



## RULE OF LAW

### Kosovo Judicial Council and USAID Agree to Assistance Program

USAID's assistance to the Kosovo Judicial Council was formalized on May 17 when USAID Administrator and Director of Foreign Assistance Henrietta Fore and the Kosovo Judicial Council Chairman Rexhep Haxhimusa signed a Memorandum of Understanding. Strengthening the rule of law in Kosovo is a priority of both the US Government and Kosovo's Government and independent judiciary.

The MOU was signed during a ceremony at the National Library in Pristina during Administrator Fore's visit to Kosovo. At the same ceremony, an agreement was signed by Tina Kaidanow, US Embassy Charge d' Affaires, and Minister of Education, Science and Technology Enver Hoxhaj, and witnessed by Fore, in which the Ministry agreed to support two scholarships for Kosovo students to earn advanced degrees from U.S. universities as part of the Fulbright program.

The support that will be provided to the Kosovo Judicial Council will be through USAID's Justice Support Program. The MOU outlined assistance valued at \$8 million in technical assistance, training and equipment for Kosovo's judiciary. USAID has worked with the judiciary in Kosovo to provide assistance to establish a sustainable, effective and independent judiciary. Under the Kosovo Justice Support Program, USAID is working to increase public's trust in Kosovo's judiciary through an array of activities that focus on building a strong, independent, yet accountable judicial system. The program to assist the Kosovo Judicial Council will focus on building the management capacity of the KJC and its Secretariat, improving court administration, piloting programs and procedures, improving the enforcement of court judgments, implementing a notary system, and promoting the use of alternative dispute resolution methods to resolve cases.

Prior to the signing ceremony, Administrator Fore discussed issues and challenges to the rule of law. Participants represented the various areas in rule of law - Rexhep Haxhimusa, Chairman of the Kosovo Judicial Council and President Judge of the Supreme Court; Ymer Huruglica, President Judge of Gjilan District Court and Head of Judges Association; Ismet Kabashi, Head of the Prosecutors Association, and Rame Gashi, Lawyer and Chairman of Chamber of Advocates of Kosovo.

Deputy Prime Minister Hajredin Kuçi, past chairman of the Constitutional Commission, spoke, emphasizing the Government of Kosovo's support for a strong and independent judiciary. Law students attended the discussion, which was held in the Student Courtroom at the University of Pristina Law Faculty. USAID's Justice Support Program is implemented by the National Center for State Courts.

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

### Business Growth Demonstrated during USAID Administrator's Visit to Kosovo

A nursery's expansion into vegetable seedlings, a wood processor's new plant and other business sector's successful products were showcased on May 17 during the recent visit to Kosovo of USAID Administrator and Director for US Foreign Assistance Henrietta Fore.

At Las Pallmas nursery in Lipjan/Lipljan, Administrator Fore started operation of a vegetable seedling equipment along with nursery owner Luan Buqaj.



At the nursery: Administrator Fore is shown the process of seedlings growth by Luan Buqaj, the owner of Las Pallmas.

"What is interesting in this process is that the seedlings will be less expensive, more available and they will grow more quickly. Thus, it creates employment for people who are growing these plants and want to sell the produce as well as employment here. Operating the machine and tending to the machine are all skills that can be used in the business sector," said Administrator Fore.

Las Pallmas received a grant for purchase of and installation of the equipment as part of cost-sharing grant program for businesses under USAID's Kosovo Cluster and Business Support (KCBS) project.

The machine cost 55,315 euro, of which Las Pallmas spent 30,315 and USAID contributed a cost-share grant of 25,000 euro. The new equipment will produce 400,000 seedlings in the first year of operation, providing high quality vegetable transplants to 200 farmers.

Administrator Fore also visited Ukaj (Elnore) wood processing plant, Lipjan/Lipljan, where she toured the family run business producing chairs, tables, doors and wood flooring. Ukaj is another client of USAID's KCBS project, receiving technical assistance to improve efficiency, expand marketing and adapt equipment for new uses, using a cost-share grant from USAID. At a reception organized at Ukaj offices by the business community, Administrator Fore met several local successful producers from many different business sectors along with representatives of business associations, and discussed challenges facing Kosovo's business community. The KCBS project is implemented by Chemonics Int.

### Internship Program Launched at Annual Wood Fair

Forty-five wood industry producers exhibited their products at the annual wood fair "Natryra 2008." Hosted by the Association of Wood Producers of Kosovo (AWPK) on May 7-10 in Pristina, the fair offered Kosovars a chance to see the many products offered by wood processors in Kosovo. During the fair, AWPK signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Technical Faculty in Ferizaj/Urosevac establishing "internships." AWPK members will host students from the Faculty in their wood processing plants for the purpose of giving them to practical experience.

Republic of Kosovo President Fatmir Sejdiu opened the fair, and spoke about the importance of business development in Kosovo. He was joined at the opening ceremony by three Ministers - from Trade and Industry, Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development and Finance and Economy.

USAID's Kosovo Cluster and Business Support project provides technical assistance and cost-share grants for equipment to many wood processors in Kosovo, and has worked with AWPK, helping it to be a more effective association advocating for the industry's interests. The KCBS project is implemented by Chemonics Int.

## SPECIAL INITIATIVES

### New Bridge - New Beginnings

"Row, row your boat," sang children from a local kindergarten at the Viti/Vitina town bridge dedication on May 16. The bridge, a joint project of USAID, KFOR, Viti/Vitina municipality and Developing Together, was dedicated by Douglas Menarchik, USAID Assistant Administrator for Europe and Eurasia, Col. Michael Selby, Chief of State of KFOR's Multi-national Task Force (East), Viti/Vitina Mayor Nexhmedin Arifi and Sasa Marinkovic, Municipal Community Officer, as they cut the inaugural ribbon to officially open the bridge.

"As we stand on this new bridge we think of future - and these children are the future of Kosovo," Menarchik said. "USAID applauds your community's contributions to the planning and support of this project to improve conditions in your municipality. USAID will continue to be a strong partner with you for a brighter future for all Kosovo."



Douglas Menarchik, USAID Assistant Administrator for Europe and Eurasia greets the children at the Viti bridge dedication event

The new stone bridge, constructed for 34,000 euro, replaced a deteriorating wooden bridge which connected one neighborhood to the main market and center of town. In cooperation with KFOR troops, the community and municipality identified a new bridge as a priority project, and submitted the project request to USAID.

The Viti/Vitina bridge project is part of the Kosovo Communities Project, conducted with Developing Together, to help communities improve living conditions. NATO's KFOR troops help many communities identify projects. This project, as well as two other USAID-supported initiatives, helps improve living conditions across Kosovo, especially working with KFOR and Kosovo Serb and other communities.

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