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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

3 August 2012

Global Coalition Calls on Nepal to Join the International Criminal Court

Civil Society Says Accession to the Rome Statute Will Pave the Way for the Establishment of a Culture of Peace and Justice

New York, USA – The Coalition for the International Criminal Court today called on Nepal to demonstrate its commitment to justice and the rule of law by acceding to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC)—the world’s first and only permanent international court to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Nepal, together with Rwanda, is the focus of the Coalition’s Universal Ratification Campaign (URC) for August 2012, a monthly campaign launched to call upon a different country to join the Rome Statute—the ICC’s founding treaty.

In a letter dated 1 August 2012 to Nepalese Prime Minister H.E. Mr. Baburam Bhattarai, the Coalition—a global network of more than 2,500 civil society organizations in 150 countries advocating for a fair, effective and independent ICC—called on the government of Nepal

to take solid steps to finalize the accession to the Rome Statute, particularly considering that accession has been an item within the government's agenda for the past years. The Coalition also acknowledged Nepal's current process of transitional justice, and underlined the common grounds between transitional justice and international justice as important tools that address human rights violations through different angles, in their shared objective of building a culture of peace.

"Nepal is currently in a transitional period. However, the peace process is yet to be completed. In this context, acceding to the ICC treaty will pave the way for the establishment of a culture of justice and confidence building amongst the people." said Subodh Raj Pyakurel, chairperson of the Nepal Coalition for the ICC

Evelyn Balais-Serrano, the Coalition's Asia-Pacific coordinator, also highlighted the important opportunity provided by this transition process, stating that, "With the directive from Parliament to accede to the treaty as early as 2006 and endorsements towards accession from past prime ministers and foreign ministers, it is time to move forward with actual accession to help the country move forward with its transition process."

As the world celebrates the 10th anniversary of the entry into force of the Rome Statute, this new system of international justice now has the support of nearly two-thirds of the world's nations, with 121 states having ratified or acceded to the treaty. To date, there are nine states in Asia (and 17 in the wider Asia-Pacific region) that have ratified or acceded to the Rome Statute. By joining the ICC, Nepal would set an important example for states throughout the region that have yet to embrace the Rome Statute system.

Background: *The ICC is the world's first permanent international court to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. Central to the Court's mandate is the principle of complementarity, which holds that the Court will only intervene if national legal systems are unwilling or unable to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. There are currently seven investigations before the Court: the Central African Republic; Cote d'Ivoire; the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Darfur, the Sudan; Uganda; Kenya; and Libya. The ICC has publicly issued 22 arrest warrants and nine summonses to appear. The Court issued a judgment in its first trial on 14 March 2012. Two other trials are ongoing. The ICC Office of the Prosecutor has also made public that it is conducting eight preliminary examinations on four continents: Afghanistan, Colombia, Georgia, Guinea, Honduras, Republic of Korea, Mali and Nigeria*

The Coalition for the International Criminal Court is a global network of civil society organizations in 150 countries working in partnership to strengthen international cooperation with the ICC; ensure that the Court is fair, effective and independent; make justice both visible and universal; and advance stronger national laws that deliver justice to victims of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. For more information, visit: www.coalitionfortheicc.org

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