



Government
of the Republic
of Serbia

The Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) in Serbia is a medium-term development framework aimed at reducing the key forms of poverty by creating material and other prerequisites and by providing opportunities to each person to provide the basic subsistence for themselves and their families.

The PRS offers an analysis of causes, characteristics and profile of poverty in Serbia, as well as main strategic guidelines for eliminating them in the coming years. The Government of Serbia is committed to economic growth and development, for which reason the PRS activities are geared towards economic development and growth, prevention of emergence of new poverty and care for the traditionally poor groups.

The final PRS document was adopted on October 16, 2003, whereas on February 17, 2005 the Government authorized the Deputy Prime Minister to regularly inform the Government on the Strategy implementation process, in cooperation with the PRS Implementation Focal Point.

BORIS TADIĆ, PRESIDENT OF SERBIA

International Day of Fight against Poverty

It is on each 17 September that the world poses the question: What else can we do to reduce poverty in our country? The leaders of 189 countries - members of the UN, gathered at the Millennium Summit in New York in September 2000 and adopted the Millennium Declaration. The Declaration sets out the key values that the 21st century international relations should be based upon: freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, environmental protection, sharing of responsibility. Serbia also identified national priorities and tasks in order to be able to fulfill the Millennium Development Goals.

Today, seven years after the democratic changes, life is better in Serbia. Living standards have increased, economic growth exceeds 5%/annum, inflation has been curbed, a significant inflow of Foreign Direct Investments is recorded... It is now easier to start a business in Serbia, loans for various needs are readily accessible, our hospitals are better equipped, we no longer fear shortages... Financing of local self-government has become more stable as of this year, enabling municipalities to plan their activities and do more for their citizens.

Economic growth, although significantly contributing to the increase of salaries and pensions as well as the living standard of the population, has nevertheless had no impact on the increase of employment. Expansion of the private sector and the sector of small and medium size enterprises opened the doors to taking over a part of the unemployed work force but not as sufficiently as to exert influence on a decrease of the number of unemployed persons. The slow institutional reforms, volatile business climate, delays in the sphere of changes in the education sector, delay of the processes of restructuring and privatisation of socially-owned and state companies and other factors resulted in persistence of the very high unemployment rate. Further to being high, unemployment in Serbia is protracted, especially among the young people and women. Mea-

sured by the unemployment rate, we are at the very top of the European scale and all our efforts should be directed towards creating conditions to reduce it as it is one of the key causes of poverty in Serbia.

In the employment sector, activities need to be taken in several directions. The first one towards removing obstacles impeding investments and starting businesses, the second is a more active role of the National Employment Service in implementing active employment measures, and the third one design of measures to promote development of the private sector and of development of small and medium size enterprises in particular.

While a part of the problems in Serbia may be resolved through increase of employment, economic growth and development will not automatically result in improvement in all the spheres of the society. Not everyone may avail themselves of the favourable options and „find their way“ on the market. Society and all of us should particularly support children, the elderly, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.

Therefore, the first democratic Government adopted a Poverty Reduction Strategy back in 2003, the development document offering recommendations and measures for economic and social development and reduction of the number of the poor in the coming years. An ambitious, but attainable goal was set then - to halve the number of the poor by 2010. The first set of activities stipulated by the Strategy relates to creation of conditions for a stable and sustainable economic growth that would result in a better life for a majority of citizens of Serbia, and the second one the formulation of a responsible social policy, meaning actually provision of social security for the vulnerable and the weak and accessibility of health and education to all. All the other commitments and goals stem from this key commitment.

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SIXTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

„Environment for Europe“

The sixth ministerials conference „Environment for Europe“ was held in Belgrade 10 - 12 October. The conference was organized by the Ministry of Environmental Protection of the Government of the Republic of Serbia. It represents the largest and the most significant international event in Serbia this year.

The adoption of a document providing for establishment of a regional virtual centre for monitoring climate changes in the region of South-East Europe in Belgrade is of particular significance for Serbia.

The participants of the conference were the environment ministers and representatives of the ministries in charge of environmental protection from 56 countries in the region of UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), including Canada and the USA, representatives of other UN member countries, as well as over 200 representatives on non-governmental organizations and the media. The ministers of education took part in the work of the conference for the first time in the history of this process.

The First Ministerial Conference, within the „Environment for Europe“ process was held in 1991 in the then Czechoslovakia. Four more conferences followed: in Switzerland (1993), Bulgaria (1995), Denmark (1998) and Ukraine (2003).

www.efe-belgrade2007.org

LANCE CLARK, UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Persons with Disabilities: Hidden Face of Poverty in Serbia

Persons with disabilities are the largest minority in the world - estimated at 650 million worldwide, over half a million in Serbia. Although this group represents approximately 10% of the total population, they tend to be hidden from the public eye, unnecessarily forced to stay confined in their homes or in institutions.

In Serbia, 70% of them live in poverty. However, they are not limited by disability but by obstacles posed by the society and at work place.

Last year the Government took a proactive step forward in this area by endorsing a new Law against Discrimination of Persons with Disabilities. The aim of this Law is to improve access to services, housing, commercial and public buildings as well as employment for

persons with disabilities. It may bear considerable impact on possibilities of employment and the quality of life of persons with disabilities and thanks to it Serbia is a leader in this regard - the first country in South-East Europe that adopted a law of this kind.

However, fines for violations thereof and legal procedures do not suffice for successful implementation of this Law. All the members of the Serbian society should give their contribution towards it becoming more open. The owners of companies should bear in mind physical accessibility when choosing office space and equipment. Parents and teachers should inform children about this issue and particularly about inclusion of children with disabilities into schools.

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LANCE CLARK, UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Persons with Disabilities: Hidden Face of Poverty in Serbia

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In absence of these efforts, the position of persons with disabilities will not change. Children with disabilities will continue to have insufficient access to education. Visits to dentists will continue to consist of taking out 10 teeth at once due to limited services, and employment shall remain elusive to the majority of persons with disabilities. Joint efforts and investments are required to raise the quality of life of these persons and to better include them in the society.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has launched a campaign for promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities. This Newsletter published by the Deputy Prime Minister's Cabinet regularly informs about relevant projects in this domain. At the time when the National Parliament is opening its doors to the first MP with disabilities, it is also preparing for a debate on the new Law on Employment and Rehabilitation.

UNDP is also working to improve access to social services and employment. We hope that you will join us by discussing this topic with your political representatives, collecting funds for offering equal possibilities or employing a person with disability at your work place. Goodwill, new ideas and attention may contribute considerably to reducing discrimination and assisting persons with disabilities to come out of poverty.

BORIS TADIĆ, PRESIDENT OF SERBIA

International Day of Fight against Poverty

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In the area of social welfare, we need to improve assistance to family and individuals in attaining minimum social security, ensure conditions for a sustainable life of persons with disabilities and assist the elderly who cannot provide for themselves. Children without parental care, promotion of foster parenting and support to natural families should be in focus of our attention. The priorities of the entire society should include also prevention of violence and assistance to victims of domestic violence.

We need to continue regular payment of pensions and ensure continuous growth of the living standards of the retired. We need to build a new system of pension insurance for the future generations entailing development of voluntary, additional pension insurance.

The issue of non-market (social) housing needs to be resolved in a systematic way in order for the state and the municipalities to be able to build affordable housing for vulnerable families.

Our system of education should be enhanced, and more inclusive. The quality thereof should be at the level of developed countries, but it should also embrace as many children as possible for whom attaining knowledge and skills is the only way of breaking out of the vicious circle of poverty. Finally, everyone must be able to access elementary quality health services without additional payments with full respect of special, individual needs.

When speaking about outstanding activities, I address decision-makers in the first place: the Parliament, the Government, local self-government and the organisations also aiming to alleviate poverty: civil society organisations, private businesses and international donors. There should be no invisible persons and persons whose voice is not heard in Serbia.

All of us need to do a lot more in order to truly accomplish a better life, further to better indicators, for all the people.

Loans Worth RSD 200 Million Approved for Small and Medium Size Enterprises

Goran Petković, State Secretary for Tourism in the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development of the Government of the Republic of Serbia stated that the Government approved RSD 200 million in loans for implementation of 38 projects from the program of SME development stimulation.

In his statement to the news agency Tanjug, Petković stated that a large number of applications had been submitted but only 38 have been assessed as complete, and announced that the first phase of the work related to approval of funds to the beneficiaries will be completed by 20 October.

According to him, most of the applications related to construction and development of tourist capacities, craft shops, boats and marines. The expert committees of the Ministry will seek to engage the entire sum of RSD 400 million earmarked for SME stimulation in 2007, in early November.

On Wednesday, 3 October the Ministry will submit the 2008 budget with the continuing emphasis on support to development of urban, alpine and nautical tourism.

IMPROVEMENT OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE SERBIAN GOVERNMENT AND SCTM

Better Laws for Local Self-Governments

Vojislav Koštunica, the Prime Minister of the Government of Serbia and Željko Ožegović, President of the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities signed end of August an agreement on improvement of cooperation that will be particularly significant in proposing laws and other regulations. This is the first agreement with the Government signed since 1953 - the year of establishment of the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities. The aims thereof are continuous work on reforms regulations with a view to EU accession, strengthening of local self-governments and lasting partnership relations between central and local governments.

The Conference will be a standing participant of work groups for drafting of laws related to local self-government, laws on the capital, territorial organization, local elections and local self-government.

PUBLIC CALL OF THE OFFICE FOR NIP Financing of Projects of National Interest in 2008

The Office for the National Investment Plan (NIP) has published a Public Call for Submission of Projects for the National Investment Plan of the Republic of Serbia for 2008.

The priority will be given to projects of construction of infrastructure, education, opening new jobs, more balanced development of Serbia and rural development.

The projects may be submitted by ministries, state agencies, public institutions, a province, city or a municipality but also by citizens or associations of citizens. The advantage shall be given to regional projects - joint undertakings of several municipalities.

With respect to financing NIP projects in local self-governments, an obligation has been introduced for local self-governments to participate with 30% of funds in financing local projects. However, this obligation shall not be imposed on underdeveloped municipalities. In 2008 the NIP projects shall be financed also from privatization proceeds, international financial institutions' loans and the EU pre-accession funds.

The most important NIP projects in 2008 are Corridor 10 with a ring-road around Belgrade from Dobanovci to Bubanj Potok, the project for which RSD 721.5 million will be allocated, stimulation of direct investments for

which RSD 500 million have been earmarked and gasification of Serbia, for which approximately RSD 503.5 million will be allocated.

The total sum projected for NIP for this year from the budget is EUR 547 million which will be invested primarily into large infrastructure projects but also for the reform of the social welfare system, construction and rehabilitation of schools, universities, hospitals, kindergartens and elderly homes. Funds will be allocated within NIP for construction of social housing, and a proposal was made to stop financing construction of housing units for civil servants for they should not be given advantage relative to other employees, said Dragan Đilas, Minister without Portfolio in the Government of the Republic of Serbia.

He stressed that all data on each of the NIP projects will be made available shortly, adding that a proposal will be made to the Government to stop all the non-developmental projects and use for unintended purposes, such as whitewashing of edifices or vehicle purchase that should be financed from budget reserves.

The deadline for submission of projects expired on 1 October, and the competition of financing of projects in 2009 will be published in March 2008.

www.nip.sr.gov.yu



DEVELOPMENT OF MUNICIPALITIES IN SOUTH-WEST SERBIA

Over EUR million Worth of Assistance

The Representatives of the Government of the Republic of Serbia and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding in mid-September stipulating the implementation of the second phase of the project Development of Municipalities in South-West Serbia the total value of which is EUR 5.2 million.

A part amounting to EUR 4.9 million is donated by the EU through the European Agency for Reconstruction, while the municipalities would provide approximately EUR 265,000 from their own budgets. This grant represents a support to local governments for creation of conditions for socio-economic development and improvement of living standards of inhabitants in the seven municipalities taking part in the project: Novi Pazar, Sjenica, Tutin, Nova Varoš, Prijepolje, Priboj and Raška. During the ceremony of signing the representative of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation announced an additional donation of EUR 6.7 million. UNDP shall be in charge of the project implementation.

On behalf of the Government of Serbia, the Memorandum was signed by Mirko Cvetković, Minister of Finance and Milan Marković, Minister of State Administration and Local Self-Government and on behalf of UNDP, by Lance Clark, the UNDP Resident Representative.

SERBIA INVESTMENT AND EXPORT PROMOTION AGENCY
RSD 65 million for Export Companies

Serbia Investment and Export Promotion Agency (SIEPA) has thus far published three competitions for disbursement of RSD 65 million grants to Serbian export companies. The sums approved to companies through public competition range from RSD 250,000 to 2.5 million including compensation of costs for selected activities in the amount of 50%, VAT excluded.

The funds are approved for market research, participation in international economic fairs, new design of products or new packaging, testing and certification of products, introduction of new standards as well as certification of new standards.

The assistance is primarily targeting successful small and medium size enterprises engaged in production of goods or offering services for exports, that are not represented on foreign markets but have potential and viable business projects.

The assistance targets marketing activities exclusively. A total of RSD 100 million have been disbursed in the course of the previous two competitions.

GOVERNMENT ANNUAL OPERATIONAL PLANNING

For a More Efficient Implementation of Reforms

The project "Towards a More Efficient Implementation of reforms - Annual Operational Planning GOP" was launched in 2005 at the initiative of the central Government institutions. GOP is a part of reforms process in Serbia aiming to put in place mechanisms for a more efficient implementation of strategic and programmatic objectives of the Government.

The aim of the project is to set up a functional system of planning and budgeting in line with the defined aims as well as monitoring and reporting against outcomes in all the line ministries of Serbia by end 2008.

The Ministries participating in the GOP are provided with the planning methodology (guidelines for drafting an annual operational plan with a detailed action plan for the following year and projections for the following two years), a set of trainings for application of the new methodology and GOP drafting, operational procedures and organizational

solution for management of the GOP process at the level of ministries as well as continuous technical support.

The associates of central institutions taking part in the GOP support the planning process in all the phases. At the level of line ministries, GOP ensures an efficient mechanism for implementation of Government strategies and policies, capacity building of employees as well as improvement of communication and cooperation within and between the ministries and improvement of labour and management organization.

At the level of the Government, GOP project is used for preparation of inputs for drafting of the document "Assessment of Needs of the Republic of Serbia for Donor Assistance", rationale of the budget and preparation of the Budget Memorandum, as well as the drafting of the Annual Government Work Plan and Report on the Work of the Government. Thus GOP provides precondi-

tions for a higher level of responsibility in implementation of national policies.

In the course of GOP preparation the ministries identify aims contributing to the fulfillment of strategic and programmatic objectives of the Government which are set down in the: Poverty Reduction Strategy, Strategy of Accession of Serbia into the European Union, a Multi-Year Indicative Document of the European Commission, Budget Memorandum and the relevant sectoral strategies.

Currently 16 ministries and 4 central institutions are involved in the project. The full introduction into all the ministries is planned for October 2008. The operational functioning of the project has been entrusted to the Central Project Team at the Cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister.

GOP is financed by the Government of the Kingdom of Norway and implemented under the supervision of the Deputy Prime Minister of the Government of Serbia.

**PUBLIC CALL FOR ORGANISING PUBLIC WORKS
Projects in the interest of Serbia in 2007**

The Ministry of Economy and Regional Development published a Public Call for Organising Public Works in the Interest of the Republic of Serbia in 2007 in the sectors of: social, humanitarian, cultural and other activities (education in health activities - prevention, assistance to the elderly, protection and preservation of cultural heritage and archeological sites, various works in theatres, museums, libraries, tourism, entry and electronic data processing, marketing, etc.); maintenance and rehabilitation of public infrastructure (clearing up and construction of roads, railway tracks, bridges, dams and other facilities in public interest, cleaning of Roma settlements - improvement of housing conditions, etc.); maintenance and protection of environment and nature (rehabilitation of illegal dump sites, cleaning and maintenance of river banks, lake shores, canals, drainages, public areas, afforestation, development of ecological properties, preservation and protection

of forests, rivers and lakes, development of rural areas, mounting and maintenance of equipment in parks and public playgrounds, assistance to establishment of new dump sites - locations for collection and disposal of waste, etc.); activities in public interest that are not part of regular work of a public company i.e. activities within regular work of a public company that cannot be executed from the funds provided for regular operation thereof (in case of natural and other hazards, maintenance and rehabilitation of environment, maintenance of infrastructural facilities, construction and maintenance of irrigation systems, organizing of mobile teams in agriculture, etc.).

The results of the Public Call will be announced in mid-November 2007.

All the additional information may be obtained at the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development at 011/311 42 27 and 011/301 43 37 or in the NES branch offices.

**Central European
Free Trade Agreement**

The Serbian Parliament ratified the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) in mid-September which enabled Serbia to take part in the Ministerial Conference held in Skopje in late September as a full fledged member of CEFTA.

The Serbian economy shall not suffer any negative consequences of application of CEFTA and the concessions granted thereby were already guaranteed by 31 bilateral agreements on free trade signed with the countries in the region.

The CEFTA is significant for Serbia which mostly generates foreign trade surplus in the region as it will help her make more efficient use of preferentials it has had thus far through bilateral agreements with the countries in the region, trade will be facilitated and the countries will find it more difficult to introduce protective measures for local markets.

The Agreement will enable growth of Serbian economy and represents an introduction to the future membership of Serbia in the World Trade Organisation and the European Union.

CEFTA provides for revocation of customs limitations for industrial and agricultural products in the countries in the region by 2010 at the latest. The novelties relate to liberalization of public procurement and stronger attracting of investments into the countries signatories. The chances for penetration into European markets per preferential treatment shall also increase.

CEFTA was created in 1992 and the new text relating to the countries of South Eastern Europe was produced last year.



NES: Working with Persons with Disabilities

Looking up to European standards in working with persons with disabilities, the Government and the line ministry have endorsed strategic documents affirming the right of persons with disabilities to independence, social integration and full participation in the life of society.

The aggravating factors of employment of persons with disabilities are a low level of education, surplus of professions that certain categories of persons with disabilities are educated for, high offer of work force on the market, low offer of jobs, deeply rooted prejudices on the capabilities of persons with disabilities, architectural barriers and the current system of evaluation of labour capacity.

The National Employment Service (NES) has published a Public Call for Support to Implementation of New Employment Programmes for Persons with Disabilities for 2007. Funding of equipping of posts for 200 persons with disabilities has been planned within this programme, the total investment being RSD 48,000.00. Funding will last 12 or 36 months, along with the possibility of selection of one of the two options.

The funds are approved to an employer contracting a full-time indefinite employment con-

tract with a disabled person with ascertained remaining work capacity; a war veteran; a disabled person; a civilian who became disabled as a result of war; classified youth and other classified persons with disabilities and other non-classified persons with ascertained work capacity.

NES ensures direct support through the active labour market policies aiming to increase competitiveness and employability, prevent long-term unemployment and social exclusion of persons with disabilities. A good practical illustration is IT training for blind persons and the persons with impaired sight implemented in cooperation with the Alliance of Blind Persons of Serbia and the Faculty of Technical Sciences from Novi Sad. Twenty seven persons in cities throughout Serbia completed this training successfully.

The area of employment of persons with disabilities will be regulated by the Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities which is being prepared.

For more information on the Public Call and other employment measures, please contact the NES branch offices or see

www.nsz.sr.gov.yu

INVITATION FOR APPLICATIONS OF NES AND UNDP: Severance to a Job

The project "Severance to a Job" is implemented by the National Employment Service (NES) and the UNDP Project Team. The project is to enable redundant workers secure new employment through investment of an entire or a part of the severance pay. The project is implemented by linking employees with employers through NES branch offices or directly, through employment fairs organized in the cities throughout Serbia.

The latest Public Call for Allocation of Financial Support for Self-Employment was published on 9 October 2007.

The Call is open to all the unemployed persons registered with NES who received severance pay after 1 September

2006 or are yet to receive it. One of the key prerequisites for allocation of financial support is that the beneficiary thereof invests a part of his severance pay in the minimum amount of RSD 80,000 into starting his own business. The funds allocated through the project "Severance to a Job" represent additional financial support to a subsidy for self-employment approved by NES and may be exercised in conjunction with that subsidy. This means that the unemployed persons registered with NES who were made redundant and who received severance pay may at the same time avail themselves of the NES subsidy from the program of self-employment amounting to RSD 130,000 and an additional

financial support from the budget of the project "Severance to a Job" amounting to RSD 80,000.

The invitation is open to persons who received financial compensation whose employment terminated due to the liquidation of an employer. However, they are eligible for financial support from the budget of the project "Severance to a Job" amounting to RSD 80,000 only under the condition that they request NES payment of a one-time monetary compensation which they will subsequently invest into their own business.

The application forms with the business plan may be obtained in branch offices or downloaded from the NES website www.nsz.sr.gov.yu

MINISTRY OF ECONOMY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Employment Promotion Measures

Currently 826,572 persons are registered as unemployed in Serbia. According to the estimates, the actual number of the unemployed is 680,000 i.e. the unemployment rate is 21.6%, as stated by Vladimir Ilić, State Secretary of the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development in mid-September. He also emphasized that RSD 2.3 billion from the Republic budget was allocated for employment promotion this year, one billion Dinars more than last year. The number of the unemployed persons is lower by 100,000 than at the beginning of the year, and almost as many (approximately 100,000) are not registered i.e. work in „gray“ economy.

A large number of employees will lose their jobs next year due to privatization. However, as of 2009 a sharp decrease of the unemployment rate may be expected whereby the state will have to finance employment as it is expected to do so by domestic and foreign investors.

Within the program of promotion of active employment measures, the funds are to be earmarked from the 2008 budget for both subsidies and loans. Establishment of a separate fund has been planned to subsidise earnings of employed disabled persons in the amount of up to 80% of income. Funds have also been planned for employment of Roma and other socially vulnerable persons. According to the data of the National Employment Service (NES), 8,655 persons contracted employment this year thanks to the subsidies and programs of self-employment and organization of public works are ongoing.

The citizens may apply for loans offered by the NES in cooperation with the Development Fund for starting one's own business. The repayment period is six years with one year grace period and 1% interest rate.

Further to different loans the National Employment Service also prepared a series of trainings for the unemployed.

This year 13,500 persons will be attending these trainings.

NES PUBLIC CALL: Regional New Employment Programmes

The National Employment Service has published a public call for support to implementation of regional programmes of new employment for 2007.

The subsidies are approved for opening and equipping of posts to employers - applicants, who employ minimum five unemployed persons with full time and under indefinite employment contracts.

The subsidies are approved in one-time grant amounting to RSD 100,000.00 per one new employee.

The forms and additional information may be obtained at the nearest NES organizational unit. www.nsz.sr.gov.yu

PRS AND SIEPA: Database of Best Practices of Corporate Social Responsibility in Serbia

The PRS Implementation Focal Point and Serbia Investment and Export Promotion Agency (SIEPA) have launched an initiative for forming a data base of best practices of corporate social responsibility in Serbia as a way of proactively involving the business community into areas relevant to poverty reduction in Serbia. This concept is developing in the EU countries so rapidly that the International Standardization Organisation introduces standards ISO 26000 for social responsibility as of 2008.

A research into socially responsible business practices of 100 most successful companies in Serbia is ongoing. By taking part in this research these companies shall serve as role models and contribute to the promotion and development of this concept in our country. On the other hand, the state is given the possibility to perceive and define conditions required for development of this concept in

Serbia through identification and promotion of best practices of corporate social responsibility.

The data base will be a collection of all the information related to the key corporate social responsibility topics, such as: engagement in a local community and the society, environmental protection, corporate governance, best practices in a work place and conduct on the market. At the same time, the data base will offer information on the activities of companies supporting strategic directions of resolution of poverty-related problems (employment, education, health care, social policy).

The information on programs aiming at improvement of the situation of vulnerable groups (refugees and internally displaced persons, Roma, disabled persons, the elderly, children, youth, women) will also be available.



INVITATION: Strategy of Development of Social Welfare

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MoLSP) in partnership with the Social Innovation Fund (SIF) and the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM) published an Invitation for Applications for Selection of Four Monitoring and Support Units within the framework of the project "Support to Implementation of the Social Welfare Development Strategy in Serbia" targeting NGOs. A part of this project is focused on improvement of local and regional social welfare services through capacity building of local self-governments for planning, funding, monitoring and evaluating social welfare services based on local needs and to make them sustainable.

The activities related to the local self-governments support will be implemented in Subotica, Kikinda, Kanjiža, Stara Pazova, Vršac, Plandište, Alibunar, Bela Crkva, Zrenjanin, Bor, Zaječar, Sokobanja, Knjaževac, Kruševac, Ivanjica, Loznica, Čačak, Valjevo, Jagodina, Paraćin, Despotovac, Čuprija, Svilajnac and Rekovac.

The project is implemented by MoLSP, SIF and SCTM with the financial support of the Government of the United Kingdom and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Norway.

The deadline for applications expired on 25 September.

For more information on the project, please see www.minrzs.sr.gov.yu, or call 011/362 15 83 and 011/363 16 35

Initiative of the Food Bank

The NGO FOOD BANK has continued regular monthly donations to the most vulnerable families during the summer. Thanks to donors - Micronet school, Coca Cola, HBC, Agroživ Pančevo and Doncafe - 2.1 ton of basic foodstuffs were collected and distributed to the internally displaced families from Kosovo and Metohija accommodated in the collective centre Resnik where 87 families /300 persons live.

"10 Banks for 10 Months" is an ongoing action targeting 30 pupils with special needs in the primary school "Sava Jovanovic Sirogojno" in Zemun. Each month one bank - Alpha, Intesa, Erste Bank, Eurobank EFG, Hypo Alpe Adria, Komercijalna banka, National Bank of Greece, ProCredit, Raiffeisen and UniCredit - will be paying funds required to cover meals and Micronet donated tea for breakfast.

In all Tempo supermarkets collection of food for 32 internally displaced families living in collective centre "Crnotravec", municipality of Banjica and for 96 socially vulnerable families in Šabac shall be organized on the occasion of the International Day of Fighting against Poverty.

FOOD BANK assistance will target individuals as well in future.

www.bankahrane.org

UNHCR: Social Housing in Protective Environment

UNHCR launched a project of construction of apartments within the framework of the project "Social Housing in Supportive Environment" in the municipality of Vranje for accommodation of IDPs from collective centres and poor private accommodation and the extremely vulnerable domicile population.

The construction of 25 housing units, funded by UNHCR in the total of RSD 25,5 million, is implemented by InterSos.

The interested potential beneficiaries were invited to submit the relevant documents to the municipal center for social welfare in the period 7 - 21 July, whereupon the selection process began. The main priority criteria included: single headed female households, extremely vulnerable families, self sufficient elderly persons, extremely vulnerable domicile families meeting the first three criteria. Of some 70 applications received, the selection commission consisting of representatives of the Commissioner for Refugees, the municipality of Vranje, social welfare centre, InterSos and UNHCR, established that 34 meet the established criteria.

The final selection of beneficiaries will take place end of October. The construction of housing units is expected to be finalized in late 2007, and the new beneficiaries will be moving in early 2008.

PROJECT FOR SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS Training Curricula Accreditation

The project "Establishment and Implementation of the System of Accreditation of Training Curricula for Social Service Providers in the Republic of Serbia" has been launched within the framework of the Social Welfare Development Strategy. The project is aimed at accreditation of training curricula for social service providers as well as at establishment of the system of permanent accreditation in Serbia. It is an integral part of the ongoing social welfare system reform in Serbia. In the course of the reform, the employees in the area of social welfare have assessed that they lack knowledge and skills for implementation of standards in provision of services and consequently asked for additional training for improvement of professional competencies. Years were spent in Serbia on drafting curricula and in trainings of social service providers, but these were not accompanied by continuous monitoring and quality assessment nor was there an assessment of relevance of the programmes offered. The implementation of the accreditation project will change this practice.

Aiming to implement the high EU standards in provision of social services in a coordinated and systematic way, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy plan to introduce a system of licensing for all service providers - through accreditation of training curricula and setting up a network of consultants who will conduct trainings in Serbia. With a view to this, the most successful curricula will be accredited in February and March 2008, a competition for trainers will be published in February and the training for trainers is to be conducted in April and May 2008.

The project is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway as a support to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

LOCAL INITIATIVE PROGRAMME IN LOZNICA Social Welfare and PRS Implementation

The process of drafting the local Social Policy Strategy has been intensified within the framework of the project "Poverty Reduction Strategy in the Municipality of Loznica". The Municipal Coordination Body for Social Policy (OKOSP) held a seminar "Strategic Planning of Social Welfare in Municipalities" in late July, work groups for children and adolescents, persons with disabilities, elderly persons, the unemployed, rural population and Roma were established. The existing municipal Network for Combating Domestic Violence has taken over the role of a work group for women; the elements of the social welfare plan have been defined through the services situation analysis for each of the target groups; institutionalization of the home care for the elderly was initiated as it functioned as a project of NGO Lighthouse for two years; the space to house day care for children with special needs was identified and the projects SOS service and the Network for Combating Domestic Violence initiated four years ago by the NGO Lighthouse, became self-sustainable thanks to the municipal budget and support of the Social Welfare Centre.

Housing Units for Children Without Parental Care

EUR 940,000 have been earmarked from the National Investment Plan for construction and purchase of 20 housing units for children and young people without parental care. Thus far 11 housing units have been purchased - six in Belgrade, one in Niš, Kragujevac, Novi Sad, Sremska Mitrovica and Priboj each.

The decision on the right to use will be taken at the centre for social welfare on the basis of the identified criteria and decisions of the city assembly. The costs of in-

vestment maintenance of the units will be borne by the local self-governments, while the tenants: four to five of them in one unit - shall pay for the utilities. The housing units shall be granted to use for a period of up to two years.

The Agreement on Provision of these funds was signed by Rasim Ljajić, the Minister of Labour and Social Policy, Radmila Hrutanović, Deputy Mayor of Belgrade and Jasminka Veselinović, Director of the Belgrade Centre for Social Welfare in August.

A Hostel for Children and Adolescents

A hostel for children and adolescents living in the street was opened in no. 24 Drinčičeva Street, municipality of Dorcol in early August. The aim of the project is to link the children and adolescents living in the street, who are generally suspicious of the competent institutions, with the representatives of the system of social welfare and health care and education. The hostel will provide them services in a way they find acceptable and special efforts will be invested into strengthening of families i.e. the possibility of return of children into their families. The hostel will have a social worker, a psychologist and a nurse.

In the course of nine months - for the duration of the project, children and adolescents living in the street will be able to spend the night, wash their clothes, watch TV, listen to music and take part in workshops 0-24h in the rehabilitated 95m² apartment.

The EUR 56,000 worth project was implemented by the Centre for Integration of Youth in cooperation with the City Centre for Social Welfare. The project was supported by the European Agency for Reconstruction, Social Innovation Fund of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Secretariat for Social and Child Protection of the City of Belgrade.



GENDER EQUALITY COUNCIL Better Position of Women

The establishment of a new convocation of the Gender Equality Council in late September completes the institutionalization of mechanisms for improvement of the position of women in Serbia.

It is chaired by Snezana Lakičević-Stojačić, State Secretary of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Government of the Republic of Serbia.

Along with the Committee for Gender Equality in the Serbian Parliament, the Council will engage in preparations for adoption of a national strategy for improvement of the position of women and advancement in the area of gender equality. These are to be followed by endorsement of the Law on Gender Equality that will legally regulate the rights of women.

Until the end of 2007 the Council will be focused on implementation of the campaign against violence targeting women as well as on preparation of an International Conference about Combat of Violence against Women to be held in Belgrade on 25 October within Serbian chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

Support to Gender Equality at the Local Level

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) is a nonprofit organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide as well as to build capacities of women in order for them to assume leadership positions, conduct campaigns and run for offices at elections.

Although the Law on Gender Equality has not been endorsed as yet, some of the municipalities have established institutional mechanisms for gender equality. Within the framework of promotion of the significance of themes related to gender equality, the Institute trains men and women - members of municipal committees, boards and councils - for education of local governments and citizens in nine municipalities and cities - Prijepolje, Prokuplje, Niš, Kragujevac, Belgrade (Palilula, Čukarica, Zvezdara), Senta and Sombor.

NDI is active in networking the municipal gender equality bodies with local politicians, NGOs, relevant state institutions and experts of both sexes in gender equality. An evaluation seminar will be organized in May 2008 where the participants in the project will have an opportunity to exchange experiences acquired in the project implementation, present their work and the results achieved. A part of the seminar will be dedicated to the planning of next steps and discussion about organizing a series of public discussions on the implementation of the Law on Gender Equality should it be adopted by then.

UNIFEM COMPETITION:

Rights of Women in the Process of Privatization

UNIFEM published a competition for projects related to combating discrimination against women in the process of privatization.

The competition called for innovative projects such as manuals and guidebooks enabling information sharing and support in safeguarding the rights but which also call for higher responsibility of government and other mechanisms involved in the privatization process, from the aspect of suppressing discrimination of women in the privatization process. The deadline for submission of concept papers expired on 7 October 2007.

www.unifem.sk

SOS PHONE LINE FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

Mediation in Working with Victims of Violence and Perpetrators

The SOS phone line for women and children victims of violence in Belgrade started the implementation of the project "Mediation in working with victims of violence and perpetrators". The aim of the project is to extend the assistance and support offered to the victims of violence to the bullies too as creators of the problems of domestic violence.

Analysing the complex process and reasons resulting in violent behaviour, the activists of the SOS phone line for women and children victims of violence realised that other methods were called for in violence prevention and resolving the problem of violence against women. Namely, the perpetrators are often aware of their problem but unable to curb their aggression, often self-destructive, by themselves. Therefore, they too are in need of assistance, particularly if starting from the premise that violence and violent resolution of

problems represent an acquired form of behaviour that calls for treatment. Consequently, counseling was initiated with spouses, common-law (and former) partners, and other violent persons. The consequences of family violence are a high number of divorces, single mothers and delinquent children. Therefore, both partners must be taught to communicate in a non-violent way and to adapt.

There are also women - perpetrators of violence, and the children who grow up in families with violence tend to adopt and project it as an acceptable behavioral model to their future families as well. Therefore, the society must take responsibility for the work with bullies as well, being one of the ways to change such behaviour.

The project "Mediation in working with victims of violence and perpetrators" is supported by the Serbian Ministry of Health.

AGREEMENT - WHO FOR EUROPE AND THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH

USD 1,475,000 for Health Improvement

A Two-Year Cooperation Agreement was signed by the regional office of the World Health Organization (WHO) for Europe and the Government of the Republic of Serbia, represented by the Ministry of Health.

WHO earmarked USD 1,475,000 for improvement of health of the citizens of Serbia in the period 2008/09.

The public health priorities identified in the Agreement are prevention and control of non-contagious diseases, human resources capacity building for planning and development of the health care system, development of the health care system itself and capacity building for response to different threats to security of health.

ROMA DECADE 2007 - PUBLIC CALL OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH Projects – Resolution of Medical Problems of the Roma

The Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia published a public call for submission of projects for preservation and improvement of health of the Roma in 2007 to be supported from the budget.

The projects could be submitted by the public health institutes and health care centres in cooperation with non-governmental organizations targeting Roma population.

The aim of the project is to respond to the medical problems of the Roma in Serbia in line with the Action Plan for Improvement of the Health of Roma adopted by the Government of Serbia within the framework of the „Roma Decade“.

The projects will be supported by RSD 500,000 to 750,000.

www.zdravlje.sr.gov.yu

INITIATIVE OF THE OPEN SOCIETY FUND

Inclusive Education – from Practice to Politics

„Inclusive Education - From Practice To Politics“ represents an initiative the foundations of which were laid in 2005. The main objective of the project involving some 10 government and non-government organisations, was creation of conditions for increase of accessibility of high quality education for all, and particularly for the children and adolescents who have been marginalised, discriminated against or segregated due to their ethnic background, social deprivation, mental capacities, disability or illness.

This entails changes in the educational system towards more flexibility and openness to the different needs of a child, (re)definition of educational aims and outputs, quality insurance, evaluation and self-evaluation. The results of a three-year work (2005-07) are numerous: criteria, indicators and benchmarks for advancement of an inclusive practice in education have been

set; paedagogical practice developed in 15 Serbian cities; an inclusive education network established an Inclusive Education Support Service for teachers, consultants and parents established; practice of joint work of institutions of various subsystems and civil society in local communities on promotion of inclusive approach in education developed; network of local inclusive teams comprised of teachers, education experts, local self-government representatives and parents established in 10 Serbian cities; an „Information Booklet for Parents of Children in Need of Social Support“ and „Guide for Improvement of Inclusive Educational Practice“ intended for teachers, educational institutions, parents, pupils, local communities and other participants in the process of education. The Information Booklet and the Guide shall be distributed by end of 2007.



THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND WATER MANAGEMENT FUNDS FARMERS DIRECTLY

Subsidies through Free Registration of Farms

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of the Government of Serbia is, for the first time, initiating a process of registration of farms with a view to increasing efficiency of implementation of measures for agricultural production development stimulation.

Registration of beneficiaries of agrarian budget will provide for the assistance to be paid directly to farmers and the registration of farms

into the registry is voluntary and free of charge.

The Ministry published the Agricultural Information Bulletin in order to inform the public of the intended use of the funds from the 2007 agrarian budget. The Information Bulletin also provides forms to be filled in by the farmers and submitted by end of November in order to register and avail themselves of the right to use the agrarian budget funds. All the reg-

istered farms of maximum 10 hectares have the right to compensation of production materials in the amount of RSD 8,000/hectare of registered area and those ranging from 11-100 hectares are entitled to three forms of compensation: RSD 3,500/hectare for diesel fuel; RSD 2,500/hectare for mineral fertilizers and RSD 2,000/hectare for declared seeds.

In case farms are using bio-renewable fuel instead of diesel,

they are entitled to 10% more i.e. to RSD 3,850/hectare.

The Registry is kept at the Administration for Public Payments at the Ministry of Finance. The data entered into the Registry are: natural persons - farmers with members of family rural household; companies registered for agricultural production; agricultural cooperatives; entrepreneurs registered for agricultural production and scientific and research institutions from the sector.

COMPETITION OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND WATER MANAGEMENT

Capacity Building in Agriculture

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management has published a competition for allocation and use of funds for special programmes of capacity building in agriculture.

The programmes are to cover one of the following areas:

- direct capacity building of agricultural producers and champions of rural development: farm management, improvement of sales, improvement of small agricultural farms, establishment of demonstration centres;
- direct capacity building of agricultural advisors and rural development support offices;
- capacity building and media promotion of topics related to agriculture and rural development.

For more information please see the website of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management
www.minpolj.sr.gov.yu

EBRD LOAN - EUR 45 MILLION TO VICTORIA GROUP

Production of Biodiesel to Save Millions

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) approved in early September a loan amounting to approximately EUR 45 million to the "Victoria Group" and its member "Victoria Oil" for production of biodiesel in Šid. By increasing production of biodiesel to 100,000 tons/annum, Serbia will reduce dependency on imports of fossil fuels and save millions of US dollars. Namely, each year almost 1.6 tons of raw oil are imported into Serbia.

Further to savings, by producing biodiesel Serbia will fulfill the EU standards in the area of reduction of environmental pollution.

On the other hand, several hundred thousand tons of oilseed and crops are needed for production of approximately 100,000 tons of biodiesel thus ensuring a higher quality purchase and placement of market surplus to a part of Serbian agriculture. Each year up to one million hectares of arable land in Serbia remain unfarmed. Production of biodiesel represents an opportunity for direct involvement of the renewable energy sources into the increase of surfaces under crops.

AGRARIAN AND RURAL POLICY IN SERBIA

Agriculture the Only Sector Generating Surplus

The agrarian exports in 2007 should exceed USD 1.5 billion, while imports are expected to be at around USD 1 billion, said Slobodan Milosavljević, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management in the Government of the Republic of Serbia at the seminar entitled „Agrarian and Rural Policy in Serbia“ held at the Faculty of Agriculture in Zemun, late September.

Agriculture is the only sector operating with a surplus and therefore all of those engaged in it should be adequately supported by the economic policy of the Republic of Serbia, primarily through the budget and adoption of relevant laws. The activities focusing on prevention of rural population migrations through improvement of the living standards of agricultural and rural population are also required, as is the protection of environment from the negative influences of agricultural production.

USAID COMPETITION: Support to Implementation of Economic Security Projects

The United States Agency for International Development launched an invitation for applications for implementation of projects in the framework of the Economic Security component of the Serbia Contingency Planning and Economic Security Program.

The Economic Security program aims to increase access to economic opportunities in underdeveloped municipalities of Serbia and create jobs for vulnerable people such as the

unemployed, redundant workers, rural poor, youth, and other marginalized groups lacking opportunities.

Targeted municipalities are Kraljevo, Kuršumlija, Preševo, Medveđa, Bujanovac, Prijepolje and Novi Pazar.

The applications may be submitted in the period 10 July - 30 November 2007.

For further information on the programme and conditions please call 011/363 99 00, email: scopes@dai.com or see: www.scopes-serbia.org

PUBLICATION OF UNDP SERBIA Small Rural Households and Rural Non-Agricultural Economy

UNDP Serbia published a document „Small Rural Households and Rural Non-Agricultural Economy“. The publication was prepared on the basis of a survey of the needs of small rural households and local decision-makers. The aim of the publication is to provide a comprehensive overview of rural development and point out the position of small rural households in order to support sustainability of rural environment and its inhabitants.

The implementation of the research project and preparation of the publication was supported by the Austrian Development Agency and the UN Development Program in Serbia.

Study for Identification of Factors Preventing Investments into South Serbia

The Agreement on the implementation of the project „Study for Identification of Factors Preventing Investments into South Serbia“ worth RSD 1,180,000 was signed in Leskovac in late August.

The project, to be jointly implemented by the Centre for Development of Jablanica and Pčinj District and the Centre for High Economic Studies, aims at identifying the key factors preventing investments at the local level into thirteen municipalities of Jablanica and Pčinj district.

This study should present information about the activities to be undertaken by local self-governments by way of attracting investors.

Investments create preconditions for increase of employment, and consequently of the living standards, and reduce migrations of inhabitants from this region.

This project is one of the seven priority projects that are implemented by the Centre for Development of Jablanica and Pčinj District. It is to be completed in late 2007.

For Legal Ban of Corporal Punishment of Children

The Initiative for Legal Ban and Protection of Children from Corporal Punishment supported by Save the Children and UNICEF, launched a campaign for explicit prohibition of corporal punishment of children in Serbia in early October. Some 70 organisations supporting the request indicate that corporal punishment threatens the health, integrity and dignity of a child, leaves long-lasting consequences and often results in violent behaviour at a later stage - when they grow up.

The current national regulations and international conventions, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in the first place, bid the state to protect the child from all forms of corporal, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and exploitation. However, Serbia still

lacks an explicit ban of corporal punishment as a way of upbringing.

According to UNICEF data, 72% of children in Serbia aged 2-14 have been subjected to some form of psychological or corporal punishment in the family. The results of a survey conducted by Save the Children indicate that 71% of children in institutions for children without parental care is faced with threats, and 60-70% of them have been physically punished.

In the 2007 Manifest the Initiative for Legal Ban and Protection of Children from Corporal Punishment in Serbia requests legal prohibition of corporal punishment of children in all environments, and especially so in the families and social welfare institutions.

COMPETITIONS OF THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND SPORTS

Youth Policy

The Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Government of the Republic of Serbia published two competitions: for funding and co-funding of projects of citizen associations in the area of youth policy; and for involvement of citizen associations in the process of drafting of the National Strategy for Young People.

The results may be obtained at the phone number: 011 311 17 81 or on the website of the Ministry of Youth and Sports: www.mos.sr.gov.yu

Education of Adult Roma

The implementation of the pilot project Functional Primary Education of Adult Roma entered its final phase. The project covered some 200 unemployed persons of Roma ethnicity aged 15-35. It was implemented by the National Employment Service in Niš, Leskovac, Prokuplje, Vranje, Bujanovac, Belgrade, Sombor, Apatin, Ada, Bečej and Valjevo.

The aim of the project is acquisition of primary education and skills for certain jobs and easier integration of Roma into the community.

BCIF: VIRTUS Award for Corporate Philanthropy

The Balkan Community Initiatives Fund published, in August, a competition for the first annual VIRTUS Award for business entities who best supported non-profit actions or organizations of general interest in 2007. The aim of the award is to publicly commend the companies and enterprises which offer material and financial support thus serving as role models to others in the following categories: contribution at the national level, contribution to local community, the most innovative project of the year. Two special awards will be given also: for long-term partnership between a business and non-profit sectors and a special award for media contribution.

The competition ended on 10 October 2007.

DONATION OF BCIF AND ERSTE BANK: „Centrifuga“ for Culture of the Young

In cooperation with the Erste Bank, the Balkan Community Initiatives Fund (BCIF) initiated a new program of donations „Centrifuga“.

The aim of the program is to motivate the young aged 15-30 to initiate creative cultural projects in the cities of Serbia where Erste Bank is operating through grants ranging from EUR 500-4000.

The competition was open until 21 September 2007.

www.bcif.org

SURVEY OF UNHCR: Position of Internally Displaced Persons

In early 2007 UNHCR initiated a survey of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in private accommodation within the framework of the World Bank Living Standards Measurement Survey. The Survey, conducted by the Republic Statistics Office, lasted from May to July and covered 1,750 IDP households and 250 Roma IDP households. The ensuing analysis is to show, for the first time in seven years, where the IDPs are both physically and from the aspect of socio-economic position in the society.

There are strong indications that many IDPs may be in a more difficult situation than several years ago. Although there is a lack of information on

the vulnerability of IDPs (segregated by age, gender and ethnicity), the most indicative concerns about IDPs are: housing problems, erosion of assets, lack of employment/ regular income, deteriorating physical and health condition in combination with a limited access to social services as well as lack of personal documents.

The results of the Survey will be used by UNHCR for its planning and preparation of programmes, fund raising and identification of vulnerable categories.

The results will also be accessible to other actors and serve as basis for partnerships with other agencies and stakeholders and possibly joint pro-

grammes with other UN agencies. Segregated data by gender, age, socio-economic categorization of vulnerability, and insight into property issues among IDP caseload would enable easier estimation and quantification of their needs especially in terms of the above mentioned concerns and with a particular focus on housing.

The technical report to be published shortly shall contain a description of the methodology applied and the most relevant indicators of IDP status. The final results will be published in mid-November 2007 and the comparative analysis relative to the domicile vulnerable population is expected in April 2008.

COMPETITION OF THE SECRETARIAT OF ECONOMY OF THE BELGRADE:

Incentive to Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship

The Secretariat of Economy of the City of Belgrade published a Call for Applications for Financing Programmes and Projects through Granting Funds for Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship Development Promotion on the territory of the city. Funds would be granted for implementation of programmes and projects which promote the tourist possibilities of the city, raise the quality of tourist and catering services, contribute to advancement of human resources in tourism and catering industries, ensure high level of supply and quality of products on the market of Belgrade.

The applications may be submitted by non-profit organizations and institutions on the territory of the city. The funds available for this programme amount to RSD 7,000,000

The deadline for applications expired on 15 September and the information may be obtained at phone nos: 3061 780 and 3061 771.

INSTITUTE FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Competition for Grant Distribution in the Area of Public Advocacy

The Civil Society Advocacy Initiative, opened a grant competition for experienced Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to support their advocacy activities throughout Serbia.

The goal of the grant competition is to promote advocacy on national reform issues and to encourage greater citizen participation in all aspects of public life through CSOs which conduct or engage in advocacy activities. Projects need to promote civil society and the strengthening of CSOs in Serbia, through civic advocacy, support for EU integration, and promotion of legal and regulatory reforms. In addition, projects should encourage the active role of citizens, directly and through CSOs, in addressing reform issues. The programme is implemented by the Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC) and funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Please find information and application forms on: www.iscvt.org/news/press_releases/article

Tennis Champions of Serbia as National Ambassadors of UNICEF

Jelena Janković and Ana Ivanović have been appointed National Ambassadors for UNICEF in Serbia thus contributing to improvement of the rights of children and adolescents in Serbia. The inauguration ceremonies will be held in Belgrade.

As UNICEF National Ambassadors, Jelena Janković will take a special interest in adolescents and young people and promotion of their rights while Ana Ivanović would engage in education and child protection. Jelena is currently ranked number three tennis player in the world, while Ana is ranked number six.

The two tennis stars have now joined the other two UNICEF National Ambassadors in Serbia: the former basketball player Aleksandar Saša Đorđević and Emir Kusturica, film director.

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