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Global Environmental and Health Leader Will Speak at Pacific on “Confronting Global Challenges: Global Warming – Global Health”

(Stockton, Calif.) –United Nations Climate Change Envoy Dr. Gro Brundtland will speak at 6:30 p.m. Oct. 18 in the Faye Spanos Concert Hall. Brundtland will address the twin global challenges of health and climate change. The event is part of the Gerber Lecture series presented through the School of International Studies. The Gerber lecture is free and open to the public.

“We are thrilled that Dr. Brundtland has agreed to share her insights into the global warming crisis with us,” said Dr. Margee Ensign, associate provost of international initiatives and dean of the School of International Studies. “We are looking forward to hearing her comments about how the global environment is so closely linked to the health of our planet and all who inhabit it. Brundtland is truly a trailblazer and an extraordinary role model.”

Born in Oslo in 1939, Brundtland was trained as a physician and served three terms as the first female Prime Minister of Norway between 1981 and 1996. As Director-General of the World Health Organization from 1998 to 2003, she was the first woman elected to run a major United Nations institution. She served as Chair of the World Commission of Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission), which became the impetus for the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in 1992.

As chair of the UN Special Envoy for Climate Change, Brundtland promotes environmental causes and advocates alternative energy sources, economic parity and population control. Currently a distinguished fellow at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government, she recently became a member of The Elders, a group founded by Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Recently, Brundtland served as a member of the United Nations high-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change.

As director-general of the World Health Organization (WHO), Brundtland confronted the global threat of the SARS virus. Her rapid response was largely credited with helping prevent the widespread growth of the disease. She also intensified the debate on global health as key to economic development, and began programs to curb malaria, tobacco use, tuberculosis, and AIDS. She left WHO in 2003 after succeeding in getting support for the first ever negotiated agreement on a major public health issue: The Tobacco Convention.

Prior to her career in public life, Brundtland spent 10 years as a physician and scientist in the Norwegian public health system. In the early 1960s she attended medical school at the University of Oslo, and earned her masters degree at Harvard University's School of Public Health. She worked in the Norwegian Directorate of Public Health until 1967. In 1968 she served as assistant medical director at the Board of Health in Oslo, focusing on children's health issues. As the main Labor Party spokesperson on abortion, she was instrumental in changing abortion laws giving Norwegian women the right to choose. Prior to this, a panel of doctors made that decision.

In 1974, she became the first female environmental minister for Norway. At age 41, Brundtland became the first woman and youngest Prime Minister of Norway.

She has received numerous awards including the 1988 Third World Prize for leadership on sustainable development, the Indira Gandhi Prize 1989, and der Internationaler Karlspreis zu Achen 1994. She also received the International Environment Prize from the City of Göteborg in Sweden, and the Blue Planet Prize from the Asahi Glass Foundation, Japan.

She also has written numerous books including her memoir, "Madam Prime Minister: A Life in Power and Politics."

Her speech will be broadcast live over the Internet on a URL to be named later. Media and bloggers are invited to submit questions for Dr. Brundtland via email to **Dean SIS@pacific.edu**. Questions will be accepted up to noon on Oct. 18th.

The Gerber Lecture Series has been bringing global leaders to the University of Pacific Campus since 2002. Past speakers have included Nobel Prize Winner Shirin Ibadi, Afghani activist and educator Sakeena Yacoobi, and Rwanda President Paul Kagame.

For more information about Brundtland's visit, call the School of International Studies at 209.946.2650.

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