

Local Agenda 21, Key to Sustainable Development, Starts Implementation in Bucharest

Bucharest, 12 February 2007. Thanks to this UNDP initiative, starting today all citizens in the Second District of Bucharest have the opportunity to contribute to both the short and long-term development and economic growth of their sector.

Ms. Soknan Han Jung, UN Resident Coordinator-UNDP Resident Representative and Mr. Neculai Ontanu, Bucharest Second District Mayor signed a Cost-Sharing Agreement today for the joint implementation of Local Agenda 21 (LA 21) in Bucharest Second District. The Agreement was signed in the presence of Ms. Anca Boagiu, Minister of European Integration, during a press conference held at the Second District City Hall.

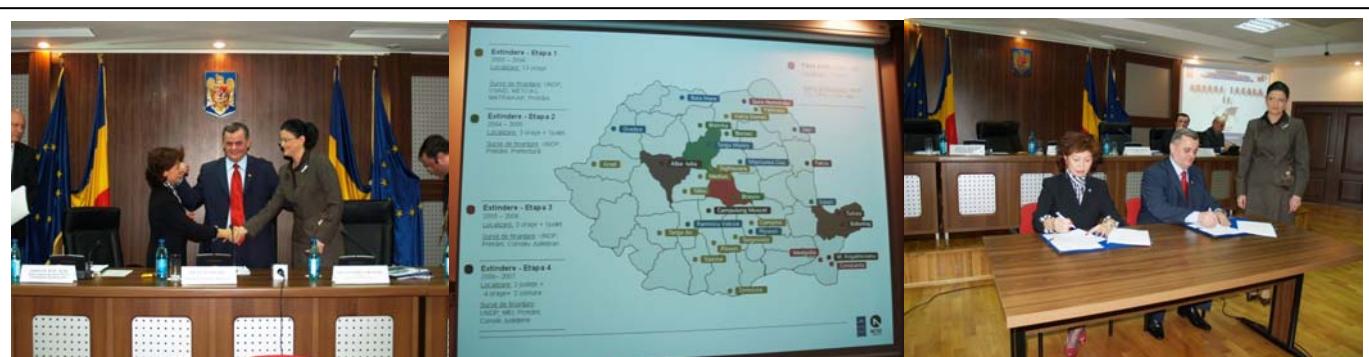
LA 21 is a comprehensive plan of action to be taken globally, nationally and locally by organizations of the United Nations System, governments, and major groups in every area in which humans impact on the environment. "Sustainable Development is the over-arching theme of UNDP programme," said Ms. Jung. "In this context, Local Agenda 21 in Romania has successfully created a framework for decentralization and capacity building of local governments to work with civil society and the private sector in support of Romania's successful integration into the European Union."

So far, UNDP Romania has helped 28 cities and 2 counties draft strategies and action plans for sustainable development under the LA 21 initiative. Mr. Ontanu is the first district Mayor in Bucharest who decided to join LA 21. "It's an honor to launch this project that offers us the opportunity to imagine how our district will look like in the future," said Mayor Ontanu, "especially now, when we are at a crossroad, planning to make sweeping reforms of the local administration by promoting public participation of NGOs, the private sector and ordinary citizens."

Ms. Anca Boagiu, Minister of European Integration, warmly congratulated Bucharest Second District City Hall for joining LA 21, saying that the success or failure of this initiative rests solely on the local authority, which is best connected to the needs of its residents. "Sustainable development means prioritizing projects efficiently," said Ms. Boagiu, "and it's crucial to do so at a time when Romania joined the EU, and Bucharest alone has already accessed 23 million Euros in pre-accession funds."

The action plan for Bucharest Second District requires:

- Modernizing the basic infrastructure.
- Improving and diversifying of public services.
- Protecting the environment.
- Enhancing and converging the quality of life of all citizens of the district to EU standards.
- Improving the identity and promoting the image of the district.



From L to R: Ms. Jung, UN RC/UNDP RR, Mayor Ontanu and Minister Boagiu.

Map of all counties and cities that joined Local Agenda 21.

UN RC/UNDP RR Ms. Jung and Mayor Ontanu sign the cost sharing agreement in the presence of Minister Boagiu.