

# INTERNATIONAL

## Costa Rica Elects Female President News at a Glance

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On February 7, 2010, Costa Rican citizens elected a female president, the first in the country's history.

Former Vice President Laura Chinchilla will assume the presidency of the Central American nation after receiving 46.8% of the popular vote. She defeated candidates Ottón Solís and Otto Guevara, who received 25.1% and 20.9% of the popular vote, respectively.

Chinchilla will take office on May 8th, 2010, replacing current President Óscar Arias, a Nobel Laureate. Chrissie Long and Sara Miller Llana of the Christian Science Monitor report in their February 8, 2010, article, "Costa Rica elects first woman president, inspiring the region," that Chinchilla hopes to improve Costa Rican health and safety and promote the nation's becoming carbon neutral by 2021.

In a February 9, 2010, article written by Ronny Rojas and Randall Cordero and appearing in *La Nación*, a prominent Costa Rican newspaper, Chinchilla expressed the possibility of retaining officials from Arias' administration. Doctor Marcelo Ardón, a native Costa Rican and postdoctoral researcher

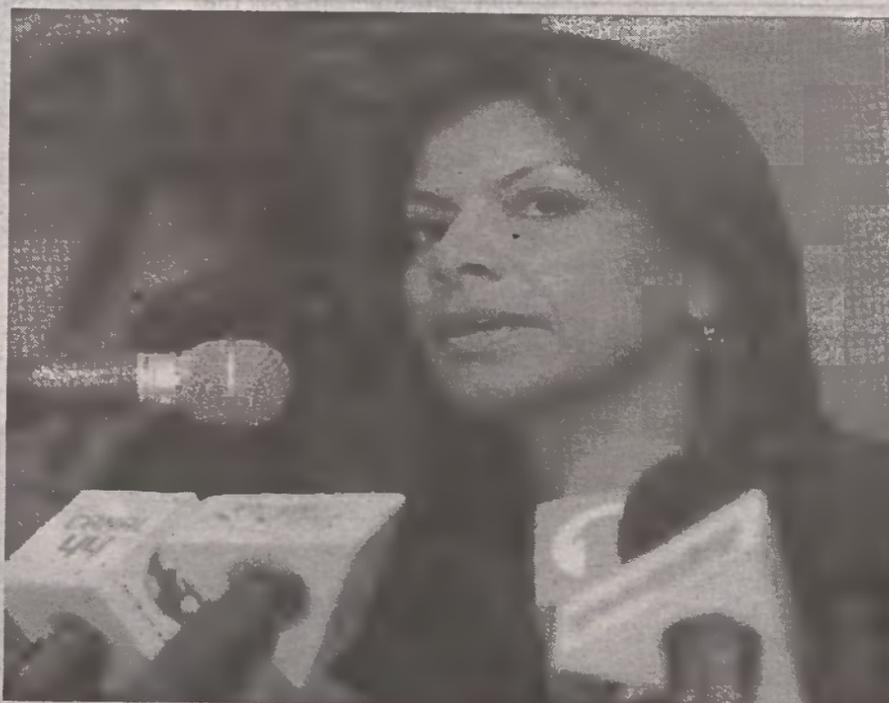


Photo courtesy of <http://fotoglif.com/f/htz9vtagkn7i/zu5xebzjfbr>

at Duke University, explained that many citizens believed that by voting for Chinchilla they could keep in place Arias' governmental policies. However, Chinchilla's ability to pass legislation may prove difficult, as her party, Liberación Nacional, will occupy only 23 of the 57 seats in the Asamblea Legislativa, Costa Rica's parliament.

Doctor Erin Lindquist, who leads summer study abroad programs to Costa Rica, echoes Ardón and adds, "I hope that Chinchilla will be a STRONG female leader and not just a follower of Arias' policies so that she paves the way for future female presidents."

(cont. from page 2) the Camry and Avalon models will have reconfigured floor surfaces to increase the space between the floor and the accelerator.

The second "Pedal" recall affects certain RAV4, Corolla, Matrix, Avalon, Camry, Highlander, Tundra, and Sequoia models. The gas pedals on some of these models are sticking when depressed. In models affected by this recall, drivers have noticed that the accelerator pedal difficult to press, slow to return or is not smooth while they are driving. Toyota urges drivers to stop their vehicles at the "nearest safe location, the engine shut off, and a Toyota dealer contacted for assistance," if they are experiencing any of these issues.

There is also a third recall which only affects the 2010 Prius. As reported by Toyota, "approximately 133,000 2010 Model Year Prius vehicles to update software in the vehicle's antilock brake system

(ABS). No other Toyota vehicles are involved in this recall." The problem with the 2010 Prius is that some drivers are experiencing inconsistencies while braking. As with the other recalls, 2010 model Prius owners are strongly urged to take their cars to the nearest Toyota dealer to have this problem resolved.

Toyota is a car company that has spent years building a great reputation among owners of their vehicles, but these recent recalls has severely impacted the way people view the company. In a message from Jim Lentz, President and Chief Operating Officer of Toyota Motor Sales, Toyota promises that they are critically reviewing the company's "quality in design, production, sales, and service" that incited the current recalls. They also assure customers that they are improving communication methods with car owners and promise to investigate any

safety issues immediately and thoroughly "without delay."

For more information about Toyota and the recent Toyota recalls, visit [www.Toyota.com](http://www.Toyota.com) or call the Toyota Customer Experience Center at 1-800-331-4331.



Photo by Anna Turner

gathered by Mengjie Zhang

- On February 21st 2010, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown denied accusations of "abusive behavior" and "volcanic eruptions of foul temper" which have been made by top British political journalist, Andrew Rawnsley in a book that will be released on March 10, 2010.
- Flash floods on the Portuguese island of Madeira on February 21st have left 42 people dead, more than 120 injured, and an unknown number missing.
- A new Saudi Arabian law allows female lawyers to argue cases in court--an action previously denied to them.
- Three days after overthrowing President Mamadou Tandja (who was seized on Feb. 18th, 2010), the leaders of the military coup in Niger have promised a "return to constitutional order" and fresh elections.
- A new federal credit-card law took effect Monday. The Credit CARD Act was signed into effect in May 2009 and most of the provisions became effective February 22nd. New provisions include limited interest rate hikes, limited credit to those under 21, and limited universal default

