UNDP Support to People’s Advocate Office in Albania

Throughout the first cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (2008-2011), UNDP has been actively involved in supporting several global, regional and national processes (in support of national governments/partners/agencies). Recognizing the importance of People’s Advocate’s role in fostering dialogue and facilitating collaboration and cooperation with all branches of government, executive, legislative and judiciary, as well as promoting a strong legal framework and a culture of human rights in the country, UNDP has been supporting the People’s Advocate office to participate in a series of UNDP regional events related to UPR process.

As the second cycle of the UPR is approaching – (2013 onward), UNDP will continue to cooperate with national institutions in the preparation process, strengthen its existing framework of engagement with the current cycle.

Under the current Government of Albania - UN Programme of Cooperation 2012-2016, one specific Programme Output focuses exclusively on public oversight functions: “Public oversight bodies including the Parliament, Ombudsman, and the anti-discrimination commissioner have the capacity to implement appropriate policy frameworks that ensure transparency and accountability of government”

The people’s Advocate office is currently being supported in three main areas:

- A training program was organized by UNDP to further sensitize the staff of the People’s Advocate on the issues faced by the most vulnerable categories of citizens to discrimination and on the ways to employ ethics, awareness and legal interpretation skills to interactions with citizens and developing recommendations. The training will focus on gender equality, LGBT rights, ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities rights creating a forum of pervasive stereotypes and prejudices against diverse categories of the population, providing examples of discrimination cases related to these vulnerable groups and discuss their role, under Albanian legislation, but also under UN and Council of Europe Conventions.

- UNDP Albania supported the People’s Advocate office to re-institutionalize the partnerships with the International Coordinating Committee for National Human Rights Institutions (ICC); reinforce communication and collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and explore possibilities of future collaboration; strengthen collaboration with the UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (“SPT”).

- In the coming months, through the support of Bratislava regional office, UNDP will engage in capacity assessment of the institution. The results of the capacity assessment will be instrumental in defining the capacity areas in need of further support.

- UNDP has also supported the outreach of People’s advocate institution among vulnerable and discriminated groups. An Open Day for People’s Advocate was organized in Fushe Kruja during the international Roma week.