



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

Miločer, September 24th 2007

Regional Conference on Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women Reporting to the UN

Between September 24th-26th at the Hotel Maestral in Miločer, Montenegro, the Office for Gender Equality of the Government of Montenegro, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Montenegro organized a **two days regional conference** titled **CEDAW Reporting. The Introductory remarks were by Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration at the Government of Montenegro Ms. Gordana Đurović, Minister for Human and Minority Rights Protection at the Government of Montenegro Mr. Fuad Nimani and UNDP Resident Representative a.i./UN Interagency Focal Point in Montenegro Mr. Garret Tankosić Kelly.**

CEDAW is an acronym for Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly. It is often described as an international bill of rights for women. Consisting of a preamble and 30 articles, it defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. CEDAW understands women's empowerment as a central to human development. Human development, as a process of enlarging people's choices, cannot occur when the choices of half of humanity are restricted. Targeted actions aimed at empowering women and righting gender inequities in the social and economic sphere, as well as in terms of civil and political rights, have to be taken alongside efforts to en-gender the development process.

By accepting the Convention, States commit themselves to undertake a series of measures to end discrimination against women in all forms, including:

- to incorporate the principle of equality of men and women in their legal system, abolish all discriminatory laws and adopt appropriate ones prohibiting discrimination against women;
- to establish tribunals and other public institutions to ensure the effective protection of women against discrimination; and
- to ensure elimination of all acts of discrimination against women by persons, organizations or enterprises.

Countries that have ratified or acceded to the Convention are legally bound to put its provisions into practice. They are also committed to submit national reports, at least every four years, on measures they have taken to comply with their treaty obligations.

Montenegro succeeded to the CEDAW on 23 October 2006, and this Regional Conference has been organized in order:

- to contribute to the understanding of the basic concepts of gender equality, international treaties and how it relates to the work of Government;
- to provide regional and UN experts knowledge and tools sharing to develop Initial CEDAW Report addressing the challenges of integration of gender equality into Governmental strategies/policies/program implementation plans.

This Initial Report will be the first document that the Government of the Republic of Montenegro will submit to the United Nations in line with the commitments that the State took when it officially became a member of UN in June last year.

UNIFEM and UNDP would like to help Government of Montenegro to translate these commitments into practical realities, contributing in expressing the noble goals set forth in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) into specific policy reforms and operational programmes that make a difference for women, poor women in particular.

As the record shows good progress in the recent years in the SEE Region, regarding accountable and competent Initial CEDAW Reporting by national governments, we have invited their representatives to share with us their knowledge and experience not only in preparing Report but also regarding its translation into policies and practice.

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For additional information, please contact Ms. Nadica Dujović, Communications Associate, UNDP Montenegro, Tel: ++382 81 231 251; Fax: ++382 81 231 644; Mob.: ++382 69 319 709, E-mail: nadica.dujovic@undp.org
Web: <http://www.undp.org.yu/montenegro>