



### CONFLICT MITIGATION

#### President Tells Kosovars Their Future Is "Together with all Minorities"

In an effort to reach out and offer detailed information to the public about the status settlement, Kosovo's President Fatmir Sejdiu participated in a roundtable discussion with Prizren area residents on March 23.

"We strive for a Kosovo where there are no citizens of a lower class, a Kosovo where everyone is equal. Kosovo will build its future together with all minorities," said President Sejdiu in his opening remarks. He, along with Thierry Reynard, Head of French Liaison Office, and Eugen Wolfarth, Head of German Liaison Office, answered citizens' questions. The two international representatives reminded participants of Germany's and France's histories, and where they stand now, together, 60 years after the war.

The event was one of 30 roundtables discussions held in all municipalities on the status settlement document prepared by President Ahtisaari. Approximately 100 people joined the event in Prizren's Municipal Assembly Building.

These roundtable discussions are organized by the Advocacy Training and Resource Center (ATRC) and their partners designed to solicit and address concerns that citizens have about the proposal and its future implementation.

Each event included a selected number of invited participants from a cross-section of society, including Municipal Assembly members, civil servants, and representatives of political parties, civil society, teachers' associations, and others. The panelists included representatives of the Kosovo Negotiation Team, expert analysts, and representatives of the Diplomatic Corps. In April, six regional town hall meetings will be held to further inform the public about the settlement package.

The roundtable discussion is part of public outreach initiative supported by USAID in partnership with the Academy for Educational Development.

### RULE OF LAW

#### "Justice Kid" Promotes Rule of Law

Starting March 30, the cartoon character "Justice Kid" began promoting rule of law, human rights and gender equality. Through three different cartoon public service announcements, the songs of Justice Kid target children in a civic education campaign on these three pillars of a democracy.



*Justice Kid, the cartoon character promoting human rights, gender equality is the first cartoon ever developed in Kosovo.*

The cartoons are part of a larger public information project including Public Service Announcements (PSAs) on fundamental rights (fair trial and access to justice), professional and ethical conduct of judges, and professional and ethical conduct of lawyers. The three PSAs address a larger audience than just children, and provide contact information for people who need to report abuses, corruption or simply inquire for help.

The purpose of the PSAs and cartoons is to increase public awareness and understanding of the law and how the legal and justice systems function in Kosovo, as well as the importance of the ethical conduct of judges and lawyers in the legal profession. The PSAs and cartoons will be broadcast by Kosovo wide RTK and RTV 21 television stations.

The public information campaign is supported by USAID in partnership with the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative in cooperation with the Kosovo Chamber of Advocates (KCA) and Kosovo Judges Association (KJA). The cartoons and PSAs were developed by Prishtina Film

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

### Conference Successfully Links Producers, Processors and Retailers

A conference hosted by USAID's Kosovo Cluster and Business Support (KCBS) project on March 21 brought together fruit and vegetable and dairy/meat sectors to help producers, processors and retailers meet and address common issues. The conference is a result of surveys that noted the need for networking opportunities between Kosovar producers and retailers.

The conference allowed each "cluster" (a business sector, such as fruit, from producer level all the way to retail side) to exchange industry specific information during separate break-out sessions. The three networking sessions have already produced a number of positive linkages between existing KCBS project clients and new potential suppliers, buyers, distributors or general partner contacts.

According to participants, and presenters, the event accomplished several objectives: producers and processors talked directly with retailers to learn about their requirements and current market conditions in order to do business together, participants learned about a successful vertically integrated value chain retailer in the region, all discovered new ideas from a panel discussion on integrated supply chain management, and networking linkages occurred at all levels of the value chain.

Approximately 200 guests representing retailers, producers, processors, wholesalers, associations, Ministries, donor projects and marketing agencies attended. A follow-up report from the conference will serve as basis for furthering "Marketing and Linkages" activities to explore and track future linkage possibilities. KCBS project is implemented by Chemionics International.

## INSTITUTION BUILDING

### Finding Mechanisms To Increase Municipal Revenues

Shterpce/Strpce municipality has increased its own-source revenues by 335% over its base compared to 2004, according to recently released figures. The increase is partly attributed to a business fee registration, an instrument that USAID's Local Government Initiative (LGI) worked to implement.

With guidance from the LGI office in the municipality, Shterpce/Sterpce established a business fee commission, composed of local stakeholders, who set the business fee rate. As a result, the municipal authorities significantly lowered the price for the business registration, but managed to increase the level of collections.

The improved collections are an indicator of residents' and businesspeople's increased trust in their local government. The LGI team continues to work closely with the municipality to develop plans for increasing collections in the 2007 tax year, including public meetings and a fee awareness campaign primarily targeting business community.

### Upcoming Events

**April 11, --** Dr. Michael Farbman, USAID/Kosovo Mission Director will speak at the Finance Fair, organized with support from USAID's Kosovo Cluster and Business Support project, implemented by Chemionics Int.

**April 12 --** UNDP will present the recent Kosovo Development Report at a Conference in Pristina. The report was made possible with assistance from USAID.



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