The collaboration between UNDP and the Anti Discrimination Commissioner’s Office

1. A number of partnerships have taken place in 2012 and will continue in 2013 under the Gender Equality and Gender-Based Violence Outputs of the UN-Government of Albania Programme of Cooperation. One of these was the seminar on gender equality, LGBT rights, ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities organized by UNDP with the entire staff of the anti Discrimination Commissioner’s Office. The seminar was an opportunity to work together with ADC staff and raise their awareness on pervasive stereotypes and prejudices against diverse categories of the population, provide examples of discrimination cases related to these vulnerable groups and discuss their role, not only under the Law on Protection from Discrimination, but also under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Gender Equality Law and the National Strategy on Roma. A similar seminar was organized for the staff of the People’s Advocate as well.

Further support has been provided to AD during the two year period on the following issues:

- Setting up of an advisory body of prominent experts in the field of gender equality and non-discrimination, to provide particular insight and alternative viewpoints to Commissioner’s decisions in relations to discrimination of multiple forms, be it gender, ethnic, Roma, LGBT, persons with disabilities, etc. The advisory group includes prominent Albanian lawyers and an international legal expert.

- Assistance is extended to the institutional website and documentation to make it more accessible, understandable and utilizable by lay people. Other activities aimed at building a collaborative relationship with the media and informing citizens on their rights under Anti-Discrimination Law, Gender Equality Law and other relevant legislation, with a view to encourage their demand of these rights to this institution.

- Specific activities are targeting the raising of the institution profile by improving the outreach, particularly targeting at-risk populations, while also increasing Commissioner Baraku’s presence in the media.

2. Under the Social Inclusion Project (2010-2011), UNDP supported several training sessions provided in collaboration with the Commissioner and the Training Institute of Public Administration to civil servants at local level on the new Law on Protection from Discrimination. Between November 2010 and March 2011, UNDP offered supported and organized training sessions in six regions of Albania (Berat, Lezha, Vlora, Durres, Elbasan, Tiranë). Support to the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner under this project amounted to approximately 15,000 USD.

This project aimed at explaining to civil employees the novelties of the Non-discrimination law in terms of definitions, responsible authorities and their duties, as well
as building their awareness on non-discrimination issues and encouraging their thinking over diversity, multiculturalism, vulnerable groups, by promoting critical thinking over linkage of Non-discrimination law and other laws and policy papers.

3. Activities within the UNDP Project “Promoting disability Rights in Albania, Support Programme on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities” (SPC) (2011-2012) also involved Anti-Discrimination Commissioner staff in training sessions and working groups. ADC’s staff was trained in May 2012 on disability rights, in particular, on CRPD social model, gaps in the existing legislation, monitoring of the CRPD implementation and cases of discrimination on disability ground. The activity aimed at building ADC’s institutional capacities in relation to disability approach.

Two ADC’s employees, being observers within the Inter-Ministerial Working Group for the Elaboration of the Disability Law (IMWG), have benefited from the training and consultation sessions organized between July 2011 and March 2012 for the IMWG members and other concerned stakeholders on aligning the legal and policy frameworks with the CRPD requirements. In 2011 UNDP has also supported the participation of two ADC’s employees in international activities. One attended the Consultative Forum and Training on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was held in Zagreb in September and focused mainly on CRPD monitoring and reporting, and the other participated in the November study visit of Albanian partners in Warsaw, Poland, to learn on the CRPD implementation in practice.

In addition to this, ADC’s building was refurbished in October-November 2011 to make most of the inside premises accessible for persons with disabilities, while also preparing the blueprints for the installment of a lift.

4. Under the Supporting Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptian Communities (SSIREC) Project a “how to” manual will be developed as a practical tool for the staff of Commissioner to guide them in providing support to Roma and Egyptian citizens in filing their complaints and in responding adequately to these discrimination cases. Following the finalisation of the manual, a two-day training will be organised for the staff of AD Commissioner, with a special focus on Roma.

Informative flyers will be produced for public institutions and citizens, to inform them of potential discriminatory practices in the areas of education, health, housing, social welfare etc., and to guide them on the relevant procedures they should follow to file discrimination cases with the Commissioner;

Six public information events will be organized in Korca, Berat and Vlora in support of Commissioner’s outreach in Roma and Egyptian communities;

The project will advocate and provide assistance to the Commissioner to start up ex officio cases of school segregation, evictions, lack of housing, social welfare, etc.