



Romania: Partnerships for gender-balanced participation in decision-making

For the Government of Romania, gender equality is part of its international commitments: the Beijing Declaration, the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Millennium Declaration, and EU accession requirements. UNDP and its partners have built momentum in catalyzing awareness and coordinated action at the national level, in support to promoting equal rights and opportunities for women, as a way to advancing sustainable human development.



From left: Ms. Dono Abdurazakova, Regional Gender Advisor/UNDP, Ms. Victoria Popescu, General Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Vice-Chair of CEDAW, Mr. Svante Kilander, Ambassador of Sweden, Ms. Corina Cretu, Presidential Counselor, Mr. Ion Iliescu, President of Romania, Ms. Soknan Han Jung, UN RC/UNDP RR, Ms. Mona Musca, member of Parliament (National Liberal), Ms. Elena Dumitru, Minister of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family, Ms. Rodica Stanoiu, Presidential Counselor

A series of recent events demonstrated the highest political commitment and genuine public interest in gender equality – celebration of the International Women’s Day on 8 March at the Presidency, and a meeting of the Romanian Gender Network jointly organized by the Presidency of Romania and UNDP at Cotroceni Presidential Palace.

Through a special resolution adopted in 1977, the UN General Assembly proclaimed 8 March as the United Nations Day for Women’s Rights and International Peace. To mark this day, the Presidency of Romania hosted a concert by the best Romanian folk musicians, dedicated to women. In her speech at the opening of the concert, Ms. Soknan Han Jung, UN Resident Coordinator, encouraged NGOs and the Romanian society at large to become more pro-active in supporting women’s rights.

The Romanian Gender Network, initiated by UNDP in 2003, has become a powerful advocacy tool that brings together representatives of the Presidency, the Government, women activists and women’s organizations, civil society, private sector, academia,

diplomatic corps, mass-media and international organizations. The Network’s objective is to consolidate efforts in addressing key gender issues including gender-balanced participation in public life, in particular women’s presence in political decision-making. Currently, women participation in Romania’s Parliament, at just 9.9%, is below the world average of 15.3%. Women’s representation in local government is also low.

In order to draw public attention to this issue, particularly acute in view of the upcoming local and national elections, the Gender Network mobilized stakeholders in an event organized under the high patronage of H.E. Mr. Ion Iliescu, President of Romania. In his statement, the President pointed out that “Romania cannot afford to exclude more than half of the population from this participatory process, only because of old traditions and mentalities”, and stressed the need to move from words to action.

Discussions and consultations facilitated by the Gender Network resulted in a project proposal formulated by UNDP Romania, with the support of UNDP Regional Center for CEE/CIS based in Bratislava. The proposed project will address obstacles and barriers to women’s participation, by targeting both women and men, with a view to creating a more conducive environment for gender-balanced political participation at local and central level in Romania.

For more information please contact Ms. Violeta Kogalniceanu, Gender Focal Point, UNDP Romania, at: violeta.kogalniceanu@undp.org.



From left: Ms. Jung delivering Secretary-General’s Message on 8 March / Concert at Cotroceni Palace / Romanian Gender Network Workshop / Dono Abdurazakova, presenting UNDP project at Gender Workshop