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NEWS RELEASE

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Rotary accepting applications for World Peace Fellows

Humanitarian service organization to help future leaders become agents of peace

BEIRUT, Lebanon (December 5, 2009) – Rotary Clubs in the Middle East and other parts of the world will accept applications in January for the 2011-2013 class of Rotary World Peace Fellows. Launched in 2002, this innovative program is aimed at helping the next generation of government officials, diplomats and humanitarian leaders develop the skills needed to reduce the threat of war and violence worldwide.

“You only have to pick up a newspaper to realize how vitally important it is that our world leaders be skilled in the arts of conflict resolution and peaceful negotiation,” said Dr. Michel P. Jazzar, Rotary representative to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) at a Rotary Foundation seminar in Beirut.

Through a worldwide, competitive process, this program awards full scholarships to up to 100 Rotary World Peace Fellows each year. Members of the 2011-13 class will be announced in October 2010. The peace fellows study at the six Rotary Centers based at leading universities in five countries. Qualified applicants must possess an undergraduate degree, have a minimum three years of professional experience at international agencies such as the United Nations, governments, non-governmental organizations, businesses or academic institutions; and demonstrate a commitment to peace and international understanding through their volunteer, academic, and professional achievements.

“Rotary is a non-political, non-religious volunteer organization where all cultures, religions and traditions are respected and merged to respond to humanitarian needs,” said Jazzar, who is a member of the Rotary Centers Selection Committee and member of the Rotary Club of Kesrouan. “It is our hope that these impressive Rotary peace fellows will go out into the world and make a real difference in their home regions.”

Mahamoud Abdi Sheikh Ahmed of Borama, Somalia, currently attends the Rotary Center at the University of Bradford, England. He was a team leader with the Norwegian Refugee Council in Somaliland, which provides basic education to children of displaced families. Ahmed’s own childhood was interrupted by inter-clan violence, forcing his family to flee to Ethiopia.

“Twenty years of civil war have torn Somalia apart and all Somalis have become victims. I believe the conflict resolution and peace building skills I will learn at Bradford will help me contribute to the future prospects of my country,” Ahmed said.

The Rotary Centers for International Studies are located on the following campuses: International Christian University, Japan; Universidad del Salvador, Argentina; University of Bradford, the United Kingdom (UK); the University of Queensland, Australia; and - in a shared arrangement - Duke University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, N.C. In

addition to the two-year program, the Rotary Center at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand, offers an intensive, three-month course aimed at mid-level professionals in governments, non-governmental organizations, and international industry.

The Rotary Centers for International Studies program is already showing results. Currently, 454 Rotary World Peace Fellow alumni are making a difference in jobs within United Nations agencies, the World Bank, and leading non-governmental organizations.

“A total of 16 citizens from the Greater Middle East and Central Asia --including Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Palestine, Tajikistan, and Turkey-- have completed the program,” said Jazzar. “It is this growing network of peacemakers that makes us believe that peace *is* possible.”

Those interested in the program can apply through local Rotary clubs or email rotarycenters@rotary.org for more information. The 2012 applications will be available for download from the Rotary website beginning January 2010. Applications are due July 1st to The Rotary Foundation.

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Rotary – an organization of business and professional leaders united worldwide in humanitarian service - has more than 1.2 million members in more than 33,000 clubs in over 200 countries and geographic regions. For more information, visit www.rotary.org.