

# PRESS RELEASE



United Nations Development Programme

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## LAUNCH OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE FACILITY

*Nairobi, July 18 2008* – **UNDP Kenya**, in collaboration with the Swedish International Development Agency, SIDA and the Royal Netherlands Embassy have established a Facility that will provide mechanisms for channeling support to civil society in the areas of democratic governance and key reforms. This UNDP managed Facility will be launched on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2008 by UNDP, SIDA, Royal Netherlands Embassy and the Ministry of Justice, National Cohesion and Constitutional Affairs. The Facility is funded by a multi donor basket which will provide support to Kenyan civil society organisations and community based organisations working across Kenya. The formation of the facility is the culmination of a long process of consultation between UNDP, development partners and civil society organizations on the need to support civil society to strengthen and fulfill its role in deepening democracy and achieving inclusive and citizen-led development. This will enable citizens to benefit politically, socially and economically from a more accountable, just, transparent and democratic society that upholds the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The facility seeks to sustainably provide support to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to engage in the governance and reform agenda in the country. A unique feature of the Facility is that it seeks to equitably engage with CSOs from all over the country. The facility will thus emphasise on national and thematic coverage in the support provided to CSOs. Community Based Organizations, organizations working on disability issues, women's, children's organizations and organizations dealing with other issues of vulnerabilities and vulnerable groups will be specifically targeted with capacity strengthening initiatives to enable them deliver on their mandate and to access funding from the facility.

Among the Facility's funding windows is the emerging issues fund to enable rapid response by civil society to issues of governance. The recent post election crisis makes the need for such a Facility with a rapid responsive window more evident. For 2008, the Facility will focus on supporting civil society's contribution to the national dialogue and reconciliation process. In particular it will support civil society input into the various commissions set up under the framework of the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation, as well as community based peace building initiatives.

### Specific objectives

- (i) Strengthen participatory democracy, social justice, the rule of law and protection of human rights,
- (ii) Increase organisations' internal good governance practices (against established benchmarks and as part of the capacity strengthening)
- (iii) Promote and facilitate citizens' active engagement in development processes and their capacity to take action
- (iv) Transmit citizens' concerns and ideas to local governance institutions and elected parliamentarians, appropriate parliamentary committees, committee staff and reform institutions, and
- (v) Enhance two-way communication flows between rural and remote areas/actors and national development processes.

The Facility will mirror the Governance, Justice, Law and Order Sector (GJLOS) key result areas.

The facility aims to enhance the relationship between civil society and government to influence policy dialogue and to meet human development objectives through the respect for the rule of law and human rights. This will be done through learning platforms and dialogue among CSOs themselves, and between CSOs and government, and the development fraternity.

Capacity strengthening for CSOs will be a crucial component in aligning internal systems and development of planning and monitoring tools for technical and financial management. Furthermore, capacity building will include support to strengthening organizations' internal governance and tailored coaching in relation to adopting a rights-based framework and skills in relation to networking, coalition-building and information sharing, especially for rural constituents.

The Facility will enable synergies between processes such as the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), which addresses the areas of democratic governance, national economic governance and management, corporate governance and socio-economic development, and the areas covered under GJLOS. Overall, the establishment of the Facility will provide support to CSOs' work across Kenya which will result in deepening the impact of their interventions at national, provincial and local levels.

*For Further Information contact*

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