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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Monday, July 26, 2004

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Chavez Gets Strong Support From Brazil

President Lula's Party, Renowned Leaders, and Major Trade Union Federation (CUT) All Support Chavez Win in August 15 Referendum

In recent statements, the party of Brazil's President Lula Da Silva, the largest Brazilian trade union federation Central Unica dos Trabalhadores (CUT), and dozens of prominent individuals in Brazil expressed support for President Hugo Chávez' campaign in the August 15 referendum in Venezuela.

On July 16, the Workers' Party – the party of Brazil's President Lula Da Silva – released a letter sent to President Chávez in which it expressed “its desire for full success of president Hugo Chávez in the referendum August 15, since his victory will speed the process of economic integration of South America.”

Just 9 days earlier the national trade union federation CUT had released a “Declaration of the CUT on the August 15 Referendum in Venezuela,” which said, “we understand that this election will be of basic importance for all the peoples of Latin America,” and that the decision of Venezuelans to “support the continuity of the Chávez government will be a strong reaffirmation ... of democracy.” The CUT is the largest labor federation in Brazil, founded in 1983. Brazil's President Lula was one of the founders of the CUT.

Strong support for Chavez also came from a group of 69 prominent writers, intellectuals, musicians and politicians, mostly from Brazil, who signed a declaration entitled "If I were a Venezuelan, I would vote for Hugo Chávez." The declaration was signed by Jose Rainha, coordinator of Brazil's landless workers' movement, the MST (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra); best-selling author Fernando Morais; and Brazilian music legend Chico Buarque, who was exiled from Brazil during its dictatorship.

The declaration denounced “the media monopoly... that portrays Chávez as a tyrant despite the fact that he respects the Law and the Constitution” and praised “his commitment...[to the] common people and his determination to apply the 1999 constitution, created by an inclusive democratic process.” It noted that the right to a recall referendum is an unprecedented in Latin America, and that “few government leaders have the courage to submit themselves like President Hugo Chávez ” to such a referendum. The statement declared, “We are sure that on August 15, the people of Venezuela will be victorious and will construct a free and just country...if we were Venezuelans, we would vote for Hugo Chávez.” Nobel Peace Laureate Adolfo Pérez Esquivel and Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano also supported the declaration.

The Venezuela Information Office is dedicated to informing the American public about contemporary Venezuela. More information is available from the FARA office of the Department of Justice in Washington, DC.