



UNDP Launches the First Romanian Gender Network

On April 14, 2003, the United Nations Development Programme organized and hosted the first Romanian "Gender Network" of Government representatives, civil society, parliamentarians, private sector, academia, media and international organisations.

The Network was launched at a luncheon hosted and chaired by Ms. Soknan Han Jung, UNDP Resident Representative and UN Resident Coordinator. Ms. Victoria Popescu, Director of the UN and Specialised Institutions Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, & Vice-Chairperson of CEDAW, facilitated the discussion.

The aim of creating a Romanian Gender Network is to gather leaders in Romania to discuss priority needs for the country with regards to gender development and the advancement of women, and to galvanize their efforts and energy to address key gender issues. As a next step, the network will explore the key actions that the members can undertake jointly and with one another's support.



The participants emphasized the need to support the economic and social empowerment of women and to increase women's political participation and representation. In her remarks Ms. Victoria Popescu said, "There are many prominent representatives here. It is important for us to bring people together to raise awareness of gender issues at the political level and support the development of female senior management." The discussion included identification of gaps the group could take action on, including the provision of support to young women in business, and to sensitise men to gender equality.

The participants included senior representatives from the Government (Ms. Silva Ciornei, Minister of SMEs and Cooperatives; Ms. Daniela Semenescu, Director of the Equal Opportunities Department), parliament (Ms. Mona Musca, National-Liberal Parliamentarian Group), as well as representatives from CSOs, academia, the private sector, the media, the diplomatic corps and international organisations (Mr. Jonathan Scheele, Head of the European Commission; Ms. Hildegard Gacek, Head of the EBRD). The participants warmly welcomed the initiative and recommended that the network continue to be held monthly, hosted on a rotational basis by the participants. Ms. Hildegard Gacek stressed the importance to "identify areas where we can be proactive. We need to undertake action and establish credibility."



The launch of the Romanian Gender Network allowed participants to discuss their projects, their concerns and their experiences in an informal working atmosphere. It successfully gathered senior men and women from many sectors to place attention on gender equality and women's empowerment. Ms. Jung said that "The Romanian Gender Network can play an important role in supporting Romanian society empower it's women and reduce gender inequalities."

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