

PRESS RELEASE

United Nations Development Programme



Podgorica, May 11th, 2007

Strengthening National Capacities for Efficient Management of External Assistance

Hosted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), a two-day technical and expert consultative meeting on **strengthening of national capacities for efficient management of external assistance** will take place in Podgorica, Montenegro (Hotel Crna Gora, 14 – 15 May 2007).

The objectives of the Podgorica meeting are to debrief on progress made since the «Partnerships for Aid Effectiveness in the Western Balkans» conference held in March 2006 in Sarajevo; discuss national capacity to manage external assistance focused on EU instruments, assistance management systems and their placement; promote regional cooperation on these issues and identify areas of potential UNDP support.

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In March 2006, UNDP organized a regional consultative meeting in Sarajevo on «Partnerships for Aid Effectiveness in the Western Balkans» focusing on aid coordination and management in the context of the EU accession process. The workshop assembled representatives of the Governments in the region, bilateral and multilateral donors, United Nations agencies, academia and non-governmental sector. Workshop participants discussed how to improve aid alignment with national priorities relating to the EU accession process and MDG achievement.

*The participants formulated the main challenges to aid effectiveness in the region to be **national ownership and leadership around clearly defined and prioritised national strategies** focused on EU accession and beyond (acquis, legislation) to ensure development and sustainability; **transparency and accountability** of donor budgets and better dialogue between donors and governments around mutual beneficial priorities and resource allocation; **alignment between the realities of EU accession for the government and non-EU donors**; national capacity for more comprehensive strategy development beyond the EC requirements to ensure social cohesion and prevent potential economic and social pitfall; **institutional capacity and national systems** to include decrease in the number of PIUs, avoiding duplication of national structures, strengthen procurement capacity and support more sustainable staffing; **support to decentralised structures and municipalities** in aid coordination resource alignment; **cross-border collaboration** for regional strategic planning and coordination and budget reporting for EU/national government cost-sharing. A fruitful exchange of experiences and lessons gave rise to a community of practitioners and highlighted the need for regional peer learning.*

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The key topics to be discussed at the Podgorica meeting are the following:

Changing the way we do business – Government presentations focusing on issues such as complementarity, mutual accountability, ownership, how the donors contribute to the accession process and national capacity.

National capacity and tools to manage international assistance with focus on EU - addressing national capacity to manage assistance, assistance coordination units and their function; capacity assessment needs; assistance information management systems (AIMS); managing Instruments of Pre-Accession Agreement (IPA) funds; case studies on Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia on establishing of assistance coordination and management mechanisms.

Cross-regional cooperation.

UNDP will use this opportunity to present its capacity development and capacity assessment methodology as it relates to aid effectiveness.

«**In the context of increased EU assistance to the region it is becoming extremely important for the governments and international donors to strengthen effective communication with each other, in order for the donors to feed their assistance into governments' real priorities, but also for the governments to know what donors do and how successful they are. This will not only increase the effectiveness of international assistance but also contribute to transparency and mutual accountability**», says Mr. Garret Tankosić Kelly, UNDP Resident Representative a.i./UN Interagency Focal Point in Montenegro.

The meeting is at expert and high professional level. **Participants are Government representatives from the region** (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and UN Administrative Province of Kosovo) **and from countries selected for peer learning and exchange** (Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine); **bilateral donors** (Austria, Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada (CIDA), Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary (HUNIDA), Italy, Ireland (IRISH AID), Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden (SIDA), Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom (DFID), USA (USAID) and **multilateral donors** (EAR, EC, EU, OECD/DAC, OSCE, REC, Stability Pact, UN Agencies, World Bank).

The Conference will be opened by

Ms. Gordana Đurović, Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration at the Government of Montenegro

Mr. Martin Harvey, European Commission's Special Resident Envoy in Montenegro

Mr. Moises Venancio, Head of UNDP RBEC/Western Balkans Cluster

Please note that the the workshop will be conducted in English.

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UNDP in Montenegro promotes sustainable development, which is economically viable, socially inclusive and environmentally friendly.