



## CONFLICT MITIGATION

### USAID signs Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with Northern- Municipalities

An official ceremony to sign Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) between USAID and three Kosovo northern municipalities took place on August 31st.

The Mayors of Zvečan/Zveçan, Zubin Potok, and deputy mayor of Leposavic/q, joined by Tina Kaidanow, US Chief of Mission, and Michael Farbman, USAID Mission Director participated in the ceremony.

The MOU officially launches a project to work with communities in northern Kosovo and their municipal governments to design and implement small-scale infrastructure projects.



Signing the MOUs with northern municipalities  
Left to right: Dragisa Milovic, Mayor of Zvečan, Tina Kaidanow, US COM and Michael Farbman USAID/Director

"We hope that this kind of partnership will be a model for the future, and we hope that local governments will play an increasingly important role in improving the lives of their citizens," said Tina Kaidanow, US Chief of Mission at the MOU signing ceremony held in Zvečan/Zveçan.

The U.S. government will contribute more than \$1 million over the next year on infrastructure projects in Zvečan/Zveçan, Zubin Potok, and Leposavic/q.

The projects themselves will be designed through a collaborative effort among municipal leaders, community groups and USAID.

### New Program to Improve Multi-ethnic Communication

A program to improve multi-ethnic communication in Kosovo, known as the Kosovo Community Reconciliation Program (KCRP) started in August. This USAID partnership with Freedom House will support organizations working to address common issues shared by community members of different ethnicities.

This program is specific as it addresses the causes of conflict in Kosovo, by providing local communities with the mechanisms to help them communicate with each other, thus facilitating a dialogue to resolve shared issues among local communities.

The Kosovo Community Reconciliation Program, a two-year program, will partner with the Foundation for Democratic Initiatives (FDI) and the Balkan Human Rights Network (BHRN), to deepen civil society organizations' use of reconciliation tools and encourage the formation of coalitions and networks to increase the reach and impact of individual projects.

Through an open competition, local organizations will submit proposals to promote cross-community reconciliation and dialog across Kosovo with the active engagement of community members.

The program will focus on freedom of movement, inter-ethnic youth projects, religious freedom, local government cooperation, free and objective media reporting on human rights, and cultural events in multi-ethnic communities.

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

### A US - Kosovo Business Partnership

The visit of Gerald Perlot, Chief Executive of SwedeCo, a US based wood products distributor to Kosovo, on August 23, marks the beginning of a partnership between SwedeCo and two Kosovar manufacturers in producing engineered wood flooring.

SwedeCo's will work in partnership with KORENICA and UKAJ, Kosovo wood manufacturers to improve the quality of their engineered wood flooring, and help them develop a market for other products suitable for potential export to US and Europe.

As Mr. Perlot said, "the uniqueness of these two Kosovar entrepreneurs is their commitment to quality. While other international partners are turning toward quantity, Kosovo manufacturers are looking for quality, which is what US market wants, quality not quantity".

These types of partnerships will link Kosovo businesses to export market and create jobs.

The establishment of this partnership was facilitated by USAID's Kosovo Cluster and Business Support, a four-year activity aimed at helping Kosovo producers in improving their businesses through a clustered approach.

### A Successful Blueberry Season

In coffee shops of remote villages in the western part of Kosovo, the 2006 blueberry season has become the topic of the day among villagers.

The success of this blueberry collection season, the first phase of which end mid August, is being regarded as "outstanding". All berries gathered at Collection Centers thus far have been sold to exporters.

80,000 kg (188 tons Valued at 470,000 euro)) of blueberries have been collected and sold, result of hard work of the villagers in improving the quality of berries and cooperation with exporting companies.

USAID's Kosovo Cluster and Business Support activity has worked closely with the local producers in organizing the collection of blueberries and improving their quality, identifying new export markets and organizing events that brought exporting companies to the collection centers.

#### Upcoming Events

**September 7**, Michael Farbman, the new USAID/Kosovo Mission Director will meet USAID partners.

**September 8**, USAID/Kosovo kicks off with Kosovo Inclusive Community Change and Reconciliation Project



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