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NEPALI ACTORS MIX VOTER AWARENESS WITH ENTERTAINMENT

KATHMANDU, NEPAL – FEBRUARY 29, 2008 – Art will imitate life with the launch of a new nationwide program of theater performances aimed at educating Nepali voters about the Constituent Assembly Election on April 10.

Working closely with the Election Commission, IFES is supporting Aarohan, Sarwanam and Kushum theater troupes to perform street drama on election day procedures and the importance of voter participation. The actors will use a script specially developed by Ashesh Malla and the theater partners to present this information in approximately 1,500 street performances to take place in all 75 districts of Nepal over the next few weeks.

The performances begin at 4:30 p.m. today in Ratna Central Park in Kathmandu. After that, the groups—working with district-level theater partners—will go to remote areas to put on performances in the local languages.

IFES Chief of Party Peter Erben said street theater is an entertaining and effective way to reach citizens that may not have easy access to television or print media.

“Performing street drama to audiences in remote and rural locations is one of the most effective voter awareness methods, and one that is particularly suited to the rich and culturally-diverse context of Nepal,” he said.

After performing, the actors will lead discussions on electoral issues and distribute voter information brochures produced by the Election Commission.

The theater performances are funded by the U.S. State Department and a part of IFES’ program to strengthen the electoral process in Nepal. .

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IFES is an international, nonprofit organization that supports the building of democratic societies.