



UNDP and the Romanian Ministry of Waters and Environmental Protection Co-Chair Annual Donors Meeting

UNDP Romania and the Ministry of Waters and Environmental Protection jointly chaired the Ministry's annual meeting of donors on March 11, 2003.

The meeting is designed to allow the Ministry the opportunity to report to the donor community on the current status of on-going and planned initiatives in the environment sector and progress towards satisfying the environment chapter of the European Union (EU) *acquis*. It represents a concerted effort to identify critical areas in need of investment and to promote effective and efficient coordination within the environment sector. The session was well attended, with representatives from major donor countries active in Romania, including Japan, Switzerland and the United States, along with staff from the EBRD and NGO representatives from the WWF and Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) in attendance.



Minister Lificiu presents UNDP Resident Representative Soknan Han Jung with a book on the Danube Delta

UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative Ms. Soknan Han Jung, was invited by the Ministry to open the session with Minister Petru Lificiu. Ms. Jung commented on the progress that has been made within the sector, noting that successes have been the result of the Government's efforts to work with a diversity of strategic partners that include the EU, IFIs, bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors, NGOs and the UN system. The UN Resident Coordinator highlighted that much work remains to be done, and that creative partnerships will continue to be important, emphasizing that one of UNDP's main objectives continues to be to support the Government's efforts to meet its international obligations and address development challenges.

This year's meeting focused on investment-intensive directives for environmental protection. Within the water sector, Mr. Costica Sofronie, General Director for the National Administration of Waters (*Apele Romane*) presented the Administration's investment activities and requirements. Ms. Venera Vlad, Counselor for the Ministry's ISPA Unit, reported on the current ISPA Strategy, project portfolio and co-financing arrangements. Donors were updated on the Ministry's National Environmental Action Plan by Mr. Costel Hanta, Director of the Directorate for International Programmes and Projects, and on the status of the newly created National Environmental Fund by the Fund's General Director, Mr. Ionel Gheorghe.

Ms. Jung and Minister Lificiu also held a joint press conference during the meeting. The two responded to questions from the media regarding investment needs and priorities within the environment sector. The UNDP Resident Representative noted the critical need to ensure clean water supply at the community level and the importance of continued biodiversity protection programmes. Ms. Jung also commented that projects have been well implemented by the Government, and that she looked forward to fruitful future cooperation with the Ministry.



The Minister and UNDP Resident Representative answer questions from the media

The meeting concluded with an open discussion session in which donors had the opportunity to comment on their priorities and programmes, and identify important trends and issues.

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