

59% of Romanians believe that Romania has the moral duty of assisting the least developed countries



10th of April 2009 - The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) organized a roundtable with civil society, media and the diplomatic corps to share the results of a public opinion survey on attitudes of Romanians towards official development assistance (ODA). Participating civil society organizations also shared the results of their awareness raising campaigns on ODA, conducted in 5 different cities since December 2008.

According to the public opinion survey, one out of every two Romanians does charity – in cash and in kind to help those in need. 75% of Romanians are willing to volunteer in development and humanitarian assistance projects abroad. 59% of Romanians believe that Romania has a moral obligation to assist least developed countries.

Noting the budgetary constraints due to the global financial crises, State Secretary Doru Costea underlined the importance of creating high impact for Romania's limited national ODA budget and thanked civil society for their cooperation with the MFA.

UNDP Resident Representative Jan Sorensen highlighted Romania's obligations in ODA as an EU member state, reminding that for many of the world's poor, Romania's economic and social development level is paradise.

"Knowing the public perception on these issues enables us to tailor an efficient communication," said Mihaela Rutjens, Head of the Official Development Assistance Division of the MFA, referring to the next steps of the Ministry, as national coordinator, in communicating the national strategies of development assistance.

NGO partners of MFA, namely CENTRAS, Pro Democratia, SECS and World Vision involved hundreds of volunteers in their activities. In Constanta, youth organized a fundraising for the purchase of anti-malaria bed nets for an affected African community. High school and University students in Timisoara and Iasi became familiar with the Millennium Development Goals and official development assistance issues. The public in Bucharest was urged to "Pay it Forward" through messages in public places. The public in Cluj was engaged in dialogue by trained volunteers present in town squares.

Viorel Micescu, President of FOND, saluted the first steps taken by the MFA and UNDP to work with non-state actors which are best equipped to establish the link between the political stakeholders and citizens. "The financial resources used in the awareness campaigns constitute the bases for future projects", added Viorel Micescu.

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