



Parliamentarians for Global Action
Acción Mundial de Parlamentarios
Action Mondiale des Parlementaires

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**Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) Announces Recipients of the
18th Annual Defender of Democracy Awards**

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Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) will present the 2013 Defender of Democracy Awards to **Mr. Samuela 'Akilisi Pohiva, MP** of Tonga and **Dr. Noor Jehan Panezai** and **Hon. Naveed Qamar, MP** on behalf of **The PGA Pakistan National Group**. The awards ceremony will be hosted by the Mayor of Bogota, Mr. Gustavo Petro, on the evening of **December 8th, 2013** at the **Salón Huitaka, City Hall** in Bogota Colombia in conjunction with PGA's 35th Annual Parliamentary Forum; *Building a Stable and Durable Peace: The Role of Parliamentarians in Support of Peace Processes*. The Forum will be held at the Camara de Representatives organized by PGA Members from Colombia: Rep. Ivan Cepeda Castro, Rep. Angela Maria Robledo and Rep. Guillermo Rivera. For details please see PGA's Forum website: <http://www.pgaction.org/activity/2013/annual-forum.html>.

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. Some past recipients include H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of Liberia; Ms. Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland and United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; and Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, former Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Afghanistan.

This year, PGA is honoring **Mr. Pohiva** for his distinguished work in the Tongan Parliament and for establishing the Human Rights and Democracy Movement and Democratic Party of the Friendly Islands. Mr. Pohiva is the longest-serving people's representative in the Tongan Parliament, having first been elected in 1987. His political career has been marked by battles with the Tongan monarchy over democracy, transparency and corruption. In 1996, he was imprisoned for contempt of Parliament on the order of the Legislative Assembly for reporting on Parliament's proceedings. He was subsequently released after the Supreme Court ruled that the imprisonment was "unlawful and unconstitutional". In September 2010, he established the Democratic Party of the Friendly Islands along with other Human Rights and Democracy Movement People's Representatives, in order to contest the 2010 elections. Mr. Pohiva was nominated to receive the Defender of Democracy Award by the Chair of PGA's New Zealand National Group, Ms. Katrina Shanks, MP.

Dr. Noor Jehan Panezai and **Hon. Naveed Qamar, MP** on behalf of **The Pakistan National Group** are being honored by PGA for their willingness to reach across great political and cultural divides to

promote dialogue, and to bring together Pakistani MPs from diverse political and ethnic backgrounds to create the PGA Pakistan National Group in 2004 in which every party was represented and women and men had an equal voice. This National Group has withstood and continued to work through coup d'états, showdowns between a military ruler and the judicial system, targeted assassinations of senior PGA members such as Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, natural disasters, and a sustained terrorism campaign by the Taliban targeting liberal political leadership. PGA's National Group has worked across the political divide to host an award-winning series on HIV/AIDs nationally and to host multi-party delegations from South Asia, including India. Members of the group have worked to pass women's empowerment legislation during these last five years. As a result of the work of these two leaders, today PGA's members have on May 11, 2013 re-elected a strengthened legislature which for the first time in the country's 65 year history saw an elected government complete its term and hand over to an elected government from the opposing party peacefully. The Pakistan National Group was nominated to receive the Defender of Democracy Award by PGA Secretary-General, Ms. Shazia Z. Rafi.

Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA), a non-profit, non-partisan international network of over 1,000 committed legislators from 130 countries, informs and mobilizes parliamentarians to advocate for the rule of law, human security and gender equality.