



Parliamentarians for Global Action

Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) Announces Recipients of the 11th Annual Defender of Democracy Awards

For Immediate Release

NEW YORK, 1 October 2006 - Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) will present the 2006 Defender of Democracy Awards to **Mrs. Yukika Sohma**, a renown humanitarian and activist in Japan, and to **Dr. Nafis Sadik**, Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General and Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Asia and the Pacific. The awards ceremony will take place on 4 December 2006 at the Hotel New Otani in Tokyo, Japan in conjunction with PGA's 28th Annual Parliamentary Forum on Human Security and the IV Session of the Consultative Assembly of Parliamentarians for the International Criminal Court and the Rule of Law.

Since 1996, PGA has held the Defender of Democracy Awards in conjunction with its Annual Parliamentary Forum. The Defender of Democracy Award is presented to individuals who, through their own commitment and active engagement, have made significant progress in strengthening democracy and democratic practices.

As the third daughter of Yukio Ozaki who was known as the father of democracy in Japan, Mrs. Yukika Sohma has dedicated her life to promoting democracy at home and working towards world peace. In 1979, she established Japan's first international NGO, the Association for Aid and Relief (AAR), to send volunteers and material help to refugees and persons with disabilities. AAR is a coordinator for the International Campaign to Ban Landmines which received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997. From 1970, Mrs. Sohma served as an adviser to the Asian Parliamentarians Union. She established the Japan-Korea Woman's Friendship Association in 1977 to heal the wounds of the occupation and the war. In 1980, she established the Japan Association of Moral Re-Armament (Initiatives of Change) to promote civilian-based reconciliation in conflict zones. In 1984, Mrs. Sohma was elected Vice-Chairman of the Ozaki Yukio Memorial Foundation, which is dedicated to the advancement of democratic governance and world peace and supports groups working for disarmament, human rights, and sustainable use of natural resources and environmental protection. PGA will honor Mrs. Sohma for her work in promoting democracy in Japan and world peace.

Dr. Sadik, a national of Pakistan, was appointed Executive Director of UNFPA in 1987 and became one of the highest ranking women in the UN system marking the first time in the history of the United Nations that a woman was appointed to lead one of its major voluntarily-funded programmes. She is well-known for her dynamism and guiding force in the field of international maternal and child health, reproductive and sexual health, including family planning. Under her leadership as Secretary-General of the landmark International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo in 1994, the approach to reproductive health which includes empowering women through education and economic opportunity was unanimously agreed to by the international community. Dr. Sadik was selected as the Laureate, in the individual category, of the United Nations Population Award 2001, for her outstanding contribution to the awareness of population issues. She served as a member of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, and was recently appointed to membership of the Secretary-General's High-Level Group on "Alliance of Civilizations". She is a Commissioner of the Global Commission on International Migration, a member of the International Task Force on Global Public Goods, and a Trustee of International HIV/AIDS Alliance. PGA will honor Dr. Sadik for her work in addressing the rights of women as well as sexual and reproductive health rights.

For further information, please contact: **PGA Secretariat, New York**, Ms. Helen Vasilopoulos, Development Officer, tel: (212) 687-7755 ext. 111, fax: (212) 687-7755 or email: Helen.v@pgaction.org

211 East 43rd Street, Suite 1604, New York, NY 10017, USA
T: 1-212-687-7755 F: 1-212-687-8409 E-mail: info@PGAction.org