



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**REP. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ TO DELIVER KEYNOTE ADDRESS
AT NDI'S MADELEINE K. ALBRIGHT AWARDS LUNCHEON**

WASHINGTON, DC – Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL) will deliver the keynote address at a March 22 luncheon honoring the Women’s Discussion Club of Kyrgyzstan, the 2012 recipient of the Madeleine K. Albright Grant awarded by the National Democratic Institute (NDI).

The luncheon, hosted by NDI Chairman Albright, will begin at 12:30 p.m. at the Ritz Carlton hotel at 1150 22nd St., NW. Melanne Vermeer, the State Department’s ambassador-at-large for global women’s issues, will also deliver remarks.

The award luncheon will be preceded by a panel discussion on women in politics featuring Albright and a group of international experts. The program, entitled “Parties to Parliament: How Women Can Win in the Institutions of Democracy,” begins at 10:30 a.m. at the Ritz Carlton. It will be moderated by Judy Woodruff, co-anchor and senior correspondent at the PBS NewsHour.

The Discussion Club, launched with NDI support in 2006, was one of the first groups in Kyrgyzstan to bring together women from diverse backgrounds and political parties to defend the rights and interests of women nationwide. The women will use the award’s \$25,000 grant to form a coalition of political party women’s wings to advocate on behalf of women’s rights within the legislature and their respective parties.

“Women in Kyrgyzstan must be equal participants in building the country’s new democratic institutions if it is to reach its full potential,” Albright said. “The Women’s Discussion Club has made great strides in this area, giving a voice to women in Kyrgyzstan as the country advances its democratic transition.”

The Madeleine K. Albright Grant supports community-based organizations that create greater roles for women in political and civic life. It is part of NDI’s [Win with Women Global Initiative](#), which promotes women’s political leadership worldwide. The Albright Grant is made possible through the generosity of the Melvin and Bren Simon Foundation.

Winners of the \$25,000 Albright Grant, which was established in 2005, are selected from a competitive pool of applicants seeking to promote women's participation in civic or political life. The 2011 grant was awarded to ACT, a women's rights organization from Egypt, which is using the grant to help organizations and women leaders identify and advocate for women as Egypt works to develop a new constitution and transition to a democratic government.

Other past winners are [the Departmental Network of Chocó Women of Colombia](#) (*Red Departmental de Mujeres Chocoanas*), the [Women's League of Burma](#), the [Indonesian Women's Political Caucus \(KPP\)](#), the [Mostar Women's Citizen Initiative of Bosnia-Herzegovina](#), and the [50/50 Group of Sierra Leone](#).

NDI is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization working to support and strengthen democratic institutions worldwide through citizen participation, openness and accountability in government. More information about the dinner and about NDI is available at www.ndi.org.

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