

News Release

National Democratic
Institute for
International Affairs



THE FIRST
ELEANOR ROOSEVELT
INTERNATIONAL CAUCUS
OF WOMEN POLITICAL
LEADERS

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International Women Leaders Caucus Opens

The 1984 Democratic Party candidate for Vice President, Geraldine Ferraro, officially opened the First Eleanor Roosevelt International Caucus of Women Political Leaders with an appeal to delegates "to design a global blueprint" to increase women's participation in their nation's political and governmental life.

Sixty-three of the world's top women political leaders from forty-two nations heard Ms. Ferraro call on democratic governments to "fulfill the basic promise of equal participation..." She observed that "women hold five percent of the offices in the world's democracies," though women comprise more than half the world's population.

President Corazon Aquino of the Philippines, in a dramatic pre-taped message to the Caucus, told the story of her ascension to power, observing that it was not until the recent referendum that some men accepted her as the nation's leader. She wished the Caucus delegates well and concluded her remarks with "power to us all".

Ferraro cited Eleanor Roosevelt's leadership as the principal author of the U.N. Declaration of Universal Human Rights and her less-publicized role as the leader of an informal women's caucus in the U.N. General Assembly, a caucus which forty years ago called on "Governments of the world to encourage women everywhere to take a more conscious part in national and international affairs..."

"Under the banner of Eleanor Roosevelt," Ferraro asked the delegates, some of the world's most successful women politicians, to "tap into the rich vein of experience you have brought with you to San Francisco" to define "ways women can play a greater role in the political life of their countries."

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Caucus delegates also heard a panel composed of Senator Barbara Mikulski (D. Maryland), Nita Barrow, Barbados' Ambassador to the U.N., Vice President of Costa Rica Victoria Garron de Doryan and former Prime Minister of Portugal Maria Lurdes de Pintasilgo, explain how they achieved success in their nation's political system.

The Caucus is being held in San Francisco at the Fairmont Hotel because the U.N. Charter was drafted here in 1945 and also because San Francisco is also a city governed by a woman mayor, Dianne Feinstein.