



DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY

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

PRESS ADVISORY

CONTACT: Claire Moreno 703-631-0650

March 24, 2017, Washington D.C. — Dialogue on Diversity presented the twenty first of its yearly Public Policy Policy Forums yesterday at the Reeves Municipal Center offices in Washington, D.C., staging the program in the Center's newly designed Community Room. "The 2017 policy program is again part of the March observation of Women's History Month," stated Dialogue president **Ma. Cristina Caballero**. "Dialogue on Diversity, whose agenda is centered on the concerns, the challenges, and the opportunities of women, today brings into focus four key topical themes that are squarely pertinent to the evolving story of women's success: Education, the Economics of Discrimination, The Condition of Women Around the World, and Immigration. We are again proud to carry the banner of Diversity: at least sixteen nationalities were represented in this year's Forum audience." The current Forum has been an early example of a collaboration between the Dialogue and the Global Policy Institute, a Washington think tank, whose president, **Prof. Paolo von Schirach**, greeted the audience with an extended review of the assertion historically of women's autonomy and professional aspirations. GPI is launching a long-term study of the worldwide phenomenon of women's entrepreneurship, a line of inquiry parallel to the Dialogue's own proper theme of women's business leadership.

The main Forum speaker, inspiring a capacity noon-time audience, was Hon. **Mari Carmen Aponte**, former White House Ambassador to El Salvador and Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs. Study by Americans of the U.S. focusing on the language and cultures and economic stresses of the Americans of the Latino world, was seen as the key to constructive relationships. She turned to an account of her personal experiences, both the disappointments of multiple rejections of her Ambassadorial appointments, and her eventual service nevertheless for several years as Ambassador and, more important yet, the record of solid accomplishment on the Western Hemisphere front. Her anguish, through a long siege of self-examination, yielded a healthy optimism, which was soon affirmed by her State Department post. The recital was deeply moving for hearers and, also, drove home the now universal conclusion that the Senate opposition to Ms. Aponte's confirmation had been largely detached from any factual basis and was founded in an unbudging animus in a small core of opponents.

An immigration session closing the Forum brought together **Lilia Alvarez**, Esq., an immigration law expert in private practice and subsequently a highly innovative Judge in the Phoenix, Arizona metro area, who now has taken over leadership of legal representation in Washington's CARACEN organization; **David Bier** of the Cato Institute, who calmly debunked a long series of commonly voiced objections to immigrants and their entry (the historical normality of present immigration levels, their relatively slight influence on domestic wages, and the facts persuasively testifying to the immigrant crime rate as, far from rampant, in fact roughly half of that of native born Americans); **Professor von Schirach** returned to sum up, in a broad, carefully nuanced commentary, the social and economic effects of immigration.

Added highlights of the Forum agenda were the other key policy themes, each sounded against the backdrop of the women's history motif. Education practice, from pre-K to mid-career, headed the list. **Julie Anderson** of the Institute for Women's Policy Research recounted needs for support of various kinds for women during job training and other educational projects. **Lisa Ransom**, who manages the Augustus Hawkins Foundation (named for the quietly effective member of the House of Representatives who during the mid-post-war years engineered uniquely effective educational and workplace policies) outlined the special concerns of the Foundation and its tireless work advancing education policies and projects around the country. **Roberta Rincon**, of the Society of Women Engineers, analyzed the strategies of women's STEM studies and their subsequent careers.

Merging panels on economics and the worldwide condition of women brought into sharp relief the existence of greatly varied states of culture and law, while sometimes affording women real economic opportunities, often stunting these by wage gaps and promotion ceilings – these persuasively detailed by **Carol Joyner**, of the Labor Project for Working Families, followed by **Ana Harvey**, Director of the D.C. Department of Small and Local Business Development. Sadly, far more rigid barriers, however gradually being eroded, were described by **Ursula Casabonne** of the World Bank, in relaying the results of the Bank's studies in Central Asian societies. **Danieh Shuaib**, of BAU/GPI, presented a riveting account of the prevalence of domestic abuse in the U.S.

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About Dialogue on Diversity: Dialogue on Diversity is an international network of women, and men, entrepreneurs and professionals, NGO executives and staff, bringing together the Latino and other diverse cultural traditions, for exploring Internet Privacy, Women's History, Health Care, Immigration, and other essential social and policy questions that are illuminated at the interface of the varied mind-sets and values and styles of our diverse audience of friends and members.