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INTERACTIVE EXPERT PANEL

**The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and
hunger eradication, development and current challenges**

**Focus: The role of gender-responsive governance and
institutions for the empowerment of rural women**

**ONE-WINDOW MODEL OF SERVICE PROVISION FOR
RURAL WOMEN**

by

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Moldova At A Glance

Republic of Moldova modeled its vision for development in its Strategy “Moldova-2020”. The Government of Moldova regards European integration as a fundamental priority of domestic and foreign policy. In line with the government’s aspiration to Europe, an objective to create a modern European public administration system led to the launch of reforms to streamline and enhance the efficiency of the civil service. We clearly understand that in order to integrate to Europe we have to reach the minimum standards and the launched reforms will not take place overnight to bring us to the minimum standards. The Government absorbed the ideas and goals that were put forward under MDGs and CEDAW and transformed them into national priorities, including those set under the National Program on Gender Equality for 2010-2015. The same happens with other international treaties and development instruments.

Attaining the European minimum standards lays the foundation for the philosophy of the development policy in our state. While the formulation of policy and legislation for reform has been progressive and rapid, the process of implementation has been uneven – including reforms of the institutions that provide services to the population. Local governments in Moldova play a significant role in the provision of public services. They face various challenges and the improvement of the much-needed public services in rural areas depends on the ability of the local government to implement the reforms launched by the Government.

We are a very young state of only 20 years with a long history of soviet legacy, which encompassed heavily centralized structures and planning systems. That means we need profound transformation in the State implying a vast range of changes starting with physical/infrastructure changes to mental transformation that are needed at personal, institutional and systems levels. Most importantly, in the whole chain of reforms the Know-How of the process comes at the forefront. This implies the reengineering of the way the Government Works and Thinks for delivery of goods and services for its residents. One of these persons is Ana Turcan, from Telenesti District.

One Window Model: Joint Information and Services Bureau (JISB)

Ana Turcan is one of the beneficiaries of UN Women Programme “Women’s Economic Empowerment” (WEE) currently implemented in four districts of Moldova. Ana is a single mother from the district of Telenesti, situated 90 km away from Chisinau, capital of Moldova. She lives with her eight years old daughter and disabled parents. For two years Ana was unemployed having hard time to support her family without any regular income. She searched for various options, but in vain, until she approached the Joint Information and Services Bureau (JISB) located in the district Council, seeking solution for improving living conditions both for her and the family members. With assistance of service providers in the field of employment, social protection, chamber of commerce, who are residing in

the JISB along with others, **Ana received guidance and support to advance her skills.** She completed computer classes during two months, and immediately got employed as a secretary at the local gymnasium. Now she has a regular income, and is able to support herself and her family. After this success, Ana decided to advance herself further for her carrier growth and got enrolled in distance learning studies at the State University faculty of Psychology and Social Assistance. Ana, like any other women and young persons from among 2000 persons residing in the raion of Telenesti, Singerei, Cantemir and Nisporeni got access to the opportunities to improve their lives and advance economically thankful to the unique approach to service provision in rural areas titled “Joint Information and Services Bureau” established by the local authorities with support and facilitation of UN Women program following One Window (OW) Approach.

JISBs/OW were established under the auspices of local public administration at the end of 2010 as a new model of information and service provision for rural women and vulnerable groups at the local level. JISB/OW brings together around 10 services providers such as territorial employment agency, labour inspection, rural extension services, chamber of commerce, land and cadastre, entrepreneurship development, etc. They come together in one physical location in the building of the District Council, in an easily accessible by local population premise every week on the district market day. JISB also carries out mobile visits to the villages to provide services to those, who are not able to travel to access services, especially women with many children and/or those caring for family members, elderly, disabled and all other disadvantaged persons.

It is noteworthy that all **capacity development** of service providers were done following **unconventional methods and approaches. The focus was put on challenging the service providers** with finding new ways of working and delivering services to women and men by giving them the opportunity to brainstorm, discuss and decide themselves. **The self-paced method** that was used for facilitating the transformation of the way the service providers think and work availed the JISB/OW to configure the best way for organization of joint work and provision of services in a coordinated and coherent manner reaching out to the most needy. **The peer pressure and competition among four pilot districts** resulted in new motivations and creative approach for effective operation of services. The feedback received from the President of one of the pilot district is a clear demonstration of this “We received various support and funds earlier, but the support provided for the establishment of JISB/OW was the only one which provided the Opportunity for us to think ourselves and act differently”

Key Benefits

With the JISB establishment, **many structural and institutional barriers to women's economic advancement started to disappear**. Now women don't have to queue for long hours in front of different service providers, do not return for several times to the District center with the same question, and do not waste their scarce resources for travelling between the village and the District center. Moreover, they are now able to save their scarce resources, both time and money due to the coordinated services at the district level and their mobile services to the villages.

Women are now able to openly and easily address their problems related to employment, social service provision, initiation of small business, land registration and others. Women are better supported and feel empowered to excel their education, advance career opportunities and improve their living conditions and thus fulfill their rights. **From the statistics overview, more than 65 percent of the total beneficiaries of one-stop-shop model are women and more than 80 percent are from rural areas.**

This new model of service provision initiated and supported by UN Women laid a **foundation for sound governance structure at the local level**, which directly benefit the service providers as well. The service providers became "people and their needs" centered, rather than service provision oriented, taking into account the specific needs of women. Among many benefits, the service providers highlight the fact that they are highly motivated when their beneficiaries leave their office satisfied and happy. Also, the service providers **note drastic increase in coordination and cooperation among themselves at the local level**, efficient use of public funds due to joint analysis, planning, budgeting and reporting of service provision and delivery of services, reduced cost for service provision at the village level through sharing the transportation costs by the service providers and the district administration, Increased professional competencies of service providers by jointly addressing the challenges of beneficiaries, no physical barrier due to having one open and transparent office; For the Government, there are many benefits, among which the most important ones are 1.Improved targeted rights based service delivery, 2.Increased Transparency and Accountability and thus Trust of the residents and, 3. Reduced corruption in the localities. From the Cost-efficiency point of view: Implementation of services provision through JISB at the national level in all 32 districts is modestly estimated to generate savings for women and vulnerable groups totalling 300,000USD a year.

Next Steps

The next step is the **institutionalization of JISB/OW approach** by the Government and support for its further expansion throughout the country to better help and reach women like Ana, who are in great need for such a coordinated and efficient service of the State, so that Women will be empowered to help themselves better and fulfill their rights.

In this respect, I am pleased to inform you that this model has obtained the highest level appreciation and recognition from the Government. **The Prime Minister has called for an urgent action to replicate the model throughout the country** within shortest time frame with the financial inputs from the state budget. 14 more districts in addition to 4 existing pilot districts have expressed their readiness and interest to replicate the model immediately. Once these 14 districts are reached with the model, 56 percent of the country will be covered with this service provision model and we are now working to attain this goal within 2012. From 2013 we aim to cover the rest of the country with the same model, thus reaching out to every women and men, and a young person, who are in need for coordinated, transparent, open and efficient state service in employment, social protection, land, agriculture, extension services, business development, etc. At the Central level a Working Group was established according to the Order of the Prime Minister from 9th January tasked with the elaboration of the required institutional and legal basis for the roll out of the model throughout the country.

It is notable that the One Window model is getting ready to also provide e-services, thus further upgrading both the quality and the outreach of the services in the named areas. Not of less importance, I would like to mention the fact that a private internet service provider has announced its support to provide free access to internet for service providers to the four existing districts, and this dialogue was facilitated by the Central Public Authority. The UN Women Program is working on assisting the digitization of services, including developing a specific software and providing a required hardware to provide better services for women in rural areas.

Conclusions

This year's priority theme for the CSW on the “**empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges**” is highly relevant for the Republic of Moldova's aspiration towards greater gender equality and women's empowerment that are supported by the Government. We know that this is central to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and we hope that the Commission will adopt a strong outcome document that will strengthen the normative basis and a shared commitment for action in this area and we trust that our modest contribution from Moldova will inspire the others to look into the possibilities of remodelling the existing services towards becoming more gender sensitive and human rights based, which is fully achievable as we have seen from our country experience. Moldova is ready to share its experience, including receiving country missions to learn from our experience as well as sharing our knowledge that was accumulated so far on making the services to women and men, especially those in rural areas gender responsive and rights based.

For the Conclusion, I would like to mention that:

1. **It is possible to re-model the existing governance structures to make it more gender sensitive** and rights based (and our experience shows that re-modeling of

existing structures is possible and real opportunity for which a political will, passion and a leadership are the key).

And this is a new method in addition to the existing methods of Gender Mainstreaming, Targeted Interventions, etc, which are known already.

2. **Gender responsiveness of public services yields immediate positive results for the whole population**, especially for women and vulnerable population in rural areas;
3. **The Key transformations that bring greater gender sensitivity in service delivery are possible** due to Unique! Tailor made! Inexpensive! and Self-paced learning! and Know-How based facilitation combined with true ownership by service providers and local public authorities

We developed a new model of service provision, which proved to be highly effective and Which we brought here for you. It is inexpensive, fast, and realistic So Take this Model, Review it and Use it for the benefit of women and youth, elderly and disabled in your respective countries. Do not be afraid to follow our example! We are happy to welcome you to Moldova and share our experience and further develop it jointly with all of you.