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Photo: Government-Donor Roundtable held on 3 December 2010

Conclusions from the Regular Government-Donor Roundtable

On 3 December 2010 the Government of Albania held the regular Government - Donor Roundtable, co-chaired by the Minister of Innovation and ICT, Genc Pollo and the Ambassador of the Switzerland, Yvana Enzler, as rotating chair of the Donor Technical Secretariat. The event gathered senior officials from the Government and the donor community in Albania. On behalf of the Government of Albania, the Minister for Innovation and ICT summarized the major achievements and reforms the Government had undertaken within the last six months and their impact on development and the EU integration process. He greeted the European Commission's 8 November 2010 decision on lifting the visa regime for Albania as a historical event and pointed out that the visa-free regime is a matter of freedom and dignity for every Albanian, not discounting big responsibilities it entails. Concerning the EC opinion and recommendations, Minister Pollo said that "European integration is a major priority for the Albanian Government. The next milestone in the Albania's EU integration process is achieving candidate status,"

an objective Mr. Pollo was confident his Government could meet within its current mandate. To that end, he explained that the latest European Commission report will set the working programme for the next months and years to come. Addressing the priorities and shortcomings identified in the report have become the Government's priority. Minister Pollo also stated that considerable progress has been made in implementing Agenda of the Paris Declaration, citing the Harmonisation Action Plan and successful completion of the Assessment of Procurement Systems as evidence.

Ambassador Enzler addressed the roundtable on behalf of the donor community, and expressed their satisfaction with the considerable progress made towards the implementation of the Integrated Planning System, especially the recent establishment of a new Performance-Based Monitoring mechanism for the National Strategy for Development and Integration 2007-2013, which will also help to better align external assistance with government priorities. She emphasized the need for the donors and Government

to work together towards increased complementarity between the EU financial support to Albania's enlargement and the aid offered by all bilateral and multilateral donors to reach the main goal for Albania, EU Integration. "I would like to assure you that all donors are fully committed to further strengthening the partnership with Government, in completing the EU requirements and in furthering the aid harmonisation agenda," she said. DSDC Director Valbona Kuko delivered a detailed presentation of the IPS implementation and progress on establishing the new results-based NSDI monitoring. She emphasized that Albania has now completed the strategic framework and that the focus needs to shift toward monitoring. Director Kuko recognised the achievements of the joint work of Government and donor community in strengthening coordination through Sector Working Groups (SWGs), on embracing and adopting new coordination mechanisms aiming at accountability and managing for results.

More information about the roundtable can be found [here](#).

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Photo: UN Resident Coordinator in Albania, Zineb Touimi-Benjelloun, Minister of Innovation and ICT, Genc Pollo, (Chair of the GMC) and DSDC Director Valbona Kuko at the Government Modernization Committee discussing the new One UN Programme 2012-2016

New One UN programme 2012-2016

On 21 December 2010, the Government Modernization Committee (GMC) - the highest level policy, coordination and decision making authority - met with United Nations Agencies in Albania to discuss strategies and UN's areas of support for the 2012-2016 period. Minister of Innovation and ICT, Genc Pollo, Chair of the GMC, highlighted the main achievements and lessons learned from the current One UN Programme, which started in 2007. "With the current programme coming to an end in 2011," he stated, "we can now say with confidence that Delivering as One has been a success in Albania and there is now no going back. The Government of Albania is fully committed to seeing the continuation and further deepening of UN reform at the country level, as well as globally. The most important achievement is that One UN priorities are fully aligned with the National Strategy for Development and Integration 2007-2013, as well as sector and cross-cutting strategies. The programme has contributed and supported Government efforts to respond to the requirements for EU membership.... We appreciate the new vision and considerable changes brought on by the One UN Programme through the 'Four Ones' approach: One Leader, One Programme, One Budget and One Voice. It has contributed to further enhance strategic planning and coordination of foreign assistance, in line with commitments to the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action".

GMC members welcomed the deci-

sion of the UN to prepare the One Document to be signed with the Government of Albania, replacing specific agreements between different UN agencies. This is a key step in deepening UN reform at the country level. "I would like to reiterate the importance of having clear, focused and well stated priorities which will ensure that the future programme remains as relevant as the existing one", said Mr Pollo. United Nations Resident Coordinator in Albania, Zineb Touimi-Benjelloun, thanked Minister Pollo and the Government for their strong leadership and commitment in the implementation of the current programme. In her presentation, Ms. Touimi-Benjelloun outlined the UN's areas of support and expected results for the 2012-2016 Programme, which was developed after extensive consultations with a large array of stakeholders. Proposed areas for UN support include: governance/ modernization of public administration, economy and environment, regional and local development and inclusive social policy. She concluded by thanking the donor community who have supported the current programme and looked forward to renewed partnerships under the new UN-Government of Albania Programme of Cooperation 2012-2016.

The UN-Government of Albania Programme of Cooperation is due to be signed in October 2011.

Norway furthers its support to One UN Programme in Albania

On 8 December 2010, the Government of Norway renewed its commitment to Delivering as One UN in Albania, with

an additional contribution of 806,452 USD (NOK 5,000,000)*. The Government of Norway is a strong supporter of UN reform, having first committed 1,092,896 USD in December 2007. Norway's newest contribution will go to the One UN Coherence Fund: a non-earmarked, multi-year funding pool that enhances the efficiency of the United Nations in Albania by streamlining, simplifying and increasing the harmonization and predictability of resource flows. Led by the Government of Albania and building on the strengths of 14 participating agencies, the One UN Programme aims to maximize the UN's impact in five main areas: more transparent and accountable governance; greater inclusive participation in public policy and decision-making; increased and more equitable access to quality basic services; regional development to reduce disparities; and environmentally sustainable development. Norwegian assistance for the Western Balkans primarily targets key reform and development processes and focuses on humanitarian efforts, democracy building measures, long-term capacity building and private sector development. Albania's European integration efforts and its achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 are top priorities.

KfW signs Five Project and Loan Agreements

On 23 December 2010, KfW Entwicklungsbank, represented by the Director of the Regional Office Albania and Kosovo, Ute Rodrian and the Government of Albania, represented by the Minister of



Photo: U.S. Ambassador Alexander Arvizu visited the flooded region of Shkodra and met with officials at the disaster operations centre to discuss their emergency assistance operations. (Credit: Robert Manga, U.S. Embassy)

Finance, Ridvan Bode and Minister of Public Works and Transportation, Sokol Oldashi, signed five Loan and Project Agreements worth 65.6 million Euro. The funds consist of a grant element of 16.9 million Euro provided by the European Commission and 48.7 million Euro in grant and development loans provided by the German Government through KfW Entwicklungsbank. In line with the Paris Agenda, KfW Entwicklungsbank is in the lead for joint and harmonized donor financing which brings together European resources aiming to increase their impact.

The agreements include several programmes, Municipal Infrastructure I, Environmental Protection Ohrid Lake – Water Supply and Sewerage Porgradec III, Solid Waste Management South-east Albania, Water Supply Middle Albania – the Berat-Kucova Component and Social Investment Fund IV, which fall under the Water and Sewerage sector of the German-Albanian Development Cooperation.



Photo: Minister of Finance, Ridvan Bode and KfW Director of the Regional Office Albania and Kosovo, Ute Rodrian sign project and loan agreements on 23 December 2010

US Government Assists Displaced Following Severe Flooding

On 15 December 2010, the U.S. Ambassador to Albania, Alexander Arvizu, visited the flooded region of Shkodra and met with officials at the Government of Albania's disaster operations centre to discuss their emergency assistance operations. The Ambassador met with the Prefect of Shkodra, Maxhid Cungu, the Mayor of Shkoder, Lorenc Luka, and the President of the Albanian Red Cross, Dr. Shyqyri Subashi to discuss relief efforts. In his remarks to the media, the Ambassador affirmed the U.S. Government's commitment to support the Albanian people during both the emergency and long-term recovery efforts. The United States Embassy donated \$50,000 in emergency assistance to flood victims. The funds were disbursed through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)'s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance to the Albanian Red Cross for the purchase and distribution of blankets, hygiene kits, and other emergency relief supplies.

High Level Conference: European Integration - Realities and Perspectives in the Light of the Analytical Report of the European Commission

The reactions of the Albanian Government to the opinion of the European Commission on the application of

Albania for membership in the EU were discussed on 10 December 2010 during the conference *European Integration - Realities and Perspectives in the Light of the Analytical Report of the European Commission*. The Ministry of European Integration organized the event, which took place in the framework of the project "Support to the Albanian Ministry of European Integration (SMEI II)". SMEI II is co-funded by the EU and the German Government and implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). The Conference follows the 9 November 2010 publication of the Opinion of the European Commission on the application of Albania for EU membership and the accompanying Analytical Report. Though the Opinion assesses that Albania has made good progress overall, it also calls for important reforms. In her opening speech, the Minister for European Integration, Majlinda Bregu, referred to the successful implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU, but also underlined the need for support from all political forces and for their commitment to participate broadly in the ongoing process and bring it to a successful conclusion. The Chargé d'Affaires of the EU Delegation to Tirana, Luigi Brusa and the acting German Ambassador, Jan Rudolph pointed to the conditions and technical steps required to further align the country with European standards. The panellists jointly agreed that preparing Albania for full membership in the EU will be a long-term process. Participants at the conference included representatives from Government Authorities, Members of Parliament, as well as representatives from civil society and international organisations. The ongoing 2 million Euro project will continue to support the capacities of the Ministry of European Integration until 2011.

Enhancing cooperation between the Government & Albanian migrant communities/new diaspora on transnational development

On 6 December 2010, IOM Tirana organized the conference *Enhancing cooperation between the Albanian Government & Albanian migrant communities/new diaspora on transnational*



Photo: High Level Conference: European Integration - Realities and Perspectives in the Light of the Analytical Report of the European Commission

development, in conjunction with the Albanian Government and the Development Cooperation Office of the Italian Embassy in Tirana. The event marked the conclusion of the project The National Action Plan on Remittances: Moving from Policy Development to Implementation, funded by the Italian Development Cooperation and implemented by the IOM Tirana. It brought together Albanian government institutions responsible for migration policies, civil society and international actors, financial institutions managing remittances and investments in the country as well as representatives of Albania's new diaspora (namely, Albanians who emigrated after the 90s, have spent more than a decade abroad, hold regular status, and are well integrated in their new countries, e.g., Greece, Italy, the UK, and Germany). Discussions explored possible partnerships between the government and Albanian expatriate communities, with particular attention to human and economic development. In his opening speech, the Chief of the IOM Tirana Mission, Nicoletta Giordano, emphasized the new diaspora's important contributions toward the country's development as well the catalytic role the Government has played. She recalled the most recent Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) on Partnerships for migration and human development: shared prosperity – shared responsibility which took place in November 2010 in Mexico. The GFMD Forum, in which Albania

participates regularly, transcended the usual economic debates on effects and consequences of migration and focused instead on such human dimensions as health, education, gender, human rights and the protection of all migrants. The Italian Ambassador to Albania, Saba D'Elia also underlined the important role the Albanian community in Italy plays. Approximately 400,000 Albanians live in Italy where they represent the second largest immigrant community. They are well integrated in the labour market and active members of civil society. Therefore, encouraging cooperation between the Albanian Government and migrant communities abroad, as well as promoting the use of formal channels to transfer their savings, will remain a priority of the Italian Development Cooperation in conjunction with IOM. Deputy Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Kastriot Sulka pointed out that the Albanian Government also encourages citizens to return, if they so wish. The Strategy "On reintegration of returned Albanian Citizens 2010 – 2015" and its Action Plan strive to render return more sustainable by facilitating the reintegration process, minimizing migration costs and maximizing benefits. The Conference generated a number of recommendations on how to foster partnerships between the Government of Albania and the diaspora, including: strengthening and expanding existing institutional channels of communication with the diaspora (through the National Institute of Diaspora at MFA,

the Albanian Investment Development Agency and other government entities); promoting diaspora engagement in an ongoing dialogue with policy making in Albania; organizing similar events regularly, hosted by the Government of Albania and stakeholders.

Participation of civil society in policy-making process

The project *Strengthening civil society and democratic structures in Albania*, funded by GTZ through GOPA consulting agency, was a Government initiative to promote civil society participation in policy-making process as a standard of governance democratic, and to build a process of continual involvement of civil society. The project has been implemented in central government (Council of Ministers, Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of European Integration). The closing ceremony



Photo: The closing ceremony of the project *Strengthening civil society and democratic structures in Albania*, held on 16 December 2010



Photo: Conference Enhancing cooperation between the Albanian Government & Albanian migrant communities/new diaspora on transnational development

was held on 16 December 2010. The ceremony was attended by government representatives, international organizations and civil society representatives. It was greeted by Secretary General in the Council of Ministers, Gjergj Lezhja who said that the support by the Ger-

man government had been decisive for the progress made and that the Government considered the co-operation within this project as successful. What was achieved through this project was the establishment of an institutional framework that ensured and promoted citizen participation in governance. The aim was that once this framework was institutionalized it turned into an element that will accompany the performance of all levels of governance. Project Manager, Valdet Sala provided a presentation of project activities and achievements: Establishment/allocation of a government Fund to support civil society, as a part of the state budget; legal initiative that sanction this fund, through the approval of law On organization and functioning of the Agency for the Promotion of Civil Society, Support for the estab-

Conference on Continuing Education for Health Professionals Marks Progress Achieved and Identifies Challenges

On 9 and 10 December 2010, The Ministry of Health together with the Swiss Cooperation Office in Albania (SCO-A) and the National Centre for Continuing Education held a conference on continuing medical education for health professionals. The event was organized as part of the Swiss-funded Professional Development



Photo: Swiss Ambassador H.E. Yvana Enzler addressing the opening remark at the conference on continuing medical education for health professionals

Project. Minister of Health, Petrit Vasili and Swiss Ambassador, Yvana Enzler opened the conference. Health professionals from Switzerland, Albania, and several other countries presented their experiences and identified further steps needed to improve continuing

medical education in Albania. "A modern health work force must continuously improve its knowledge and skills", said the Director of the National Centre for Continuing Education, Entela Shehu. She also added that "Albania, thanks to Swiss support, is on the right track towards creating continuing education for health workers". The National Centre for Continuing Education was established with the support of the Swiss government in order to provide accreditation and re-certification for health professionals wishing to pursue continuing education.

lishment of the Agency for the Support of Civil Society and making it functional; Drafting and approval by representatives of the civil society and government of the draft Charter of the Civil Society, which is expected to be adopted by the Assembly; revival of a co-operative process between the civil society and government through concrete experiences in the processes of consultation of draft law and the civil society charter. This project aimed to create a political climate of trust between government and civil society, not only through public expression of goodwill for co-operation, but also through the materialization of the legal and institutional initiatives that enable the space for civil society engagement in governance processes. The project has been showing the best European models of governance, which have proven successful thanks to the involvement of citizens in governance, and strategic engagement of civil society.

Albanian-Slovenian Business Conference

On 8 December 2010, the Albanian-Slovenian Economic Forum organised a conference, which Albanian Prime Minister Sali Berisha and Slovenian Prime Minister Borut Pahor opened. Over 107 representatives from all sectors of Slovenian business attended. PM Pahor positively assessed Albania's achievements in recent years and confirmed that 20 Slovenian companies intend to start business ventures in the country very soon. The Slovenian premier said that Albania will be the ultimate destination in Europe and at the focus of Slovenia's investments. "Slovenia is looking for a new market in Europe for investments in different sectors and Albania will be at the focus of the Slovenian investors. Albania is a country to invest in as it makes it easy for business. And the two governments are determined to promote cooperation in this respect. Therefore, we decided to set up even the Business Council as the two countries cooperate closely for the stimulation of investments," Pahor said. For his part, PM Berisha called on the Slovenian businesses to invest in Albania where they would find the lowest taxes in Europe. The prime minister emphasized



Photo: Prime Minister Sali Berisha and Prime Minister of Slovenia, Borut Pahor address the Albanian-Slovenian Business Conference, organised on 8 December 2010

that the reforms his government implemented over the last years have made Albania a very favourable environment for the foreign investors. The conference ended when Deputy Foreign Minister Selim Belortaja and Director General for Economic Diplomacy and Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia Vladimir Gasparic signed a protocol of cooperation.

Public Administration Reform - Stakeholder Event

On 1 December 2010, the Department of Public Administration (DoPA) organized a "Stakeholder Event on Public Administration Reform" funded by the European Union and the Federal Government of Germany. The aim was to re-energize the Government's efforts after one year of Public Administra-

tion Reform (PAR) Strategy implementation. The event brought together more than 60 participants from the key stakeholder institutions, including 5 Deputy Ministers representing the Inter-ministerial working group on public administration. The head of German International Cooperation (GIZ) Office Albania, Gantzer-Sommer, underscored the need for PAR to adopt standards in line with *acquis* as part of Albania's effort to achieve EU membership. All Deputy Ministers expressed their support to realizing the PAR strategy and recognized the importance that civil service reforms are actually implemented. A number of concrete steps, focusing on revitalising the working groups on PAR, increasing effort in collecting information from stakeholders and the revision of the action- and monitoring plans, were pointed out by DoPA Director, Blerta Selenica at the conclusion of the meeting.



Photo: Stakeholder Event on Public Administration Reform organised by the Department of Public Administration on 1 December 2010 / Credit: GIZ

Businesses strongly endorse the one-stop-shop for licensing in Albania

According to key survey findings announced today by the non-profit organization Partners Albania, the one-stop-shop National Licensing Centre (NLC) has significantly reduced the time and effort for businesses to obtain licenses or permits in Albania. These results were presented at a roundtable in December with business community representatives. The Millennium Challenge Corporation Albania Threshold Program II (MCCA2), administered by USAID, established the National Licensing Centre in June 2009 and operates under the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Energy. The Centre has processed over 2,000 applications in the last five months and demand for its services is growing. The study found that the Centre receives a very high level of satisfaction among businesses in terms of fairness, transparency and effectiveness. The roundtable in Tirana was part of a second round of NLC consultations with the business community, supported by MCCA2, with the goal of further improving the range and delivery of its services.

EU continues support to Judiciary Reform

A new 2.3 million Euro project funded by the EU to support the strengthening of the rule of law in Albania was officially launched on 17 December 2010. The project Consolidation of the Justice System in Albania (EURALIUS) will assist the Albanian Ministry of Justice and judicial institutions to develop an independent, impartial, efficient, professional, transparent and modern justice system. It intended to contribute to building further public confidence in these institutions, to the consolidation of democracy in the country and rule of law. The Opinion and Analytical Report recently published by the European Commission re-emphasised the importance of the rule of law and justice reform for Albania's accession. The Council of the EU has endorsed the Opinion of the Commission and reaffirmed that future evaluation of Albania will be focused on the twelve key



Photo: National Licensing Centre business roundtable in Tirana, 1 December 2010

priorities outlined by the Commission, including strengthening of the rule of law, and justice reform. The project has brought to the country 5 long-term international experts from different EU Member States, who together with 2 local experts, will work during the coming 30 months on Justice Organisation and Justice Reform, Modernisation of the Judiciary, Enforcement of Rulings, Court Administration and Case Management, Criminal Justice and Participation. During the launch ceremony, Chargé d'Affaires of the EU Delegation to Albania, Luigi Brusa noted that "reforming the justice system cannot be patchwork. It cannot be done upon ad hoc decisions. The rule of law needs to derive from a comprehensive vision and an all-encompassing strategy towards the goals of transparency, accountability and efficiency". Speaking of the importance of the rule of law for a functioning democracy, he added that "there is no such thing as a 'majority rule of law',

or an "opposition rule of law". Broad political consensus between political forces on judicial reform is a necessary condition for progress". The project is being implemented by the Spanish Ministry of Justice in consortium with the Italian High Council of the Judiciary.

Workshop on Probation Services

A first round table took place on 14 December 2010 to review experiences and good practices, and identify ways to strengthen the partnership between probation services and NGOs. The Ministry of Justice (Probation services) and the Centre for Integrated Practices and Legal Services (CIPLS) jointly organised the event with support from UNICEF. Deputy Minister of Justice, Brikena Kasmi, reiterated that judicial reform also involved increasing the capacity of



Photo: Deputy Minister of Justice, Brikena Kasmi, Director of Probation, Arben Sefgjini, UNICEF representative, Detlef Palm, and Director of CIPLS, Holta Zaçaj, leading the discussions on the Probation Services on 14 December 2010

the newly established probation services. She stressed the importance of non-custodial measures and diversion for juveniles at odds with the law were key. The Director of Probation, Arben Sefgjini, presented the progress and challenges of probation services and the steps needed to complete the legal framework. UNICEF Representative, Detlef Palm underlined the importance of improving the probation services for juveniles. "Probation is not just an everyday job for the probationer, or for a probation officer, or for a social worker. Probation services must show compassion and understanding, and a willingness to connect people so they can learn from each other.... The treatment of juveniles must be different from that of adults, with complementary services, including vocational training. Last year, about 42% of the sentences for juveniles by courts included in the pilot phase were referred to civil society organizations and probation, and we want this figure to increase. And we want the juveniles to be reconnected, so they can find work and live a decent life" said Palm. Holta Zaçaj (CIPLS), Don Marek Grun (Don Bosco) and other NGO representatives shared experiences and challenges for better partnership between civil society and probation services.

USAID Launches New Project to Support Albanian Justice Sector

On 21 December 2010, USAID, in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and the High Council of Justice, organized a conference "Toward more Transparent, Effective and Accountable Justice in Albania" to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the Albanian justice system, and to launch USAID's new Albanian Justice Sector Strengthening Project (JuST). Represented at the conference were court chief judges and chancellors from across Albania, representatives of legal professional associations, civil society organizations, and the media. Conference discussions centred on ways to create a more robust university and continuous legal education, improve self-regulation of the legal profession, as well as better relations between the courts and civil society and the media. The USAID Albanian Justice Sector Strengthening Project (JuST) is a five-year program,



Photo: USAID Mission Director, Joseph C. Williams, together with the Minister of Justice, Bujar Nishani, and the Head of the High Council of Justice, Kreshnik Spahiu, delivered remarks at the launch of the Albanian Justice Sector Strengthening project (JuST)/ Credit: USAID

which aims to increase court transparency, fairness and efficiency, bolster the watchdog and anti-corruption role of civil society organizations and media, and strengthen the legal profession and education in Albania.

Inauguration of the Youth Employment Service (YES) office in Kukës

Youth Employment Services (YES) were inaugurated in the Kukës Regional Employment Office on 3 December 2010. UNICEF helped to transfer the necessary skills, provided equipment and assisted initial service delivery, as

part of the government Youth Employment and Migration programme supported by three UN agencies. YES provides: Job postings, employer hiring fairs, career assessments and guidance, vocational educational opportunities; Individual employment counseling for young people between 16 and 29 years of age; Job placement services, internships and seasonal employment opportunities; Information packages on youth employment and education; Resume development, and employment preparation and planning. Counselling on work rights and work contract information; occupational health and safety; and safe mobility information (related to migration). In his remarks, UNICEF Representative, Detlef Palm, reminded young



Photo: YES Inauguration - Handing over certificates to graduates from a vocational training programme in Kukës on 3 December 2010

people that “one always needs good advice or a second opinion when it comes to major decisions about one’s career. These services can help you. But, it is your initiative that makes the difference. Seek to keep control over your future and your life. Discover your entrepreneurship spirit!” The inauguration event was attended by Mayor of Kukës, Hasan Halilaj, Ambassador of Kingdom of Spain, Manuel Montobio, and representatives of National and Regional Employment Services. The programme is financed by the Government of Spain through its contribution to the MDG Achievement Fund.

International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

“Violence against women is always unacceptable; it is always a violation of human rights; it is against the law. It is always a crime. I think most of us agree. But do we do something about it? - UNICEF Representative in Albania, Detlef Palm, said during a meeting with students of journalism. The meeting was held in the framework of the 16 days of activism against gender based violence, a yearly activity organized by the UN GWG in collaboration with Government of Albania. High level representatives of American Embassy, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and Civil Society also attended the meeting and expressed support for Mr. Palm’s stance. Students attending the meeting received these comments positively. The media, it was pointed out, has one of the most important roles in changing attitudes given its wide reach. Journalists are not only observing or reporting; they are in a position to drive. They must take the lead not only for 16 days of activism, but as long as it takes to end domestic violence and violence against women.

Toward establishing a Sector-Wide Approach in Environment

On 16 December 2010, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Water Administration organized the regular Meeting of the Environmental Sector Working Group. The meeting provided general in-



Photo: 7 December 2010 – Students of journalism’s forum on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

formation on the different developments in the environment sector during 2010, including progress on environmental legislation, gave an overview of the 2011 Ministry workplan and discussed the preliminary results of the work undertaken in preparing the Operational Plan for Environmental Sector aimed at facilitating a Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp). The Operational Plan will transform the government’s policy intentions to operational objectives and will integrate them with the financial realities as expressed in the government’s multiannual and annual budgetary frameworks. The elaboration of the Operational Plan for the Environment Sector is organized through, analyses, interviews and workshops where the Plan is built up step by step. The first one-week workshop took place at the end of October 2010; others are scheduled for early spring 2011. These workshops will be complemented by other activities such as interviews with concerned parties and promotion of the Plan with government institutions, donors and media. This initiative call for information meetings at both political and administrative levels of the Albanian administration, organized by the Ministry political leadership and by the core working group. Donors in the sector were invited to support this process.

Pre-accession assistance for the Western Balkans, Iceland and Turkey IPA Conference 2010

On 6 and 7 December 2010, the European Commission and the World Bank,

hosted a two-day conference in Brussels to discuss how the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) can be implemented toward maximum effect in the Western Balkans, Turkey, and Iceland. The conference also addressed cross-border cooperation in the Western Balkans. It also addressed the role of financial assistance for the Western Balkans, Turkey, and Iceland and the role of financial in their bid for EU membership. A deeper partnerships between the EU, the European financial institutions and the World Bank was recommended for helping this country in the wake of financial crisis.. The participants examined how political and economic support, EU financial assistance and other donor financial support can be made more coherent and mutually reinforcing, particularly as regards fine-tuning of the IPA. The conference was used to launch a stakeholder’s consultation on the future of pre-accession assistance after 2013. Participants had the opportunity to set the tone for the debate on what form EU financial mechanisms should take in order to best assist sustainable change and efficient reforms. The second day focused on cross-border cooperation between the Western Balkan countries. This meeting took stock of the regional efforts and achievements during the period 2007-2010, and discuss future prospects for cross-border cooperation in the region. The conference attracted over 450 participants, including ministers and senior officials from beneficiary states as well donor agencies, international financial institutions, and civil society organizations.

International Day against HIV/AIDS

“Access to qualitative health, social services and informed citizens are key to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS” was the joint message that followed a roundtable the National Programme on HIV/AIDS in partnership with UN agencies organized in recognition of the International Day against HIV/AIDS on 1 December 2010. Discussion focused on the major challenges and obstacles to fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS and developing control and treatment programmes. The Government has adopted a national strategy and action plan on fighting HIV, strengthened testing systems throughout the country and provides free treatment for AIDS patients. Participants at the round table, including the representatives of the Association of People living with HIV, shared their views and described the challenges and obstacles they faced in their day-to-day work. In a press conference following the event, Participants constructively discussed how civil society can be more engaged and agreed on the need for better targeted programmes for those most at risk to get infected. A press conference was led by Minister of Health, Petrit Vasili. “AIDS has caused untold suffering and death. But another story has unfolded through the years, one of people around the world uniting with passion to take action. These efforts are making a real difference”. said UNICEF Representative, Detlef Palm. “But it is not over yet”, he added. “Albania hasn’t crossed the peak of the epidemic. We want to help that the response to HIV embraces health, dignity, security and solidarity; and not stigma, discrimination and punishment. The work is not done until we have zero infections, zero AIDS deaths, and zero discrimination”.

Meeting of the ICT Sector Working Group

On 15 December 2010, the Ministry for Innovation and ICT organized the second meeting for 2010 of the Sector Working Group on ICT. Minister Genc Pollo chaired the meeting, which aimed to analyse progress in the sector, new policies adopted to develop ICT and



Photo: 1 December 2010 - World AIDS Day activities at Sheraton hotel

Information society and further steps. Minister Pollo provided an overview of the current situation in this sector, new policies and achievements so far and priorities in ICT. He invited the donors to support the Government priorities in this sector since its development plays a major role in the socio-economic development of the country. Ministry Chief of Cabinet, Gjergji Gjinko made a detailed presentation of the areas that need further donor financial support, such as digital library, online education, citizen e-participation in decision-making (e-inclusion), and online public services. Participants included representatives from the Delegation of EU, World Bank, UN, Italy, Austria and Switzerland.

A New Agenda for Albania's Future Growth

On 13 December 2010, the World Bank presented *The New Growth Agenda* (or the Country Economic Memorandum for Albania). The report argues that Albania can sustain growth in the future only by implementing a new generation of policies and reforms focused mainly on education and skills, ICT development, the energy sector, and better governance and rule of law. The Bank engaged a team of national and international experts to prepare the report. It explores future sources of growth as Albania enters a new stage of development and analyzes new sources for growth. It

conclude that further investment in human capital is needed, particularly in areas of education and training. It also reviews developments in information technology, the investment climate, financial sector, and proposes measures for improving Albania's economic outlook as an upper middle income country. “Reaching the upper middle income country status in a relatively short time is a major achievement. It also poses new challenges. Under this new status Albania has to compete with low-wage poorer countries as well as with rich country innovators”, said Kseniya Lvovsky, World Bank Country Manager for Albania in presenting the report. This report follows other recent World Bank studies that recommended improvement in the country's education system and IT infrastructure. Albania has made considerable efforts to improve the business climate and to prepare for possible EU accession by enacting large numbers of new laws and regulations. To complement these measures a critical issue for firms is the extent to which the Government abides by, and implements existing laws and regulations in a consistent and coherent manner. The report was presented by a team of World Bank experts and was followed by a fruitful discussion of representatives from Government, civil society, private sector and donors. This report aims to contribute to the ongoing debate of the Albanian society on the new growth agenda. To view the report, please click [here](#).

2011 Survey on Monitoring Paris Declaration

The third round of Monitoring the Paris Declaration began in December of 2010 and will be completed by March 2011. In the run up to the 2011 Survey on Monitoring the Paris Declaration, UNDP and the OECD have organized a series of regional workshops aiming to ensure that key actors involved in the management of the monitoring survey and other related processes - including the 2011 UN DESA/UNDP Survey on Mutual Accountability - were briefed on the objectives, process and technical aspects of the 2011 surveys. Besides offering technical training on the Paris Declaration Survey methodology, the workshops also aimed at strengthening regional communities of practice, providing a platform for exchange of experience and best practices around the Paris Declaration process, and collecting partner country views and concerns to take to the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness that will be held in Republic of Korea, in December 2011.

Co-hosted by the Government of Jordan, the Government of Iraq, the OECD and UNDP, the regional workshop for the Arab States, Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States took place at the Dead Sea, Jordan, on 8-9 December 2010. The 2 day Survey workshop was well attended, with 20 government representatives and 15 Paris Declaration Survey donor focal points from the following 11 partner countries/territories, including Albania. During the first day of the workshop, DSDC Coordinator, Klodjan Seferaj along with panelists from Morocco, Jordan, and Egypt shared country experience on priorities for aid and development effectiveness in Middle Income Countries. Group and plenary discussions highlighted a range of issues specific to countries in these regions as they relate to both the 2011 Survey and the aid effectiveness agenda more broadly. The workshop was characterized by high levels of concentration, an eagerness to seize the opportunity to gain a solid understanding of the 2011 Survey process and lively discussions and debates that went well beyond the PD Survey. Materials presented at these workshops are available [here](#).



Photo: DSDC Coordinator, Klodjan Seferaj along with panelists from Morocco, Jordan, and Egypt sharing country experience on priorities for aid and development effectiveness in Middle Income Countries.

In-country Missions

World Bank Albania Disaster Risk Mitigation and Adaptation Project, visited from 1 to 7 December 2010.

The primary purpose of the mission was to review, together with counterpart agencies, the status of all project activities; identify bottlenecks in the implementation; review the work plan, procurement pipeline, and financial management issues; and discuss measures to accelerate progress in achieving project objectives. Together with Government counterparts, the mission also reviewed the project results and

monitoring framework including the targets and specific outcome indicators for potential revisions.

Albania Avian Influenza Control and Human Pandemic Preparedness and Response Project, took place from 13 to 17 December 2010.

The aims of the mission were to: i) assess progress achieved in implementation of the project components and actions agreed in the supervision missions of June 4 2010 as well as the project completion, ii) make sure that the project and component performance indicators are met and duly reflected in Task Force Secretariat final reports, and iii) guide the project staff in the completion of the Borrowers Project Completion Report (PCR).

governmentdonor**dialogue**

As of 15 December 2010 the World Bank took over as the Chair of the Donor Technical Secretariat from the Swiss Cooperation Office.

All comments regarding Government-Donor Dialogue are warmly welcomed!

Want to contribute?

If you would like to contribute, send your text to the Donor Technical Secretariat (DTS) Office (nevila.como@aidharmonisation.org.al) or the Department of Strategy and Donor Coordination (DSDC) (akabashi@km.gov.al) by the 5th of every month. An ideal word count for submissions is around 100 words.

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