former Director of the United Nations Electoral Assistance Division Dr. Horacio Boneo, characterized the Peruvian electoral process as "well within international norms for a democratic election". Nonetheless, the campaign is developing in the context of ongoing revelations concerning corruption in former President Alberto Fujimori's regime, detailed in the videos captured from his key advisor Vladimiro Montesinos. The delegation report warned that this legacy of mistrust and the increasingly competitive presidential race threaten to damage the tone of the campaign and urged candidates to debate the issues and abide by the Civility Pact they signed last month. In addition, the observers encouraged the use of quick counts on election day to build confidence in the results, noting that these statistical projections of the vote totals are more accurate than exit polls.

Additional members of the delegation included NDI Director for Latin America and the Caribbean Dr. Gerardo Le Chevallier, the Associate Director of The Carter Center's Latin American and Caribbean Program Dr. Shelley McConnell, Resident Project Director Luis Nunes, Deputy Resident Project Director Linda Frey, and the advance team coordinator Francisco Robles. NDI and The Carter Center are non-governmental, non-profit organizations that have jointly observed the election processes in Peru since November 1999.

The text of the delegation's statement can be found on the worldwide web at: www.ndi.org and at www.cartercenter.org