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PRESS RELEASE

International Day of Peace 2008

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UN launches text messaging campaign for International Day of Peace

UNITED NATIONS—A text messaging for peace campaign was launched today at the United Nations to bring visibility to the International Day of Peace, on 21 September.

The UN General Assembly established the Day in 1981, for “commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace...”. Twenty years later, the General Assembly declared 21 September as the date to observe annually a “day of global ceasefire and non-violence.”

In the United States, cell phone users are urged to compose a 160-character message on peace beginning with the word “PEACE” and to send the message to number 69866.

The UN Department of Public Information will gather the messages, publish them on a website at www.peaceday2008.org and deliver them to world leaders gathered at the UN General Assembly on 23 September.

“On 21 September, the International Day of Peace, I call on world leaders and peoples around the world to join forces against conflict, poverty and hunger, and for all human rights for all,” United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in a message issued on 29 August. “Together, let us send a powerful signal for peace that will be read, heard and felt around the world.”

The Day of Peace is observed around the world every year by UN offices and peacekeeping operations, and non-governmental organizations, among others.

Secretary-General Ban will ring the Japanese Peace Bell at UN Headquarters on Friday, 19 September at 9:30 a.m. along with UN Messengers of Peace HRH Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein, Michael Douglas, Jane Goodall and Midori Goto. The Secretary-General will lead UN staff in observing a minute of silence at 12 noon.

Students from schools around New York will then engage in a video conference with students living in Sudan, Afghanistan and Liberia.

For more information, contact Melanie Nolte, UN Department of Public Information, nolte@un.org. For background on the International Day of Peace, go to www.un.org/events/peaceday/2008.