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A chance for rural women - From unemployment to entrepreneurship

Unemployed women from Floroaica village, Valcelele Commune in Calarasi County became entrepreneurs upon the inauguration of SC VICORA FEMINA SRL, a packaging and distribution unit for agricultural and food products.

This is the fourth pilot unit established under the "Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Romania" project implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in partnership with the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and through the Japan Women in Development Fund (JWIDF). Already in place are a vegetable processing plant in the village of Sageata, Buzau County, a milk processing plant in Negresti, Vaslui County, and a bakery in Comana, Giurgiu County.

The Unit was opened by Ms. Soknan Han Jung, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Romania, Mr. Masanobu Yoshii, Charge d'Affaires, Embassy of Japan, and Mr. Vasile Iliuta, Mayor of Valcelele. Representatives of the supportive local authorities, mass media, and a large number of villagers were present.



Ribbon cutting ceremony

From left: Mr. Vasile Iliuta, Mayor of Valcelele, Ms. Soknan Han Jung, UN RC/UNDP RR and Mr. Masanobu Yoshii, Embassy of Japan

SC VICORA FEMINA SRL was established with an investment of USD 43,300 and, initially, it will pack and distribute agro-food products. The product range will be expanded as the business develops. The Unit will ensure the distribution of products initially within the county, with prospects of considerable expansion in the future.

The women entrepreneurs are equal partners in the company, thus facilitating the decision making process and contributing to an efficient management. They received technical training from the equipment supplier as well as basic economic training in business management, strategies, promotion, team work, finance, and contracting.

During the concluding phase (June - September 2004), the project will analyse the results with a view to replicating the model at a larger scale. There are three components to this phase:

- a study tour by the women from the pilot units in Comana and Valcelele to a country with similar ongoing programmes in order to share best practices;
- a national workshop of Government representatives and other facilitators who will discuss achievements and future initiatives in rural development;
- and a round-table aimed at sharing the results of the project with all interested parties and mass-media and to identify efficient means to further generate employment in rural areas.

For more information please contact UNDP Romania's Socio-Economic Section at socio@undp.ro



The packaging unit – Labeling the products – Rice, sunflower seeds and sugar packed and ready for distribution