



# NEWS RELEASE

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## FUTURE POLITICAL LEADERS TO EXAMINE CHALLENGES FACING POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE AMERICAS

WASHINGTON, D.C. February 24, 1999 – Thirty emerging political leaders from the Americas will participate in the “Political Leadership Program” to be hosted by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) in Washington, DC from February 28 to March 12. The leaders from Mexico, Guatemala, Paraguay and Venezuela will be joined by activists from the U.S. Democratic and Republican parties and party leaders from three continents for the first of several stages of this long-term regional program.

The Americas have a long history of strong, well-organized political parties, many of which played key roles in the wave of democracy that swept the hemisphere in the 1980s and early 1990s. Polls, focus groups and voting behavior, however, indicate that many political parties in the region are viewed by citizens as ineffective, corrupt and out of touch with their constituencies. This loss of confidence in political parties has led to the emergence of populist leaders who threaten democratic institutions and processes.

“Recognizing the vital role of political parties in a democracy, the Political Leadership Program will foster relations among political parties in the hemisphere and help young political leaders develop the skills necessary to return home and advocate for parties that are more democratic, open and sensitive to the needs of the electorate,” said Gerardo Le Chevallier, NDI’s director of programs for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Calling upon Latin and U.S. practitioners to share their experiences, the program seeks to help these leaders develop the skills to help parties promote political party reform and renewal. Workshop topics will include negotiation techniques, strategic planning, crisis management and effective communication.

Distinguished political leaders will also address global challenges for political leadership in the 21st century. Speakers include: **Genaro Arriagada**, Chilean Ambassador to the U.S. and former vice president of the Christian Democratic Party; **Jorge Castañeda**, professor at the National Autonomous University of Mexico; **Christopher Dodd and John McCain**, U.S. Senators; **Geraldine Ferraro**, former U.S. Democratic vice presidential candidate; **Paul Kirk**, former chair of the Democratic National Committee; **Sergio Ramirez**, former vice president of Nicaragua; **Noemi Sanin**, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and presidential candidate of Colombia; and **Arturo Valenzuela**, director of the Center for Latin American Studies at Georgetown University.

Upon completion of this intensive two-week program in Washington, NDI will join the leaders in their respective countries as they design and implement projects with their political parties – from enhancing the political participation of women and indigenous citizens in Guatemala to building the training capacity of local political party branches in Paraguay.

Participants were selected through a competitive process based on demonstrated leadership in political activities and an expressed commitment to strengthen the party system in their own countries. The 30 leaders include members of congress, city council members, press secretaries and legislative advisors.

NDI is a nonprofit organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide. NDI works with democrats in every region of the world to build political and civic organizations, safeguard elections, and promote citizen participation, openness and accountability in government. This program is supported by the National Endowment for Democracy, the U.S. Agency for International Development and private contributions.

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Working to strengthen  
and expand  
democracy worldwide

***PARTICIPANTS***  
**Political Leadership Program**  
**Inaugural Seminar**  
**February 28 - March 12, 1999**

***Guatemala***

**Mariela Chojlán Cojulum**, Quetzaltenango Department Executive Committee member, New Guatemala Democratic Front (FDNG); program assistant, Municipality of La Esperanza

**Jorge Coyote Ajquejay**, member, National Action Party (PAN); financial assistant, Office of the President

**Miguel De Leon Ceto**, Indigenous Communities Secretariat delegate, Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unit (URNG); political and civic coordinator, FUNDAMAYA

**Rubén Mejía Linares**, press secretary, Municipality of Guatemala City; alternate Municipal Council member; former youth president, National Action Party (PAN)

**Honorable Haroldo Quej Chen**, member of Congress; National Executive Committee member, Guatemalan Republican Front (FRG); former mayor of San Pedro Carchá

**Honorable Zury Ríos Montt**, member of Congress; Secretary of Women's Arm, Guatemalan Republican Front (FRG); member, Guatemalan Forum for Young Politicians

**Jordán Rodas Adrade**, Municipal Council trustee, Municipality of Quetzaltenango; member, Xel-Jú Civic Committee

***Mexico***

**Edgar Alvarado Domínguez**, legislative advisor, Miguel Estrada Foundation; member, National Action Party (PAN)



**Rafael González Chío**, Municipal Council member, Municipality of Victoria, Tamaulipas; Tamaulipas youth president, Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)

**Laura Lira Urdiana**, legislative advisor; Miguel Estrada Iturbide Foundation; member, National Action Party (PAN )

**Guillermo Máñez Gil**, Undersecretary for International Affairs, Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)

**Antonio Mondragón Duarte**, Undersecretary for International Affairs, Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD); vice president of Youth Socialist International Organization

**Honorable Jacaranda Pineda Chávez**, member of Chamber of Deputies; Undersecretary for Social Action of the National Executive Committee, Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI); president of Mexico Nuevo Foundation

**Sergio Santiago Galván**, advisor, Iztapalapa Delegation, Federal District, Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD)

**Angélica Sanvicente Cisneros**, Secretary of Political Training, Morelos State Executive Committee, Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD)

### *Paraguay*

**Sonia Beatriz Delgado**, member, Social Democratic movement Political Committee, National Encounter Party (PEN)

**Fernando Camacho Paredes**, youth president, National Encounter Party (PEN); former member of Political Committee of PAIS

**Roberto Melgarejo Palacios**, advisor, Congressional Commission on Public Health; youth organizer for the Colorado Reconciliation Movement, National Republican Association (ANR)

**Julio Mineur De Witte**, Department Coordinator, Liberal Renovation Movement, department of Presidente Hayes, Authentic Radical Liberal Party (PLRA)

**Elisa Ruíz Díaz**, legislative liaison, Office of the Vice President; Executive Committee member, National Republican Association (ANR)

**Laura Villalba Benítez**, trainer, Center for Paraguayan Social Studies, (CERPA); member, Authentic Radical Liberal Party (PLRA)

## *Venezuela*

**Carlos Arocha Monroy**, Council member, Municipal Council of Baruta, state of Miranda; Secretary General of Baruta Executive Committee, Democratic Action Party (AD)

**Javier Gómez Gonzalez**, legal advisor, Office of the Governor of Zulia State; member, Fifth Republic Movement (MVR)

**Juan Guanipa Villalobos**, secretary general, Zulia State Youth Association, Christian Democratic Party (COPEI)

**María Eugenia Hands Gómez**, alternate member of Congress, Venezuela Project Movement (PV); former logistics coordinator for Henrique Salas Römer's presidential campaign

**Honorable Jorge Millan Torrealba**, member of Congress; National Youth Secretary, Democratic Action Party (AD); vice president of Socialist International Youth Organization

## *United States*

**Dean Aguilen**, legislative assistant, Office of Representative Max Sandlin (D-TX); president and treasurer, Congressional Hispanic Staff Association

**Phillip Barbosa**, former candidate for Toledo, Ohio City Council; former member of Toledo and Lucas County Republican Party Committees; member, Young Republicans

**Roberto Coquis**, former office manager, Office of Representative Bill Redmond (R- NM); former administrative budget director for Dole '96 presidential campaign

**Teresa Martínez**, Vice-chair and Latino outreach coordinator, Arlington, Virginia Democratic Committee; national media coordinator for the '96 Clinton/Gore campaign

**Erica Romero**, press assistant, Office of Communications, Republican Assembly Caucus in Sacramento, California