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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Global Coalition Calls on Nepal to Join the International Criminal Court  
*Civil Society Says Accession to the Rome Statute is a Priority to End Impunity***

**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 is the focus of the Coalition’s Universal Ratification Campaign (URC) for August 2011, 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 2011 to Nepalese President H.E. Mr. Ram Baran Yadav, the Coalition—a global network of more than 2,500 civil society organizations in 150 countries advocating for a fair, effective and independent ICC—urged the government of Nepal to prioritize its accession of the Rome Statute.

The Rome Statute came into force in July 2002 and now has the support of well over half of the world's nations, with 116 states having ratified or acceded to the treaty. A number of states around the world including the Philippines, Cape Verde, Malaysia and the Maldives are nearing completion of their ratification processes.

To date, only 14 states in the Asia-Pacific region have recognized the jurisdiction of the ICC. By joining the ICC, Nepal would set an important example for states throughout the Asia-Pacific region that have yet to embrace the Rome Statute system.

“We are encouraged that a growing number of states in the Asia region are moving forward in their ratification processes, as it is one that remains underrepresented at the ICC,” said William R. Pace, Convenor of the Coalition. “By embracing the Rome Statute system, Nepal will strengthen its leadership in the Asia region toward increasing accountability for the gravest crimes,” Pace added.

The Coalition also recalled Nepal's past efforts to join the ICC, in particular the Nepalese Legislature's decision on 24 July 2006 to unanimously endorse a proposal to accede to the Rome Statute and the tabling of the matter before the Cabinet in February 2009.

“Nepal's accession will signal the government's readiness to fulfill its promise to end impunity for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes” said Evelyn Balais-Serrano, the Coalition's Asia Regional Coordinator. “It is time for the government to turn its commitments to action and take concrete steps to join the ICC.”

As a state party, Nepal would be able to actively participate in the annual Assembly of States Parties (ASP) of the ICC, during which states make important decisions in relation to the administration of the Court, including the election of judges and prosecutors. In December 2011, six new judges, a new chief prosecutor and other Court officials will be elected by the ASP. By acceding to the Rome Statute by 2 September 2011, Nepal can nominate and vote for candidates to these important posts to ensure national and regional representation in this new mechanism for international justice

**Background:** *The ICC is the world's first, permanent international court to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. There are currently 116 ICC States Parties. 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 six active investigations before the Court: the Central African Republic; the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Darfur, the Sudan; Uganda, Kenya and Libya. The ICC has publicly issued 18 arrest warrants and nine summonses to appear. Three trials are ongoing. The ICC Prosecutor recently requested authorization from Judges to open an investigation in Côte d'Ivoire. His office has also made public that it is examining eight other situations on four continents, including Afghanistan, Colombia, Georgia, Guinea, Honduras, Republic of Korea, Nigeria, and Palestine.*

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](http://www.coalitionfortheicc.org)

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