

media advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UN Ambassador & Local Economists to Preview UN Special Session on Global Economic Crisis

Venezuelan Scholar-Diplomat Escalona Joins Stellar Panel of Economists to Discuss Upcoming Meeting

Boston, MA—Venezuelan envoy Julio Escalona will join economists Richard Freedman, Julie Matthaei and Arthur MacEwan to discuss the global dimensions of the economic crisis. The discussion will focus on both the US reaction and the emerging global responses. The conversation will be accessible for non specialists and involve strong audience participation.

- WHO:** H.E. Ambassador Julio Escalona
Professor Richard B. Freedman (Harvard University, Economics Department)
Professor Julie Matthaei (Wellesley College, Economics Department)
Professor Arthur MacEwan (UMass Boston, Economics Department)
Ms. Kimberly Foltz (Board President, Massachusetts Global Action)
- WHAT:** Presentation and commentary on the global economic crisis, followed by audience participation and discussion. The event closes with an informal reception.
- WHERE:** encuentro 5
33 Harrison Ave, 5th floor
UNITE-HERE Building
Boston, MA 02111
- WHEN:** Friday, June 12, 2009
7:00 – 9:30 p.m.
(contact organizers for photo/interview opportunities with Ambassador Escalona)
- WHY:** The conversation is part of a series designed to promote dialogue and debate about the global economic crisis and its consequences. It is also designed to foster a greater understanding of the diverse responses to the still-deepening crisis. Sponsoring organizations support local and global economic reforms and policies to promote the welfare and well being of all working people and their families.

For more information and to set up local interviews with Ambassador Escalona, contact Jorge Marín, Coordinator, Martin Luther King, Jr. Bolivarian Circle of Boston or Suren Moodliar, Coordinator Massachusetts Global Action. Visit the website: <http://www.encuentro5.org> for more information.

ATTACHMENT: “Background & Biographies”

Background & Biographies:

The *global* economic crisis is too often an afterthought in many discussions of the US economy and the current “Great Recession” (or “Great Depression” as some economists have labeled it). Nonetheless, deeply impacted and worse hit, the countries of the Global South are mobilizing diverse and sometimes coordinated responses.

Last December, the United Nations resolved to host a special session of its highest decision making body, the General Assembly, to address the topic. It charged Assembly President, Miguel d’Escoto Brockmann with convening the session and assist states in the development a draft “outcome text” for negotiation. He also convened a panel of experts under the chairpersonship of Joseph Stiglitz. The G-77 countries (mostly developing economies) and China immediately supported the effort.

Venezuela’s leadership and support for this process is considered critical to its success and its UN envoys offer important and unique insights.

His Eminence, Ambassador **Julio Escalona** represents Venezuela at the UN and is an insightful economist and academic. His visit to Boston will provide an opportunity for an insider’s account of the politicking and stakes involved.

Offering commentary on the Ambassador’s account are three diverse economists who straddle very different sub-disciplinary specialization. Each offers a different vantage point while very concerned with the well being of all working people.

At the Harvard-based National Bureau for Economic Research, Professor **Richard Freeman** was among the first economists to grapple with the significance of India’s and China’s entrance into the world labor markets: the doubling of labor power with only modest changes in global demand.

Professor **Julie Matthaei**, Wellesley College Economics Department, is a pioneering thinker and activist researching the “solidarity economy” – i.e. one that considers human relationships and not market, cash-nexus transactions as fundamental to creating a more humane society. She is also a pioneer feminist reader of economic transformations across US history.

UMass Boston-based economist, **Arthur MacEwan** is Dollar & Sense Magazine’s *Doctor Money*. Most recently he has offered a survey of the institutional and social conditions that explain today’s crisis. In doing so, he identifies the “power grab” (beginning in the 1970s) that shifted income and power away from workers to the very wealthy.

The event will be chaired by **Kimberly S. Foltz**, former Bikes not Bombs executive director and a founder and board member of Massachusetts Global Action (MGA). She also helped launch MGA’s Color of Water project. Her past writings have surveyed day labor, social networks, and the World Social Forum process. Currently, she is doing graduate work in MIT’s Department of Urban Studies and Planning.