

Jim Swigert, *Senior Associate and Regional Director Latin and America and Caribbean Programs*,
National Democratic Institute



Jim Swigert directs NDI's programs in Latin America and the Caribbean. NDI has worked for more than 25 years in the Americas to support democratic development by strengthening political parties, civic organizations and parliaments, safeguarding elections, and promoting citizen participation, openness and accountability in government. Among NDI's current priorities are programs to increase political participation by underrepresented groups, especially indigenous populations, Afro-descendants, young people and women, as well as projects helping to increase the responsiveness of democratic institutions by strengthening civil society dialogue with political leaders concerning public policy priorities

ranging from issues of poverty, public safety and electoral reform throughout the region to the unique challenges of reconstruction in post-earthquake Haiti. In recent years, NDI has supported international and domestic election observation missions in Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Venezuela.

Before joining NDI in 2005, Mr. Swigert spent 30 years as a career diplomat with the U.S. Department of State, during which time he served at embassies in Latin America and Europe. While in Washington, he held a series of increasingly responsible positions dealing with policy issues concerning Latin America, Europe and international organizations, including principal deputy assistant secretary of state for international organization affairs and deputy assistant secretary of state for Southeast and Central Europe. He also worked on the staff of the former chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Rep. Dante Fascell (D-FL). Throughout his government service, Mr. Swigert was a strong advocate for the work of independent civic organizations in strengthening democratic practices around the world.