



Parliamentarians for Global Action

For Immediate Release

Contact Information:

Helen Vasilopoulos

Tel: (212) 687-7755 ext. 111

Email: Helen.v@pgaction.org

Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) Announces Recipients of the 13th Annual Defender of Democracy Awards

NEW YORK, 5 September 2008 - Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) will present the 2008 Defender of Democracy Awards to **H.E. Mr. Leonel Antonio Fernandez Reyna**, President of the Dominican Republic, and to **Rt. Hon. Don McKinnon**, former Commonwealth Secretary-General. The awards ceremony will take place on 30 October 2008 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic in conjunction with PGA's 30th Annual Parliamentary Forum on the Fifth Consultative Assembly of Parliamentarians for the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the Rule of Law. The Forum and the Defender of Democracy Awards ceremony are hosted by PGA's National Group in the Dominican Republic.

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.

President Fernandez Reyna is being honored for his work in addressing economic reforms, regional development and peace. He developed a dynamic foreign policy that strengthened the Dominican Republic's relations internationally and with the CARICOM and Central American countries. The President also integrated the Dominican Republic into the Rio Group and the ACP countries (Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific). He also instituted economic reforms and reoriented public investment towards social spending especially towards education and public health. His achievements as President include the creation of new jobs, the signing of commercial treaties, the development of basic and higher education and respect for public liberties and human rights.

PGA is honoring Rt. Hon. Don McKinnon for putting good governance, democracy and human rights at the heart of the Commonwealth's work. As Commonwealth Secretary-General from 2000 to 2008, Rt. Hon. McKinnon worked to address these issues. He sent election observers to more than 20 Commonwealth countries and also built strategic partnerships with other international organizations. Rt. Hon. McKinnon has also led a distinguished career in New Zealand politics for 21 years. He was the country's longest serving Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade (1990-1999) and his achievements include brokering a lasting peace settlement for Bougainville after a decade-long civil conflict in Papua New Guinea. This led to the signing of a peace agreement in 1997.

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