



15 July 2014 Belgrade - On the eve of an international donor conference for flood recovery efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, UNDP Administrator Helen Clark today visited an affected area in Serbia and stressed the need to include disaster resilience in forthcoming recovery and reconstruction efforts there.

"Building back better means integrating disaster risk reduction policies into the plan going forward," she said after speaking to a young family whose house had been rendered uninhabitable by the widespread floods in May. "I think the plan that Serbia is taking to Brussels tomorrow is a good plan, and it is very precise. It lays out what happened and what the needs are going forward."

Heavy rainfalls hit Serbia in May causing unprecedented floods which killed 34 people and forced 32,000 people to evacuate their homes. The flood also inundated two coal mines, knocking out around 40% of Serbia's energy supply. Post-disaster needs were valued at 1,345 million EUR, of which 403 million EUR (30 per cent of the total) refer to recovery activities, and 942 million EUR (70 per cent) are reconstruction needs.

Helen Clark, together with the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Construction, Transport and

Infrastructure, Zorana Mihajlović, visited Smederevska Palanka, one of the six municipalities where UNDP is currently implementing a recovery project funded under the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to support relief efforts in Serbia. This project is working to provide safe water to the 240,000 persons in these areas by the end of the month through the cleaning and repair of the sewage system.



"I came to Serbia to see first-hand what has happened here, before going tomorrow to the international donors' conference in Brussels, said Helen Clark. As partners look into the needs here, I hope that will bring more international support for Serbia, on top of what has already come, to bolster its efforts to restore the economic and social conditions of the affected areas and to create a higher level of disaster resilience".

In addition to the CERF response, UNDP has started two additional recovery projects. One will tackle waste management and debris removal through a cash-for-work scheme whereby people affected by the floods will be directly involved in the rehabilitation of their community infrastructure and will get money in exchange for their work, improving their livelihoods. The second project will build new houses in the area.

During her two-day visit to Serbia, Helen Clark met the Prime Minister of Serbia, Aleksandar Vucic, the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ivica Dacic, and representatives from diplomatic missions and civil society. In her meetings with government, she discussed expanding UNDP's partnership with the country to include post-disaster and climate change response, and to accompany Serbia in its journey to join the European Union.

UNDP has been working in Serbia since 2000 in the areas of democratic governance, social inclusion and energy and environment.