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**UN ENVOY CALLS ON AFGHANS TO SAY NO TO CORRUPTION**

**Kabul, 20 August 2008** – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan (SRSG), Kai Eide called on Afghanistan's people, civil society and the media to stand up against corruption today as he launched a new anti-corruption report from the United Nations Development Programme.

Speaking at an event with Afghanistan's Minister of Finance, Anwar ul-Haq Ahadi, the **SRSG, Kai Eide** said; "Corruption in Afghanistan is endemic, it hurts the poorest people disproportionately, pushes people away from the state and undermines our joint efforts to build peace, stability and progress for Afghanistan's peoples.

"I welcome the recent steps that the Government has taken by becoming a state party to the UN Convention Against Corruption; adopting new anti-corruption legislation and the establishment of a new anti-corruption body. Full implementation of all of these steps will be vital. But corruption must also be tackled from the bottom up with the people, Afghan civil society and the media having a crucial role in supporting Government efforts.

"Together they can act effectively as a watch-dog to ensure that public services reach those most in need and that Government officials are held accountable to the people they serve. We must all stand up and say 'no' to the corrosive influence of corruption.

"It is vital that the state allows sufficient space for Afghanistan's civil society and the media to be able to effectively play this role. I urge the Government to work towards strengthening these areas of national legislation. On our part, the United Nations pledges its continued assistance to the Government and peoples of Afghanistan as we work together to remove the scourge of corruption."

According to a recent survey by Integrity Watch Afghanistan the average Afghan household pays an estimated \$100 in petty bribes every year. With around 70 per cent of the population surviving on less than \$1 per day, the burden on families is enormous. A staggering \$100-\$250 million is paid in bribes every year. This is equivalent to half the national development budget for 2006.

The Asia-Pacific Regional Human Development Report (APHDR) entitled 'Tackling Corruption, Transforming Lives', emphasizes Governments and citizens across the Asia-Pacific can tackle corruption together by focusing on areas which impact daily life such as health, education, the police and natural resources.

**Notes to editors:**

- Copies of the United Nations Development Programme's Asia Pacific Human Development Report 2008: "Tackling corruption, transforming lives" are available at; [www.undp.org.af](http://www.undp.org.af)