



## **Opportunities for Cooperation between Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund and the Dominican Republic**

Ambassador Francis Lorenzo from the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the UN and Abraham Joseph, from the Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs held a briefing on 26 October 2006 with members of the Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund on potential areas for cooperation in the Dominican Republic within the framework of the UN Public-Private Alliance for Rural Development (UNPPA).

The Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund is a non-governmental organization (NGO) which works to improve the health, nutrition, physical security, and economic stability of women and children in developing countries.

Ambassador Lorenzo discussed the major challenges facing the Dominican Republic - strengthening the health and education systems and improving the country's infrastructure. Reaffirming his country's commitment to achieving the MDGs, the Ambassador acknowledged the importance of strategies such as UN Alliance in order to strengthen efforts to attain those goals.

Ambassador Lorenzo mentioned some potential areas in which the assistance of the Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund would be crucial, such as the development of small and medium sized enterprises (MSEs). Additionally, the Ambassador noted the importance of remittances to the country's economy, since the Dominican Republic has a large diaspora. In this regard, Ambassador Lorenzo mentioned the initiative undertaken by the Bureau for Development Policy, UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government of the Dominican Republic to learn more about the role played by migrants and the diaspora at the local level by organizing a regional consultation on migration, remittances and development in Santo Domingo in June 2006.

Mr. Joseph noted the importance of partnerships in order to promote development. In this context, he explained the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) initiative on the UNPPA and the significance of partnership between the Dominican Republic, the UN system and NGOs, such as Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund efforts to promote the UN alliance.

Ms. Leslie Wright, representative of the Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund, and the Fund's members expressed interest in collaborating with the UN Alliance on projects in the Dominican Republic, in particular developing pro-poor businesses by granting small loans to the rural poor.