

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MISSION TOO GEORGIA

MAY 10-12, 2010 GEORGIA



Executive Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) Ines Alberdi paid a three day official visit to Georgia – May 10-12, 2010. The goal of the mission was to meet with government and civil society partners, review progress and achievements in terms of UNIFEM’s programme in the country over the past couple of years, and discuss forthcoming work.

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Ines Alberdi,

Executive Director, UNIFEM



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UNIFEM Executive Director,
Ines Alberdi



“Thanks to the coordination and close cooperation between the local government and UN agencies, including UNIFEM, many positive things have already been done for IDP and conflict-affected population of our region”.

First Deputy Governor
of Shida Qartli
Giorgi Avaliani

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Within the framework of her official visit Ms. Alberdi held meetings in Shida Qartli, the region affected by August 2008 conflict. Ms. Alberdi met with the representatives of Shida Qartli local government on a consultation meeting in Gori municipality, where together with civil society and women’s groups there was reviewed progress towards the implementation of the recommendations for the improvement of the situation of the conflict-affected women and their families in Shida Qartli Region. This package of recommendations was elaborated by civil society in partnership with UNHCR, UNIFEM, and Council of Europe, and was submitted to Shida Qartli Governor Mr. Vardzelashvili by Mr. Thomas Hammerberg, High Commissioner for Human Rights of Council of Europe in November 2009.

“Partnerships play a central role in UNIFEM’s work. Working together with non-governmental organizations and governmental actors brings together expertise and resources, and strengthens the capacity of all partners for creating an enabling environment for sustainable development,” Alberdi stated while meeting with the local government in Gori.

UNIFEM Executive Director acknowledged and congratulated Shida Qartli local administration and Gori Municipality for their efforts to address the needs of IDPs and conflict-affected citizens after August 2008 crises. The meeting participants highlighted the successful partnership established between the local government, civil society, UN agencies and international organizations to solve the problems related to conflict and displacement. Ms. Alberdi emphasized on the role of UNIFEM as one of the leading UN agencies in addressing women’s human rights concerns and rendering support to the government in meeting its international and national commitments towards enhancement of gender equality. The Executive Director expressed her hope that UNIFEM’s three-year project, “Women for Equality, Peace, and Development in Georgia” (WEPD), supported by the Royal Government of Norway, will be implemented “in close partnership with the government and civil society, and will serve to improve the situation of internally displaced and conflict-affected women and their families in the region.”

After the meeting with local government and civil society, Ms. Alberdi visited Karaleti IDP cottage settlement where she visited a cottage of a single mother of two children displaced as a result of August 2008 hostilities from a Georgian village of Didi Liakhvi gorge of South Ossetia conflict zone. UNIFEM Executive Director asked her about living conditions in the settlement, employment and economic opportunities, also discussed the issues related to children’s education, health and social security situation and possible ways to overcome the existing difficulties.



Executive Director met with women community at Karaleti Community Center introduced by WEPD project partner organization Taso Foundation

Ms. Alberdi encouraged her together with other women living in the area to take an active part in implementation of UNIFEM's project **"Women for Equality, Peace and Development"** and join self-help groups formed in the frameworks of the Project that aim at empowerment of women for to addressing their needs, solving problems and advancing their human rights.

In her meetings with IDP and conflict-affected women in Shida Qartli, the UNIFEM Executive Director underlined the importance of social mobilization as a strategy for strengthening women's economic opportunities and improved social protection.

During the meeting in Karaleti Community Center, which has been established by UNIFEM partner NGO Taso Foundation, Ms. Ines Alberdi once again pointed at those sustainable changes for women that can be achieved only through the coordinated work between local government, international organizations and communities themselves. "This Center is an excellent example of combining and mobilizing the internal and external resources for the sake of community, which can be used as the basis for future social mobilization activities for women"- she said.

The Executive Director attended the meeting of the Interagency Council on the Measures to Eliminate Domestic Violence and visited the construction site of the first state-supported shelter for the victims of domestic violence in Tbilisi. The shelter is built by the State Fund for Protection and the Assistance of Victims of Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence in the framework of UNIFEM's project "SHiEld – Enhancing Prevention and Response to Domestic Violence in Georgia", supported by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), which also aims to establish another shelter in the conflict-affected Shida Qartli region and a nation-wide hotline for the victims/survivors of domestic violence.

"National surveys show that worldwide as many as 17 to 76 percent of women experience physical and/or sexual violence at some point in their lifetime, most often by husbands and intimate partners. It takes place in the home, on the streets, in schools, the workplace, in fields, refugee camps, during conflicts and crises" – said UNIFEM Executive Director, Ines Alberdi in her speech at the special press conference which was held to sum up of her three day official visit to Georgia on May 12.

The special press conference was held in Tbilisi by Marriott together with Rusudan Kervalishvili, Vice-Speaker of the Georgian Parliament, and the Chair of the Gender Equality Parliamentary Council. Giving her closing remarks at the press conference, Ms. Alberdi stated that Georgia is making progress in elaboration of gender sensitive laws and policies.

"Namely we welcome adoption of the domestic and anti-human trafficking legislation in 2006, amendments to the domestic violence law in 2009 as well as adoption of Gender Equality Law in spring 2010," The Executive Director announced.



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Rusudan Kervalishvili, Vice-Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia

Rusudan Kervalishvili, Vice Speaker of the Georgian Parliament, the Chair of the Gender Equality Parliamentary Council talked about successful partnership between the Parliament of Georgia and UN family, UNDP, UNFPA and UNIFEM that among others has resulted in the adoption of the Gender Equality Law. In her speech Ms. Kervalishvili said that the law is only the first step towards addressing the gender equality problem in Georgia and the main challenge lies ahead in its implementation

“The implementation of the Gender Equality Law is a complex process, in which I see a huge role of civil society and international organizations along with the government. A lot work is ahead of us also to increase women’s participation in political life of the country, in this regard one can think of handful of measures to encourage political parties to set internal quotas and include more women higher in their election lists. Without such measures, I personally do not see gender equality being achieved either in politics or in society, which is so important for harmonious development.”

Ms. Alberdi thanked Ms. Kervalishvili for her commitment and support to enhancement of gender equality in Georgia “I would like to once again underline great support and commitment to women’s rights and gender equality issues of the Parliamentary Council for Gender Equality under the leadership of Ms. Kervalishvili, Ms. Kervalishvili has truly championed policy level work for enhancement of gender equality and women’s empowerment in the country and we are highly grateful to her for this hard work”.

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UNIFEM is the women's fund at the United Nations, dedicated to advancing women's rights and achieving gender equality. It provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programmes and strategies that foster women's empowerment. UNIFEM works on the premise that it is the fundamental right of every woman to live a life free from discrimination and violence, and that gender equality is essential to achieving development and to building just societies.