



More than US\$2 million Grants for Roma Communities

According to the Regional Human Development Report "Avoiding the Dependency Trap", published by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Roma community most affected by poverty is in Romania. Long-term unemployment, inadequate or lack of infrastructure, limited access to social services and education characterize the situation of Roma in Romania.

Over the last decade the Government and international organizations have allocated considerable amount of funding to address these problems. Despite their efforts, significant results or improvements are yet to be seen.

The Romanian Government, through the **National Strategy to Improve the Conditions of Roma** approved in April 2001, renewed its focus on achieving tangible results in improving the situation of Roma, concentrating on the communities in which they live.

On 11 October, the Government of Romania/Department for Inter-ethnic Relations (DRI) and UNDP jointly launched a grant programme for local authorities that provide directly assistance to local communities with high concentration of Roma population.

The project "Activities to support implementation and monitoring of the National Strategy to Improve the Conditions of Roma - 2004" has two main components:

- Community support interventions through Grants offered to local authorities to implement projects in partnership with Roma organizations.
- An impact assessment study on Roma programmes in Romania over the last decade (1994-2004).

Community support will be provided to local authorities in areas with large Roma population for upgrading small infrastructures and stimulating Roma participation in economic, social, educational and political life by involving them in sectoral assistance and community development. The methodology for accessing the funds is being disseminated to all local authorities across the country. The Romanian Government provides funding for community projects while UNDP supports with monitoring and technical assistance.



From left: Ms. Soknan Han Jung, UNDP Resident Representative, Mr. Cristian Jura, State Secretary, DRI, Mr. Florin Banateanu, Head of Socio-Economic Section, UNDP and Mr. Ilie Dinca, State Subsecretary, DRI - Office for Roma Issues



Press conference at the UN House, Bucharest

The second component of the project consists of a comprehensive impact assessment to analyze interventions in support of Roma over the past 10 years. This assessment will generate a summary of lessons learned and a set of policy options to more effectively address the situation of Roma, especially in light of Romania's EU integration process.

At the press conference that officially launched the project it was emphasized that mass media should play an important role in covering all the phases of the project by disseminating information to the target audiences, publicizing the winning projects and offering objective opinions during the implementation phase.

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