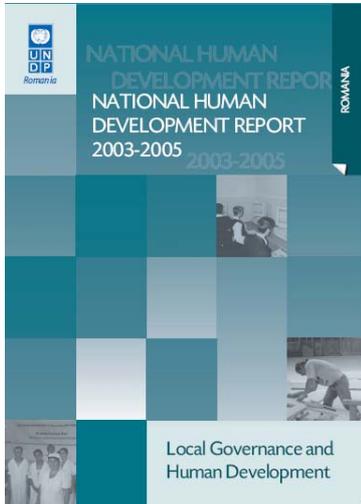


Emerging citizens' voice in Romania



Under the patronage of H.E. Traian Băsescu, President of Romania, UNDP launched at Cotroceni Presidential Palace the 2005 Global Human Development Report and 2003-2005 National Human Development Report for Romania (NHDR). The two flagship publications were presented to an impressive gathering of the press, political, diplomatic and social leaders.

"The 2005 Global Human Development Report highlights the fact that humankind can still break away from poverty, inequality and conflicts, while creating the premises for the next decade to be a genuine decade for development", stated Ms. Soknan Han Jung, UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative.

The ranking of Romania's human development index improved to 64 in 2005 from 69 in 2004. However, "the good economic development does not get reflected in the human development of Romania" said Theodor Stolojan, Presidential Adviser.

He also pointed out that "Romania needs structural and regional policies, as well as local administration reform policies. [...] The balance between responsibilities and resources should be reconsidered, given that counties and regions are loudly stating they contribute too much to, and receive too little from the central government".

From UNDP perspective, it is the right time for Romania to initiate a new series of NHDRs focusing on relevant policy issues, such as local governance, in order to promote a more effective link between governance and human development.



The governance experience of Romania after 1989 reflects the common trend of many transition countries in the region. While striving to manage the high level of social costs associated with economic reforms, Romania is making every effort to build capable democratic institutions.

The NHDR on "Local Governance and Human Development" identifies four main policy areas to close the gap between local governance and human development in Romania: institutional design; resources assignment, distribution and control; decision-making accountability; and inequality.

Decentralization is one of the key issues in Romania's preparation for EU accession and the representatives of local authorities took this opportunity to make their voices heard.

The Report suggests key elements and strategic approaches for strengthening local governance and human development: commitment, strong local actors, vigorous local governance system, financial support and access to technical assistance, ownership, local capacity, participatory approach, integrated and multi-level approach, information flow and accessibility, partnerships, coalition and strategic alliances. However, these recommendations "do not pretend to offer a universal recipe" states Ms. Jung in the Foreword.