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## WORLD VISION, UNDP, MoFA together to MDG 6 and for innovative financial schemes



### “I’ll fly, you live”

This is how the UNITAID Deputy Executive Secretary, Mr. Philippe Duneton, initiated its presentation during the “UNITAID for Romania - A call for action now”, organized by World Vision in Bucharest, on 20<sup>th</sup> of February 2009 in partnership with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Romania (MoFA).

The main event stakeholders gathered to tackle upon new innovative financial schemes, such as UNITAID, a “life-saving initiative”, according to United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan officially, more precisely a drug purchasing facility that will supply medicine and treatment against HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis for the poorest people of developing countries who otherwise could not afford them.

This initiative comes in the context of Romania becoming a European Union member country starting with January 1st 2007, changing its status from development assistance recipient to development assistance donor, having as main coordinator of the Official Development Assistance (ODA), the MoFA.

With the world financial crisis on its shoulders, Romania has drastically shrunked its ODA budget for 2009, as Mihaela Rutjens, Director ODA, MoFA office states, as such “Romania has to come with innovative financial alternative sources to contribute to its ODA tenets of 0.17 % for ODA out of the NGI until 2010, although the UNITAID mechanism is not in the strict sense of the word a replacement or an alternative to ODA, but an innovative financial tool”.

Following the same pattern, UNDP Resident Representative, Mr. Jan Sorensen, touched upon the “fiscal space for global and national developmental objectives that have become extremely difficult to create under such crises situations. Therefore the UNITAID presentation today comes very timely.”

Present at the event, H.E. Mr. Henri Paul, Ambassador of France, encouraged Romania to adhere to UNITAID in support to meet its ODA targets and follow France best practice, one of the UNITAID initiators that had already put in practice a progressive airplane levy on the international/national flights between 4 and 40 euro.

During 2008, in Romania domestic traffic increased by 21.07% compared to 2007. Roundly 500,000 persons chose airline transportation on Henri Coanda Bucharest Otopeni International Airport, thus registering over 5 mil passengers’ traffic last year. This would translate into \$5 mill raised through UNITAID for purchasing drugs to fight against malaria, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis in accordance with the United Nations agenda on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), goal 6 – Combat malaria, HIV/AIDS and other diseases. In the end, each Romanian citizen can contribute to global health, by paying 2 RON (less than \$1) more to the airplane ticket as a solidarity sign to countries in need.

In the event aftermath the equivalent of 15 net beds for malaria prevention has been raised, through the airplane tickets purchased by our international speakers, present at the event. Moreover, World Vision’s ongoing project called ‘Constanta’s World Vision’ is collecting funds destined to the purchase of net beds for malaria prevention in the African region. The project has been financed by the Romanian MoFa, through UNDP Romania.

UNITAID partners in its mission are: WHO, UNICEF, UNAIDS, Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and malaria, the Clinton Foundation and the Gates Foundation.

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