

Sister Cities International and the St. Louis Host Committee are extremely pleased to announce that former Senator, and Majority Leader, George Mitchell will be the keynote speaker at the closing Gala & Consular Ball on Saturday evening July 26th. Senator Mitchell, representing the state of Maine from 1982 to 1996, is recognized throughout the world for his leadership role in international cooperation and justice. We welcome Senator Mitchell as an exemplary public servant and world leader who understands the critical role that "citizen diplomacy" plays in creating and sustaining peace.

Throughout his distinguished career Senator Mitchell has worked with dedication for many causes that affect our national and international communities. At a time when the prospects for peace in the Middle East are at center stage, SCI delegates will have the privilege of listening to the author of the Mitchell Report, which has served as a building block of the current "Roadmap to Peace." In 1999, at the request of President Bill Clinton, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat, Senator Mitchell was asked to chair the International Fact Finding Committee on Violence in the Middle East. This Committee produced the Mitchell Report, which has been embraced by the Bush administration, the European Union, and numerous other governments, as setting forth a positive pathway toward peace.

Senator Mitchell is also known throughout the world for his leadership role in bringing peace and stability to Northern Ireland. In 1998, the British and Irish governments invited Senator Mitchell to serve as chairman of the peace negotiations in Northern Ireland, brokering the historic "Good Friday Accord" that ended decades of conflict. Agreed upon by the British and Irish governments, as well as the political parties of Northern Ireland, the accord facilitated the eventual referendum by which voters from Ireland, both north and south, jointly endorsed a move toward integration.

In addition, Senator Mitchell served with distinction in the United States Senate. He was instrumental in the 1990 reauthorization of the Clean Air Act; authored the first national oil spill prevention and clean-up law; and was the principal author of the low-income housing tax credit program. Senator Mitchell also promoted ratification of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the treaty that established the World Trade Organization (WTO) in the Senate.

At the Closing Gala & Consular Ball, Senator Mitchell will provide conference attendees with his personal insights as a "peacemaker" and the role that the sister cities movement can play in building a more cooperative and peaceful international community. At a time when globalization reaches every aspect of our lives, and issues of peace and security are dominating the headlines, delegates will hear from one of America's most prominent political leaders - a man who has committed his life to fostering a world free of conflict and human suffering. We are honored that Senator Mitchell has accepted our invitation to speak, and we hope you will join us for this historic occasion.