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PRESS RELEASE

The launch of the UN Youth Advisory Panel in Nepal

Kathmandu, 23 October 2008 –The launch of the UN Youth Advisory Panel in Nepal has been announced today by the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nepal, Mr. Robert Piper.

The Panel, comprising ten members of various social backgrounds, is expected to increase dialogue and knowledge sharing between the UN system and Nepalis youth as well as improve young people's participation in designing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of UN programmes.

The Panel's establishment demonstrates the high importance the UN Country Team in Nepal (UNCT) places on youth issues. It also recognizes the value of dialogue between young people and the UNCT for an effective implementation of the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2008 – 2010 and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Nepal's Three Year Interim Plan refers to young people of 15 to 29 as youth; at 7 million, they constituted more than a quarter of the population. Unemployment among youths is almost double compared to the overall average; this is of particular concern, as youth unemployment and underemployment usually translates into social disintegration.

The UN recognizes a need for social investments in young people to develop tolerance and commitment to peace, justice and human rights. In the current context of structuring 'New Nepal' after the successful completion of Constituent Assembly elections, inclusive participation is extremely important and it is crucial for young people's voices to be heard in framing development agenda and drafting the new constitution.

"Nepal's youth will ultimately be responsible for building the New Nepal" said Robert Piper at the launch ceremony. "They need to be heard as the blue-prints are developed. Their ideas and inputs on how to build a democratic, inclusive and prosperous society are vital. I am very pleased to express our assurance that young people's voices will be heard at the United Nations."

[A list of Panel Members is attached]

For more information contact: Rekha Shrestha: 9851091448