



## Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

### OSCE Presence in Albania

#### **DRAFT TALKING POINTS, DONOR RESPONSE FOR GOVERNMENT-DONOR ROUNDTABLE, SHERATON HOTEL, 4 JUNE 2010**

Minister Pollo, Deputy Minister Haldeda, Director Kuko, Ambassador D'Elia, your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

I am delighted to address you this morning in my capacity as Chair of the Donor Technical Secretariat at this important Government-Donor Roundtable.

I think it is a good moment to pay proper tribute to the work of Minister Pollo and the crucial co-ordinating role played by the Department of Strategy and Donor Coordination (DSDC) under the excellent leadership of Director Kuko.

We have talked about the effective bridging role played by the department so we should mention some notable examples.

In particular, I would like to express the appreciation of all donors for the truly collaborative manner in which the agenda before us this morning has been prepared – I believe the DSDC started this process as early as February!

A true example of Government-Donor partnership.

I also note with pleasure that ample time has been reserved for discussion, continuing the excellent trend started in more recent round tables.

So I hope that we will have a good and sustained discussion today and at the end will have managed to identify a few concrete issues to take away with us for further development over the next six months.

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Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

Briefly looking at today's agenda, under the broad heading of 'Implementation of Integrated Planning Systems: IPS progress and NSDI monitoring', I have a few comments.

We are very pleased to see the considerable progress made towards IPS implementation recently, especially as regards the monitoring of the NSDI and the establishment of a new results-based monitoring mechanism, which will help to better align the external assistance with government priorities.

For many donors, the capacity building of line Ministries should be more strongly enhanced through the Integrated Planning System.

Training of line Ministries is crucial in the perspective of full implementation of the Decentralized Implementation System.

As we have raised many times before in similar events, the high staff turnover in the public administration has and will continue to reduce the impact of past and ongoing co-operation of the donors.

We hope that the capacities that have been strengthened over the past years with donor assistance will be retained and used in the most optimal manner possible.

As Albania further advances towards European integration, it will have to take full charge of programming, procurement, contracting and implementation of donor funded projects.

We believe that the IPS Trust Fund has been an effective and efficient tool to support the government capacity building process and we are aware that further work still needs to be done to have a fully functioning IPS.

On Government and donor commitments towards the Harmonization Action Plan (HAP) implementation, we would commend Director Kuko for the timely way in which her Department has developed responses to the concrete implementation of the Plan and to those donors who have gone through a similar process to specify their respective concrete actions in implementing the Plan.

I would strongly encourage all other donors who have still to offer their remarks to do so.

On developing Sector Policy Dialogue, the implementation of the Fast Tracking Initiative of Division of Labour is seen as an 'added value' to the existing coordination mechanisms.

The importance of this is to increase the overall coherence of external assistance offered, to reduce overlap and to lower transaction cost – an important initiative from the HAP.

On the assessment of Procurement Systems: Another important aspect of the implementation of the Harmonisation Action Plan has been the joint initiative to undertake an assessment of the Public Procurement Systems.

The completion of this survey will set a milestone for the donor community to increase the use of country procurement systems.

Finally, we will all get the chance to look ahead over the next six months so that together we can 'map out' some joint next steps.

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Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Although my intention this morning is to be brief, I feel, nevertheless, that it is important to highlight one or two issues for donors, which are important in relation to donor co-ordination given that many donor driven programmes are aligned in support of the Albania's ongoing reform agenda.

First, on the development of sector working groups,

I want to underline that there can be no doubt that donors have been greatly encouraged to note the increased efforts made by the DSDC to co-ordinate the activities of all line ministries and donors through the Sector Working Groups.

All the hard work undertaken by the DSDC and line Ministries is noted and greatly appreciated.

Donors believe that Sector Working Groups are the most useful instrument in promoting donor co-ordination and in enhancing aid harmonisation.

Nevertheless, donors also feel that they could do more in their role as co-chairs of SWGs by providing a more effective and higher level of strategic support.

Moreover, although major efforts have made by the DSDC to co-ordinate the sector working group architecture, we hope that line ministries will assume a more active approach in line with the Paris Declaration.

We hope this will help paving the way for the development of programme based/ sector wide approaches in alignment with the National Strategy for Development and Integration and sector strategies.

Second, and finally, all donors remain hopeful that the political environment will remain conducive for the continued smooth implementation of donor-assisted programmes and projects.

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Your Excellencies, ladies and Gentlemen, to conclude.

I would like to thank Minister Pollo, Director Kuko and colleagues in the DSDC as well as our partners in the donor community for their support to the DTS over the last six months.

I would also like to wish the Swiss Co-operation Office, under Mr. Daniel Zuest, who will shortly be taking over as the rotating Chair, and the rest of the DTS agencies all the very best for the next six months.

I must also commend the work of Ms. Nevila Çomo, the highly effective and efficient DTS programme officer, have been key for maintaining and strengthening the partnership between the DTS and DSDC.

All donors are fully committed to further strengthening the partnership with Government, and between the DSDC and the DTS in particular in furthering the aid harmonisation agenda.

So while we may have a full and frank exchange of views, there can be no doubt that we will always adhere to this simple but nevertheless important principle.

Finally, it only leaves me to wish us all success for this mornings meeting.

Thank you very much.

**ENDS**

*CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY*