



José María Figueres – Former President of Costa Rica and Global IT Leader – to keynote at ITFlorida’s Awards Gala and Tech Forum

ITFlorida’s Annual Awards Gala and Tech Forum: the State’s Premier Event

Dedicated to Florida’s IT-Enabled Industries

December 7-8 in Lake Buena Vista

More than 300 of the state’s technology leaders expected to attend

TALLAHASSEE, FL, October 24, 2006 – The Honorable José María Figueres www.josemariafigueres.org former President of Costa Rica, and a founding member of the United Nations Information and Communication Technologies Task Force (ICT), will be the keynote speaker at ITFlorida’s Annual Awards Gala and Tech Forum, scheduled for December 7-8th at the Walt Disney World Contemporary Resort in Lake Buena Vista, Florida. Joining President Figueres during the two-day event will be numerous State and Federal elected officials, key technology leaders, and several hundred IT C-Level executives and professionals.

José María Figueres served as **President of Costa Rica from 1994 to 1998**. He led his country through important policy transformations in the economic, social, and environmental fields, towards a development strategy based on the tenants of Sustainable Development. He worked with different sectors of the Costa Rican society, to develop new competitive advantages for his nation. He continued to build on the cluster of eco-tourism, the second economic activity in the country. President Figueres also pioneered the development of a high tech cluster, anchored around the investment made by INTEL in Costa Rica, which he personally attracted. Today, high tech exports are Costa Rica’s leading economic activity. Prior to serving as President, he served as Costa Rica’s Minister of Foreign Trade and as Minister of Agriculture.

After leaving government, together with Nicholas Negroponte and Jeffrey Sachs, he founded the ‘Digital Nations Program’, run out of the Media Lab at MIT, concentrating on applying technologies to enhance development in countries. Towards the end of 1999 was called by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, to become his special representative, and establish the **United Nations Information and Communication Technologies Task Force**, of which he was elected Chairman during the first two terms. This task force became the first one at the UN to incorporate business and civil society members, alongside government representatives. President Figueres is also the former **CEO of the World Economic Forum**, in Switzerland. Currently President Figueres is the CEO of Grupo Felipe IV, based in Spain, which is dedicated to promoting economic development and democratic values worldwide.

President Figueres holds an Engineering Degree from the US Military Academy at West Point, and a Masters in Public Administration from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He is the author of numerous books, including *The Costa Rican Banking*

System; One election, Two Different Countries; The Future Begins Now, and On the Path to Sustainable Development.

“We are extremely pleased that President Figueres has agreed to participate in this important statewide event,” said Charles Davidson, Chairman of ITFlorida. “From his leadership and expertise in Central America, at the U.N. Technologies Task Force and at the World Economic Forum, we are very much looking forward to learning about opportunities for Florida and its high tech companies to continue to successfully compete in the global marketplace.”

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ITFlorida’s Annual Awards Gala and Tech Forum provides the state’s leading IT professionals with an opportunity to recognize the achievements of their peers, discuss current IT-related trends and issues, and pursue report on the latest IT developments around the state. The Gala will bring together Florida’s IT leaders from both the private sector and government to honor the innovative contributions of individuals and businesses that have significantly contributed to the advancement of information technology for Florida.

Visit www.itflorida.com to learn more, to register, or to nominate a company or individual for the ITFlorida Awards.

ITFlorida is an umbrella, not-for-profit, membership organization that represents Florida’s diverse information technology communities on a statewide basis.

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