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Monday 22 September 2008, San José, Costa Rica

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Costa Rican President Oscar Arias To Be Featured at Launch of Interamerican Peace Forum

The Organization of American States (OAS) is set to formally launch the Inter-American Peace Forum next Tuesday, September 23, with a ceremony that will feature Nobel Peace Prize winner and president of Costa Rica Oscar Arias Sánchez.

The brainchild of the Secretariat for Political Affairs' Department of Democratic Sustainability and Special Missions, the Forum will be held in the historic Hall of the Americas at OAS Headquarters. Its main objective is to work towards implementing a comprehensive program embracing a variety of activities to promote a culture of peace among the various segments of society in the Americas.

This mechanism is also intended to help consolidate the OAS' ongoing role in conflict-resolution, in hemispheric peace initiatives and in promoting a system of individual freedom and social justice based on respect for fundamental human rights as articulated in the OAS Charter.

The Department of Democratic Sustainability and Special Missions in the Secretariat for Political Affairs provides technical expertise in matters pertaining to conflict resolution, threats to democracy, good governance, and democratic dialogue. Its three main action areas are the Fund for Peace; the SAPEM or multiple-scenario political analysis program; and the Special Missions unit, which includes the work of the Mission to Support the Peace Process in Colombia (MAPP-OAS).

Headlining the first of the seminar's two panel discussions is the former United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Sir Marrack Gouldin, while OAS Secretary for Political Affairs Dante Caputo will lead the second. Prominent personalities in politics, diplomacy and academia across the hemisphere will take part in the event. A cultural presentation beginning at 5:00 will bring the programs to a close.

OAS Secretary General José Miguel Insulza will inaugurate the ceremony at 10:00 a.m., followed by President Arias' presentation. Then, at 3:00 p.m., the First Seminar of the Inter-American Peace Forum gets underway, with OAS Assistant Secretary General Ambassador Albert R. Ramdin delivering introductory remarks.

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