



Minnesota International Center
A World Affairs Council

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For immediate release

A Thought-Provoking Evening to Explore Global Issues

Minnesota International Center brings top-notch experts on Mexico's foreign relations and U.S. security agenda in the Horn of Africa to Fairmont for an evening discussion on Sunday, January 8

Fairmont (January 2, 2012) – Every day we hear stories about events that occur around the world. From the Eurozone financial crisis, to political turmoil in Egypt, to transition of power in North Korea and U.S. security concerns in the Middle East, global issues are today's local ones as well.

As conversations around our offices and dining room tables often turn to the critical international issues, how can we make sense of them all?

On Sunday, January 8, Minnesota International Center (MIC) will once again offer the opportunity for Fairmont residents to explore two timely global issues by bringing top-level world affairs experts for an evening of discussion. The event, to be held at Red Rock Center for the Arts between 5:45 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. on Sunday, will feature two prominent speakers:

Raúl Ramos, Latin America Sales Leader for General Electric Water Technologies, who will discuss the future of Mexico's relations with its neighbors. Mexico's border with Central America, as well as the border it shares with the U.S., has been a pathway for people, goods, crime and contraband in both directions. How can Mexico address these transborder challenges? What is the future of Mexico's relations with its northern and southern neighbors? How will Mexico's foreign relations affect its domestic politics?

William Davnie, former Foreign Service Officer in the U.S. Department of State, who will address U.S. national security agenda in the Horn of Africa and its impact on the American way of life. U.S. national security priorities were expanded after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, to include waging war in Iraq and Afghanistan, tightening border security, pursuing cyberthreats, halting nuclear proliferation and attempting to snuff out homegrown terrorism. How has the U.S. national security agenda evolved since 9/11? In what ways will this agenda shape the American way of life in the future?

These and many other questions will be addressed during the discussions. The event is free and open to the public. Attendees will be able to ask questions and engage with the speakers.

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The discussions will be followed by a special performance of Latin Drum and Song Ensemble, featuring typical music and songs from Brazil, Peru, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, and West Africa. The members of Latin Drum and Song Ensemble include Gery Jerez (The Dominican Republic), a dance and singing teacher; Teara Rosario (Mexico-Puerto Rico), a professional dancer and singer; Eliezer Fritas-Santon (Brazil), a professional drummer; and Daniel Handeen (Italian-American), a professional drummer.

“The Sunday program serves as a kick-off for our mutual tradition of bringing MIC’s international speakers to Fairmont to explore world cultures and discuss global issues with students at Fairmont Elementary and Fairmont Junior/Senior High schools,” said George Jerzy Hornik, K-12 Education Manager for the Minnesota International Center.

“We are especially thrilled about this year’s events because of a more robust evening program on Sunday that will engage Fairmont residents in the discussions with Raul and William to gain better understanding and deeper knowledge of the issues connected with Mexico’s foreign relations and U.S. security agenda in the Horn of Africa.”

For the past 11 years, MIC’s international guests have met with Fairmont students giving them the opportunity to explore first-hand other cultures and provide MIC’s international guests with a chance to learn about Fairmont students’ daily lives.

Students will meet face-to-face with 39 international guests from 23 countries including Belarus, Spain, Nicaragua, Argentina, Uganda, Peru, India, Pakistan, Jamaica, Nigeria, Colombia, South Korea, Germany, Senegal, Ecuador, Mexico, Kenya, China, Japan, Chile, France, Brazil, and the Dominican Republic. These guests include international undergraduate and graduate students from various colleges and universities in the Twin Cities metro and beyond, including the University of Minnesota, Fulbright and Humphrey Fellowship Programs at the University of Minnesota Hubert Humphrey School of Public Affairs and Law School, exchange Amity scholars, and other universities and colleges such as the Minneapolis Community Technical College, Winona State University and Hamline University.

International speakers will rotate throughout classrooms in the schools, showing their traditional dress, artifacts, and cultural showcases. The international speakers will be hosted for overnight stays at the homes of Fairmont families, will meet Mayor, and will visit the Pioneer Museum.

“We live in a world where foreign policy looms large and public awareness of global issues has never counted for more. Our belief is that if the world can be personalized to young people, they will become more aware and informed about world cultures,” added Hornik. “This year’s events will continue the students’ journey to awaken their curiosity and increase their cultural competency so they can successfully participate in our multicultural community of tomorrow.”

The event is supported in part by 3M Foundation and Rosen’s Diversified.

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ABOUT Minnesota International Center:

Acclaimed as a national model for world affairs programs, the Minnesota International Center (MIC) inspires the Minnesota community to understand global issues and cultures in an ever changing world. More at www.micglobe.org.