

PRESS RELEASE



United Nations Development Programme

Podgorica, July 4th 2006

Exhibition «My Forest», symbol of cooperation between Finland and Montenegro

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Finland together with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of the Republic of Montenegro and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Office in Montenegro organized an exhibition titled "My Forest", which will take place on Thursday, July 6th in Podgorica (17:30, Perjanički dom Kruševac), and on July 17th in Žabljak (National Park Durmitor premises, time will be announced in due course). The exhibition will show photo collages excerpted from the Finnish book «My Forest, Full of Life» and panels referring to the project "Environmental Geographic Information System (GIS) for Montenegro" as well as to the forestry and biodiversity in Montenegro. **The exhibition will be opened by H.E. Ambassadors of the Republic of Finland in Serbia and Montenegro Ms. Anna-Maija Korpi and guests will be greeted by H.E. Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management Mr. Milutin Simović and UNDP Social Inclusion Programme Team Leader Mr. Miodrag Dragišić.**

Covering 76% of Finnish territory, forest makes a unique core component of identity of this Northern country, in fact most heavily forested one in Europe. By using forest resources in a sustainable way, its inhabitants and authorities created an extensive network which supports economic, social and cultural continuity without which Finland would not be what it is.

Besides informing about the activities of the Republic of Finland in domain of sustainable forestry, this exhibition will provide an additional opportunity for presentation of the activities of the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs with relation to the support to the Montenegrin Forestry Sector. These activities are intended to support regional cooperation in domain of Forestry Sector Staff education and they also entail \$ 500.000 worth financial support to the project "Environmental Geographic Information System (GIS) for Montenegro". The duration of this project is one year and a half and the local UNDP Office is assisting the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management in the realization.

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Geographic information system is a group of technologies, processes, human resources and data from different domains (meteorology, forestry, water management, environmental protection, etc.) which can be compared, verified and jointly used for different researches in order to manage natural resources in a sustainable way.

Introduction of the GIS in Montenegro aims to create conditions for better monitoring, management and protection of forests, biodiversity and land as most significant sustainable development resources in Montenegro. Ensuring environmental and forestry sustainability is one of Millennium Development Goals and it is unimaginable without complete and precise data on the forest conditions and the control processes in the planned forestry works. By establishing data framework required by various EU conventions, the GIS in Montenegrin environmental sector will also contribute to processes of accessing European Union.

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