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KYRGYZSTAN: Inception workshop launches UNDP/UNEP Poverty and Environment Initiative in Kyrgyzstan



Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (27 July 2011) – An inception workshop to launch UNDP/UNEP Poverty and Environment Initiative (PEI) in Kyrgyzstan was held today in Bishkek. The workshop was attended by an official delegation from the UNDP Bratislava Regional Center, representatives of ministries and agencies, local self-governance bodies, non-governmental organizations and journalists.

PEI implemented by the Government of the KR with support of UNDP and UNEP focuses on strengthening financial and technical support to the Government for better integration of environmental and poverty considerations into national, sectoral and local development plans and budgeting. The main implementing partners of PEI in Kyrgyzstan are the Office of the First Vice PM, Ministry of Economic Regulation, National Agency for Local Self-Governance Affairs and the State Agency on Environment Protection and Forestry.

Two provinces, Naryn and Suusamyr, with the highest poverty level across the country, were selected as pilot areas for implementation of this initiative. People in these areas mainly depend on cattle breeding for their livelihoods and their current local development plans provide a good basis for integration of environmental priorities and poverty issues.

Welcoming the workshop participants, **Deputy Minister of Economic Regulation, Oleg Pankratov** stressed that the launch of this project had become possible due to the joint efforts of the Government, UNDP and UNEP during the last 3 years.

"We need to shift to more sustainable approaches, especially to nature management and put special emphasis on improving the state of poor. I hope with the support of this initiative we'll develop strategic documents, which will more fully reflect the poverty as well as environmental issues", Oleg Pankratov said.

He also noted the expert support that UNDP Environment Programme provided during development process of the Country Development Strategy for 2012-2014.



State secretary of the Agency on Environment Protection and Forestry, Mr. Abdymital Chyngojoev: Earlier donors did not consider environment and poverty issues together, but as a worker of nature protection agency I know these two issues are closely connected: environmental impact is high in those areas where population is poor".

Pradeep Sharma, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative in Kyrgyzstan:

"There is an ongoing debate on a global level as to which of the following is primary: environment or poverty? And which of these two affect another? Poor people are the ones who are disproportionately affected by the environmental degradation because ecological sustainability and nature resources impacts their well-being, especially in rural areas".

"I am happy that Kyrgyzstan has been chosen as a pilot country for this initiative, because more than 80% of lands here are affected by degradation due to unsustainable management of agricultural and pasture lands. Implementation of this Initiative requires that poverty and environment aspects be mainstreamed into planning on sub-regional level. I am delighted to learn that these issues are already being considered in the development of the new country development strategy", Pradeep Sharma said.



Additional information:

PEI is a UNDP/UNEP joint initiative to strengthen capacities for integration of environment and poverty linkages into national and sub-national planning and budgeting process through the provision of financial and technical support.

Regional Poverty and Environment Initiative was launched in 2008 in Bratislava, which was attended by high-level delegation from Kyrgyzstan who told about the country capacities and arguments for inclusion of the Kyrgyzstan as a pilot country. As a result of the selection process a decision was made on initiating of full-fledged programs in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In the end of 2010 Bishkek hosted a meeting of stakeholders, which approved the initiative and provided specific recommendations for finalization of a detailed work plan.

For more information on PEI visit the following site: <http://www.unpei.org>

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