



Montenegro

## Press Statement – Poverty Day 2009

October 17th presents an opportunity to acknowledge the effort and struggle of people living in poverty, a chance for them to make their concerns heard, and a moment to recognize that poor people are the first ones to fight against poverty.

In Montenegro poverty and social exclusion is still a visible phenomenon. Over the last several years the country has achieved impressive growth as a result of the economic boom in the construction, tourism, retail, telecommunications and banking sectors. Although this growth has created many opportunities for the human development of the poor and socially excluded, it has not yet fully translated into improved social inclusion or poverty reduction.

As per recently published national Human Development Report (NHDR) some 10.8% of the population in Montenegro is still living below the poverty line (€162 per month). More than half the poor (62%) reside in the north. Some population groups are poorer than others. The Roma, Ashkaelia, Egyptians (RAE) are the most vulnerable population with a poverty rate of 36%; followed by refugees 34%, social protection system beneficiaries 30%; pensioners 15.7%; the long-term unemployed 12.3% and people with disabilities 11.9%.

In order to contribute to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and in light of the European Union's (EU) integration and social inclusion process, the Government of Montenegro has committed to providing adequate health, education, housing and other social services to its citizens and has adopted a range of policy strategies addressing social exclusion.

UN agencies on Montenegro are aware that not all of challenges for population leaving in poverty can be met at once and would like to use this opportunity to among others, stress importance of further and intensified efforts in reforming, health, education and social policies, measures aiming at reducing regional development disparities, improved social and employment services targeting the most vulnerable. In this regard, UN agencies in Montenegro will continue actively supporting both Government of Montenegro and civil society in achieving these goals.

UN agencies in Montenegro will mark the International Day of Fight to Eradicate Poverty by supporting a theatre play "Master of the broom" produced by Association of Roma NGOs "Roma Circle" which will be staged in KIC "Budo Tomovic" on 17<sup>th</sup> October at 20:00.