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FORMER UN REPRESENTATIVE AND NEPAL SPECIALISTS JOIN THE ADVOCACY PROJECT BOARD

Washington, DC: Soren Jessen-Petersen, who served as the UN's Special Representative in Kosovo during the run-up to the country's independence, has joined the Board of the Advocacy Project (AP). Suvash Darnal, a prominent advocate for Dalit rights in Nepal and Devin Greenleaf, a former AP volunteer in Nepal, have also joined.

The election of three new members, each of whom represents an important AP constituency, signals an increased role for the Board as the organization prepares for 2009. Mr. Jessen-Petersen will explore synergies with the UN system. Mr. Darnal will represent AP's community-based partners. Mr. Greenleaf will speak for AP volunteers (Peace Fellows).

Soren Jessen-Petersen has had a long and distinguished career in the United Nations. He joined the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 1972, and rose to the rank of Assistant High Commissioner. He served as the UNHCR Special Envoy to the former Yugoslavia in 1996 and Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Kosovo (August 2004 to July 2006).

Mr. Jessen-Petersen is currently the Director of the Washington office of the Independent Diplomat, a lecturer at the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, and a Guest Scholar at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP).

Suvash Darnal has played a leading role in exposing caste discrimination against the Dalit in Nepal, and insisting on social change. He founded the Jagaran Media Center (JMC) in Kathmandu and served as Coordinator of the Collective Campaign for Peace (COCAP), a network of over 40 Nepalese human rights groups. Mr. Darnal is currently a Fellow at the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) in Washington DC.

"I feel very proud to be the first AP Board member from a partner (organization)," said Mr. Darnal. "AP is doing fantastic work in many conflict-affected areas, and partners are key toward achieving the goals of AP."

Devin Greenleaf brings the perspective of AP fellows to the Board. He spent last summer as Peace Fellow with the JMC in Nepal and helped to train the JMC's network of field reporters.

"During my fellowship I experienced the exhilaration of working with grassroots organizations on the ground, but also the inherent challenges that come with it," he said. "I relate to the concerns of AP's fellows and I look forward to advising the Board on how to best guarantee their success."

The three new members join Mr. Scott Allen, Ms. Teresa Crawford, Her Excellency Claudia Fritsche, Mr. Iain Guest and Professor Susan Martin on the AP Board.

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