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For Immediate Release

Witnessing “the Most Beautiful Place on Earth”
Bruce Cockburn returns to Nepal after 20 years

Ottawa, November 5, 2007 - Twenty years after his first visit to Nepal, Canadian singer/songwriter Bruce Cockburn is going back to the country he calls “hands down the most beautiful place on earth that I’ve seen.”

Cockburn returns to Nepal with the same travel companion as on his first trip in 1987 -- Susan Walsh, USC Canada’s Executive Director. They will journey on foot, staying in the villages of Humla district, located in the northwest corner of the country. This remote Himalayan region, close to the Tibet border, gained importance through history as a passage for salt caravans between China and India.

Nepal’s long and tragic civil conflict has had a serious impact on development programs in many parts of the country – including Humla. Cockburn, whose humanitarian work has won him much praise around the world, hopes to witness how the people of Humla have been living despite their many challenges -- isolation, little access to any development resources, and the political conflict, which is finally subsiding.

“One of the things that characterizes people living in difficult conditions is a very well-developed sense of how dependent we humans are on each other,” says Cockburn. “There’s a sense of community that is beyond anything that one encounters in the developed world. “

“This is what allows people to survive their difficult circumstances and to support each other physically and emotionally, given the hard work and pain that they live with,” he says. “It will also be interesting to see what the impact of the war has been on that sense of community because that often has a part to play, and that means things could go either way.”

Susan Walsh points out that despite the many challenges, the communities supported by USC Canada have managed to continue their work. “The people of Humla own this work, and it’s succeeding because of their resilience and determination. They have put all their efforts, their heart and their ingenuity into it”, she says.

Village committees in Humla are actively running small-scale irrigation, organic agriculture, community health and education programs with minimal outside support.

Cockburn’s Humla journey takes place **November 8-23**, and will be captured by film-maker Robert Lang of Kensington Communications.

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Visit Bruce’s Nepal blog at www.kensingtontv.com/nepal to see journal entries, video clips and images from Humla.

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ABOUT USC CANADA

USC Canada was founded in 1945 by Lotta Hitschmanova as the Unitarian Service Committee of Canada.

USC promotes vibrant family farms, strong rural communities and healthy ecosystems around the world. With engaged Canadians and partners in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, we support programs, training, and policies that strengthen biodiversity, food sovereignty, and the rights of those at the heart of resilient food systems -- women, indigenous peoples, and small-scale farmers.

For more information visit www.usc-canada.org

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