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**Additional Quotations about José Zalaquett
2009 Recipient of the
Notre Dame Prize for Distinguished Public Service in Latin America**

Santiago A. Canton, Executive Secretary, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights:

Zalaquett is an outstanding person and a great fighter for the cause of human rights.

Michael Shifter, Vice President for Policy, Inter-American Dialogue:

For nearly four decades, Zalaquett has stood out among the brave and impressive human rights leaders in Latin America. He has been a towering figure in many respects. No other figure combines so many exemplary qualities: sheer courage, moral sensibility, fertile imagination, resourceful pragmatism, organizational prowess, and intellectual acumen.

More than anyone else, Zalaquett designed the modern software for the human rights community. He has uniquely bridged different worlds. He has been both a fierce, tireless advocate and a consummate intellectual. Steadfastly committed to his native Chile, he has at the same time selflessly and energetically shared his mastery of human rights with the rest of Latin America and the world.

Zalaquett cut his teeth on human rights work with the 1973 military coup in Chile and was the prime mover behind the creation of the Vicaria de la Solidaridad, an unrivaled flagship organization with a deservedly brilliant regional and global reputation.

His intellectual contribution to dealing with the dilemmas of justice and accountability has been pathbreaking. You can disagree with Zalaquett but you can't ignore him. His ideas invariably set the agenda and define the terms of debate. Zalaquett has already left an indelible mark on a vital field of endeavor—and on the moral fabric and democratic temper of many societies.

Jan Egeland, Executive Director of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (served as vice-chair the International Executive Committee of Amnesty International when Zalaquett was chair):

Zalaquett was head-hunted directly into the elected leadership of Amnesty International worldwide because of his exceptional gifts as a thinker, speaker and campaigner in the human rights movement. Zalaquett had himself been a prisoner of conscience in Chile and could, like no one else, combine real understanding of how the human rights struggle was in the frontlines with

how it was to organize a major international movement. During his chairmanship of Amnesty's International Executive Committee, AI established itself firmly as the leading force among voluntary organizations working for human rights.

Juan Méndez, President Emeritus, International Center for Transitional Justice; former member, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights; former director of Notre Dame's Center for Civil and Human Rights:

Zalaquett has been an important leader of the human rights movement in Latin America for many decades. He has prepared new generations of human rights activists, especially through his course on democratic governance at the University of Chile.

Zalaquett is the rare individual who combines domestic and international experience with great distinction and significant contributions in both arenas. He was forced into exile but managed to make the most of what is always a traumatic experience. He transmitted his experience of the Chilean victims of human rights abuses to the outside world, giving us a more clear understanding of what human rights violations on the ground are all about.

He has also been a major strategic thinker in the human rights world. He pioneered how we think about transitions and transitional justice. In his early writings, he set the framework for thinking creatively about the demands of justice, democratization, and peace when they are seen to be contradictory.

His thinking and his writings about transitional justice are part of every discussion about these issues today, whenever a society decides to face the legacy of mass abuses and confront it while establishing the bases for a more humane and just civil order.

The experiences of Latin America are still assiduously studied and understood around the world. His early writings and actual experience form a jumping off point for much of the human rights work undertaken today.

Beyond transitional justice, Zalaquett has been a pioneer in several crucial aspects of human rights work:

- 1) documenting and monitoring violations on the ground and using available remedies to the height of their usefulness in difficult situations;
- 2) applying strategic vision to larger human rights organizations;
- 3) thinking creatively about how to adapt human rights work to changing circumstances and more favorable democratic conditions;
- 4) applying similar principles to violations committed by States and by non-State actors, such as insurgent groups, corporations, et al;
- 5) human rights education;
- 6) the use and effectiveness of inter-State organs of implementation of human rights treaties, like the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights, where he served as commissioner and President.

Margo Picken, Visiting Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Human Rights, London School of Economics and Political Science:

Zalaquett's commitment to and engagement with human rights started with the grim realities Chile faced after the coup. His ten-year exile, which came at great personal cost, was an enormous gain for the worldwide movement for human rights. He brought to AI and other organizations working for human rights, such as the World Council of Churches, his brilliant intellect, passion, and an iron integrity. His engagement in national, regional, and global efforts to secure respect for human rights significantly advanced human rights theory and practice at all these levels, and theory and practice were always linked.

I cannot enumerate all his contributions here but give as one example his central role in thinking through and framing issues of “truth, justice, and reconciliation” which he put into practice as architect of Chile’s Commission on Truth and Reconciliation, which achieved more than most such Commissions and has been drawn on extensively since both in Latin America and elsewhere in the world.

Zalaquett has been an inspiration for so much and so many of us in different corners of the world.

Dick Oosting, Europe Director at the International Center for Transitional Justice (former Deputy Secretary General, Amnesty International):

José Zalaquett joined Amnesty during those heady days in the mid-70s when it started to take off in a big way and became the undisputed leader in the human rights movement, sealed by the Nobel Peace Prize in 1977.

What he brought to that, freshly exiled from Chile, was the hard, direct perspective of repression and how to act against it. The force of his intellect and his moral compass were recognized instantly. Brought on to the international executive committee quickly to become its chair, he was the most formidable leader the organization has had in its 40+ years.

He brought home to all of us, operating from safe distance, the crucial importance of defending the front line human rights defenders. He was exacting when it came to quality of research, inspiring in action, and humble in reaching out to everyone without distinction. Passionate about human rights, Paul Klee, chess, Beatles, friends, and with that infectious sense of humour, he was the embodiment of humanity in the face of oppression and indifference. He made a huge difference.