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World Bank Vice President for South Asia

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

I am pleased to be here among you this morning, truly humbled by the glory and magnificence that surrounds us.

Standing here this morning at the beautiful Patan Durbar Square, I cannot but wonder what innovation, enterprise and perseverance it was that created so much wealth in the ancient Kathmandu Valley that gave rise to these very civilized and culturally spectacular surroundings.

Historically, Nepalis have never had it easy. But, to my mind, these grand monuments that surround us not only represent the proud heritage and valiant triumphs of your illustrious forefathers over many adversities, but they remain a humble reminder of the splendor and brilliant harmony that Nepalis today can still achieve if they chose to find strength in their diversity by collectively challenging their circumstances in the spirit that they have always done.

Against this backdrop, I am especially proud this morning to be addressing you at the inauguration of the final national competition of the Nepal Development Marketplace 2005, which I hope will mark a watershed in more respects than one. As Ken explained in his welcome note, this competition is about rediscovering and rekindling that enterprising fire in you. It is about daring to challenge jaded mindsets and to contest conventional wisdom. It is about thinking “out of the box” as they say, and about coming up with solutions that may not appear so obvious in the first instance. Above all, it is about Nepal and her international friends finding meaningful ways to continue serving the neediest of Nepalis.

Today, we have forty finalists, each of whom believe they can make a difference. To my mind, each and every one of the finalists are ALREADY winners. They have impressed us with their ideas and they are all gathered in Kathmandu today to impress us further in person and offer us a perspective that don't get to hear very often.

The World Bank has often been accused of throwing big money at problems in the hope that they would eventually go away. Problems that WE think we understand best, and solutions that WE tend to think we know best. The Development Marketplace is an instrument that teaches us at the World Bank to listen to you more carefully; to learn

from YOUR vast experience; and to support YOU in whatever small way to resolve what YOU think are YOUR most pressing problems.

I am particularly pleased that the event here in Nepal has benefited from a solid partnership with the Nepal Poverty Alleviation Fund, Kantipur Publications and the Society of Economic Journalists. I am sure that this partnership has resulted in the process so far being transparent and technically rigorous. My hope for today is that each of the 36 jury members will spare all the time and effort they can to listen to the presenters and try to resolving what are among the post pressing service delivery challenges of out times. I thank you all once again for your interest in the program and for your presence here today.

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