



DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY

Over Twenty Five Years of Service to America's Diverse Communities

TWENTY THIRD ENTREPRENEURSHIP/IT CONFERENCE THE BEST LAID PLANS – HOW WILL THEY FARE IN A REVOLUTIONARY ERA

PRESS ADVISORY

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WASHINGTON, SEPTEMBER 19, 2016 – Dialogue on Diversity, an active non-profit playing to ethnically diverse audiences across the country and to an audience of mostly Latino immigrant women in the D.C. metro region, presented its 23rd annual conference on Entrepreneurship and Information Technology in downtown Washington on Tuesday, September 13th. Summing up the Conference goals, the Dialogue's President, **Ma. Cristina Caballero**, noted the 2016 program title: "How will our Finest Plans survive the forces of the Information Technology Revolution and a Historic Slowing of our Economy? The core goal of the conference is to show the bright promise of the IT transformation of our lives and of our small and mid-sized businesses in time to come." The yearly conferences are supported by the District of Columbia Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs, along with Southwest Airlines, a private benefactor, and a host of collaborating organizations. **Antonio Tijerino**, President of the Hispanic Heritage Foundation, followed by MOLA's Deputy Director, Attorney **Julio Güity-Guevara**, opened the conference with a greeting from the office's leadership and staff, outlining its programs and welcoming the Latino attendees, who again this year constituted the great majority of the audience.

A Conference highlight was the presentation of the **Americas Award**, the Dialogue's highest honor, to **Julie Chavez Rodriguez**, serving in the White House as Deputy Director of the office of Public Engagement. Ms. Chavez Rodriguez stands in the third generation of a famous and much revered family; she is a grandchild of **César Chavez**.

Confronting the conference theme: How will the Country's Economic well-being fare in our revolutionary era, steeped in the swift currents of Information Technology development, **Gregory L. Rohde**, former head of the NTIA (the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, Department of Commerce), along with **Travis Hall**, a younger figure who brings an unusually creative intelligence to today's NTIA, reviewed the prospects – inclusive of the now fascinating phase of the IT age, the "internet of things" that the faculties of IT are indeed of a revolutionary character and are sufficient to keep the modest progress of modern times afloat. This is in prospect by way, among other things, of order-of-magnitude enhancement of the accessible air space for wireless transmission through "spectrum stretching" technologies. The view from the Federal Communications Commission was expounded by the Chief of the Wireline Competition Bureau, **Mr. Matthew DelNero**, and **Mr. William Davenport**, Deputy Chief of Enforcement, explicating the agency's overriding concern to spread accessibility or broadband (high-speed internet) to all the corners of the county, since now far from all may enjoy the essential utility of the internet, some persons unable because of poverty, others because of geographic isolation.

Jovita Carranza, a former Deputy Director of the Small Business Administration, moderated a midday session featuring economics writer **Justin Vélez-Hagan**, and **Andrea Zanon**, who has produced a veritable library of articles and reports from projects in economic development enterprise start-ups around the globe, much of this for the World Bank and various academic groups. Mr. Vélez-Hagan, a recognized authority on the dangerous state of Puerto Rico's finances in the public and private sectors, described the travails of Puerto Rico's financial structures and industry, aggravated by an accelerated population drain, chiefly by way of migration to the mainland.

Deniz Karataş, Executive Director of the Global Policy Institute in Washington, narrated her journey from Söke, her native town, situated on Turkey's Aegean coast, to the academic world of Istanbul, and at length to the U.S., where she has come to be associated with the GPI think tank.

The key parts of the agenda, moderated by **Wendy Rivera-Aguilar**, lay in expositions by **Ms. Gueter Aurélien** of the Venable law firm and attorney **Omar Carmona**, of the crucial choices entrepreneurs must make in organizing their ventures (as S-corps, LLCs, general partnerships, etc). **Randall Reade** discussed the network he heads – with the title "D.C. ArchAngels" – of astute business evaluators and a stable of investors.

Winding up the Conference agenda with an extensive segment on the Marketing function, **Natalia Olsson-Urtecho**, SBA Regional Administrator for the Mid-Atlantic states, recounted the range of services this essential agency has on offer for small firms, especially those in need of skill-building information, mentoring by Business Centers, or a financial boost through loan guaranties.

DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY: Founded in 1991, Dialogue on Diversity, a §501(c)3 non-profit, is a national network of women entrepreneurs and professionals, actively promoting constructive dialogue among Latino and other ethnic and cultural communities, on social and civic empowerment, with especial emphasis on their economic viability through entrepreneurship.