

PRESS RELEASE

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Island still first in the Human Development Index

Romania ranks 62nd

Challenges Sweden in Terms of Gender Equality Achievements

Friday, the 19th of December 2008 – The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) today released the Human Development Report containing the human development index (HDI) which looks beyond GDP to a broader definition of well-being. The HDI provides a composite measure of three dimensions of human development: living a long and healthy life (measured by life expectancy), being educated (measured by adult literacy and enrolment at the primary, secondary and tertiary level) and having a decent standard of living (measured by purchasing power parity, PPP, income).

The HDI for Romania is 0.825, which gives the country a rank of 62nd out of 179 countries that have provided data, in a top that ranks Iceland first and Sierra Leone last. In the last ten years there was a constant growth in the Romanian HDI. While in 1997 the level of the HDI was about 0, 752, since 2004 the value of HDI is higher than 0, 800. By comparison with the previous report, there is a progress from 0.813 to 0.825 as far as HDI is concerned.

România fares behind Bulgaria (56) but ahead of countries such as CIS (73), Brazil (70) or Turkey (76).

The first five countries this year are Island (1), Norway (2), Canada (3), Australia (4) and Ireland (5). France is on the 11th place, Austrai on the 14th, ahead of the USA (15), Spain (16) and Germany (23).

Among Romania's neighbors, with the exception of Moldavia which ranks 113 and a few states from the former Yugoslavian Republic, Serbia (65), Macedonia (68) Bosnia and Hertzegovina (75), our country is surpassed by the Check Republic (35), Hungary (38), Poland (39), Slovakia (41), Estonia (42), Lithuania (43), Latvia (44) and Croatia (45).

Concerning the dimensions of the human development, all part of the algorithm used to estimate the HDI, Romania is better positioned in terms of adult literacy rate, ranking 29 out of 147 countries. However, in terms of life expectancy at birth, Romania is on the 79 position in the global top. In the last decade, the life expectancy at birth has increased with 2 years, from 69,9 to 72,2.

One of the most spectacular achievements of Romania is related to the GDP per capita, reaching 10. 433 US\$ in 2006.

Changes in HDI values and ranks between two reports result from revisions to data for each of the HDI' s three components (4 indicators) as well as real changes in the level of human

development in different countries. The data revisions this year – especially of the GDP per capita (PPP US\$) series – have resulted in more substantial apparent movements in the HDI than is normally the case between successive publications.

Human poverty in Romania: focusing on the most deprived people

The HDI measures the average progress of a country in human development. The Human Poverty Index for developing countries (HPI-1), focuses on the proportion of people below a threshold level in the same dimensions of human development as the Human Development Index - living a long and healthy life, having access to education, and a decent standard of living. By looking beyond income deprivation, the HPI-1 represents a multi-dimensional alternative to the \$1.25 a day (PPP US\$) poverty measure.

With a HPI-1 value of 5.8 %, Romania ranks 20th among 135 developing countries for which the index has been estimated. This value positions the country between Ukraine (19) and Moldova (21). Regarding the probability of not surviving past age 40, Romania (ranking 22) displays figures similar with those of Argentina and Mauritius. Alarming enough, the number of children underweight for their age in Romania is comparable with the one in Georgia and Singapore.

Building the capabilities of women

The HDI measures average achievements in a country, but it does not incorporate the degree of gender imbalance in these achievements. The gender-related development index (GDI), introduced in Human Development Report 1995, measures achievements in the same dimensions using the same indicators as the HDI but captures inequalities in achievement between women and men. It is simply the HDI adjusted downward for gender inequality.

To measure the impact of gender inequalities on human development achievement, Romania's GDI value, 0.825 can be compared to its HDI value of 0.825. Its GDI value is 100.0% of its HDI value. Out of the 157 countries with both HDI and GDI values, only one country has a better ratio than Romania's, Sweden. There has been substantial progress since the previous report when Romania was associated with a HDI of 0.812, ranking the 4th in the world top. Due to the recent progress, Romania was able to achieve this year a better position than Maldives and Cuba.

However, if we analyze the GDI, it is obvious that there are certain areas where further progress should be achieved. As far as the life expectancy at birth is concerned, Romania is on the 22 position in a top lead by Russian Federation. The two positions just behind Romania are taken by another new EU member states, Bulgaria (ranking 23) and Slovenia (ranking 24). If we bear in mind the adult literacy rate, comparing women and men, Romania is on the 47 position with a ratio of 98,5 %. Above Romania's level we can find Croatia, EU candidate country, ranking 46. As far as GDI according to the combined primary, secondary and tertiary school gross enrolment ratio is concerned, Romania is on the 37 position, between Sri Lanka and The Occupied Palestinian Territories.

The gender empowerment measure (GEM) reveals whether women take an active part in economic and political life. It tracks the share of seats in parliament held by women; of female legislators, senior officials and managers; and of female professional and technical workers.

Romania ranks 80th out of 108 countries in the GEM, with a value of 0.500. In the Romanian Parliament 9,6% positions are held by women. The ratio of the women involved in producing legislation, senior officials and managers reaches 30%. The female professional and technical workers percentage is 57%. The ratio of estimated female to male earned income is 0,70.

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