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I am pleased to be at the Reporters' Club again. I don't need to tell you how persistent your President is, and I promised him that I would come here again after my return from New York, where I was able to listen to the Prime Minister address the United Nations General Assembly and to participate in his meeting with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. So I am here essentially to make myself available for your questions, even if I have no real news for you, and will make only a short opening statement.

I should begin by drawing your attention to a statement by the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon yesterday in New York, confirming that the Secretary-General, is later this month, is making a four nation Asia trip for official visits to Philippines, India, Nepal and Bangladesh. And therefore, we are able now formally to confirm that the Secretary-General will be visiting Nepal, will be meeting with the President, Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, members of the Constituent Assembly and will also visit Lumbini, the birth place of Lord Buddha.

UNMIN is now a much smaller mission, but the United Nations as a whole is as committed as ever to support the completion and consolidation of Nepal's peace process, now with an increasing emphasis on support from UN agencies to the development which is essential to lasting peace.

The main reason why the political parties asked - by consensus - for UNMIN to remain for a further six months, to January 2009, was of course related to the management of arms and armies. Next week one half of that six months will have passed. Of course we all know the reasons why formation of the new Government has taken time, and now it is the holiday season: I hope that this year Nepalis have celebrated Dashain with a growing assurance of lasting peace, and that next week you will have Deepawali. But from the perspective of UNMIN, and the Member States which fund UNMIN, it is most urgent that the special committee responsible for the integration and rehabilitation of Maoist combatants should be established and begin its work as soon as possible, in accordance with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, with Article 146 of the Interim Constitution, and with the 25 June agreement among the then Seven-Party Alliance.

UNMIN and the UN agencies have also resumed discussions now with a new Minister of Peace and Reconstruction and with the Maoist army about the overdue discharge of those still

in the cantonments who were found by UNMIN's verification to have been minors in May 2006, or recruited after that date. We expect rapid progress in making responsible arrangements for their discharge and reintegration.

There are many other commitments of the peace agreements that have yet to be implemented or fully implemented. The Minister of Peace and Reconstruction made a statement of the Government's commitment to implement many of them in his address on the International Day of Peace, and there is financial provision for many of them in the Government's proposed budget. The United Nations – and I want to stress that here I am talking not so much about UNMIN as UNDP and other UN agencies – has expressed its willingness to support the Peace Ministry in whatever ways it may request in this implementation of peace process commitments.

I myself have always emphasized in particular the need to have regard to the victims of the conflict – to fulfill commitments to clarify the fate of those who disappeared, to compensate victims, to enable displaced persons to return to their homes, to undertake an honest and inevitably painful acknowledgement of the truth of past human rights violations, and to end impunity. And these of course continue to be pressed, in particular for the United Nations, by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal.

These are responsibilities of government – of the previous government, and now of a new government – not of UNMIN, which has never been asked to monitor or assist all aspects of the peace process. But the United Nations as a whole remains ready to assist when it is requested to do so, while respecting the fact that this has always been and remains a Nepali-owned process.

I look forward to your questions.