



## Gender Balanced Political Empowerment and Participation

Gender discrimination is a source of endemic poverty, inequitable and low economic growth, high HIV prevalence, and inadequate governance. Even though women are actively involved in all spheres of life, they are not adequately represented either in governance or political fora. In Romania, political representation of women has not gone beyond 10.3% from 2000 to 2004 elections. Therefore, political empowerment of women remains a concern. The project 'An Integrated Approach to Gender Balanced Political Empowerment and Participation' (GBPE) addresses this issue.

The project was launched on 8 February 2005 at the UN House in the presence of Soknan Han Jung, UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative, Mona Musca, Minister of Culture and Religious Affairs & National Director of this project, Sulfina Barbu, Minister of Environment. In consultation with the Romanian Gender Network and with support coming from other donors, namely the Governments of Canada, Switzerland and Israel, UNDP started to implement this project in partnership with the Romanian Parliament and the Commission for Equal Opportunities between men and women.

"Women have an enormous impact on the well being of their families and society at large. Yet, their potential is not fully realized because of discriminatory social norms, lack of incentives or insufficient legal framework. Women and men must acknowledge the full potential of women at all levels of public life and media plays a catalytic role in this", remarked Ms. Soknan Han Jung.



HE Mona Musca, Minister of Culture & Religious Affairs, Ms Soknan Han Jung, UNDP RR & Mr. Anton Hagen, Country Director, Swiss Development Cooperation

The project has produced three surveys to date on gender stereotypes in media, advertising and on the government's use of the media to address gender issues. These surveys are important for the whole project, which includes dissemination of research data, training for media representatives, politicians and candidates, awareness raising campaign, public debates, roundtables with new and experienced parliamentarians, implementing new tools in policy making, etc.



Ms Minodora Cliveti, President of the commission on Equal Opportunities of the Chamber of Deputies, presenting her views in front of representatives of embassies, government, media and civil society. Front row: Ambassadors of Indonesia & Egypt

The surveys indicate continued presence of traditional women-roles and male-roles. As professor Mihaela Miroiu synthesizes, "Women roles gravitate around housekeeping, care giving and sexual arousing services, whereas male roles are related to money, entertainment, drinks, sports and technical activities. There is an obvious as well an implicit sexism in the majority of media products analyzed." Read detailed survey results on GBPE website [www.gender-balance.undp.ro](http://www.gender-balance.undp.ro)

At the end of the event, the audience was treated to a short theatrical performance on gender stereotypes by students of Hyperion, Spiru Haret and UNATC universities

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