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World Bank Country Director to Nepal

**Inaugural Session of Nepal Development Marketplace 2005**  
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Excellencies,  
Friends, Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

A very warm welcome to beautiful Patan Durbar Square and to the finals of Nepal Development Marketplace 2005.

The final national competition today marks the culmination of a long but very exciting process that began six months ago in an effort to generate fresh thinking about the delivery of basic services to the poor, living in conflict affected areas. An intensive, nation-wide media campaign during the months of November and December last year produced 1,037 eligible entries from across the country by the time the call for proposals closed on December 31, 2004.

Since then, a technical team composed of over fifty development practitioners, sectoral specialists and journalists volunteered their time and expertise to technically examine all the proposals. They screened and ranked each proposal against a set of assessment criteria. 250 proposals made it to the first round. 40 have now made it to the final round. The finalists have all traveled long distances to be here with us today and to champion their innovative ideas and inventive partnerships to an eminent panel of jurors.

The mission of the Development Marketplace which the World Bank group sponsors globally is to create a marketplace of ideas, talents and resources that address the challenges of development and promotes knowledge sharing. The Development Marketplace seeks to encourage the development community to work in new ways. It seeks to draw people and institutions with varied affiliations and objectives to work in partnership.

The theme of the Development Marketplace contest in Nepal is *Delivering Basic Services in Conflict Affected Areas*. This theme derives from the discussions during the Nepal Development Forum last May about the difficulty in maintaining development activities during these the turbulent times. This contest is therefore about keeping the lifelines of development open and exploring new ways of working in partnership to ensure that services continue to reach the neediest Nepalis.

We are very fortunate to have a partner in the Poverty Alleviation Fund. The Fund, as you may know, shares many of the same goals as the Development Marketplace. Through this partnership we hope to achieve and institutionalize a process of competitive and transparent grant making which Nepal and her development partners can emulate in their programs.

I would also like to thank our other partners—Kantipur Publications and the Society of Economic Journalists, for helping raise the profile of this important event and in keeping the entire process transparent.

Finally, I would like to welcome all the finalists and wish you all good luck. I would also like to welcome the distinguished members of the panel of jurors, as well as members of the technical assessment team and to thank you all for your continued support and interest in this process. I hope you have a rewarding experience today.