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Final Project Board Meeting of “Future Skills and Jobs for Armenia’s Rural Youth” Project

Date, time: 22 July, 2021; 11:00 – 13:00

Venue: Online

Agenda

- 11:00-11:20 Opening remarks
- Ms. Mihaela Stojkoska, UNDP Resident Representative a.i.
 - Mr. Vache Terteryan, Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure of RA
 - Representative of Embassy of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Armenia
- 11:20-12:00 Presentation of the project results
- Hasmik Soghomonyan, Technical Task Lead of “Future Skills and Jobs for Armenia’s Rural Youth” Project
- 12:00-12:30 Discussion
- 12:30-12:45 Sum up of the board meeting

List of Participants

Name	Position, Agency	Status
Ms. Mihaela Stojkoska	UNDP Resident Representative, a.i.	Committee full member, Meeting co-chair
Mr. Vache Terteryan	RA Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure	Committee full member, Meeting co-chair

Ms. Natalya Viktorova	Third Secretary, Embassy of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Armenia	Committee full member, Meeting co-chair
Mr. Konstantin Kulikov	Councillor, Department of International Organizations	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation
Alexander Averchenkov,	Manager of the Trust Fund for Development, New Partnerships and Emerging Donors Team	UNDP Regional Office
Armine Poghosyan,	Head of the Division of Policy-Making and Strategy Development of Vocational Education and Training	RA Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport
Ms. Anna Gyurjyan	UNDP, Socioeconomic Portfolio Manager	UNDP Armenia
Ms. Hasmik Soghomonyan	Future Skills and Jobs for Armenian Rural Youth project, UNDP Armenia, Project Lead	UNDP Armenia

Opening remarks were delivered by Ms. Mihaela Stojkoska, UNDP Resident Representative in Armenia, a.i., welcoming the board members from the RA Ministry of Territorial Administration (Implementing Partner), other partner ministries and the Embassy of the Russian Federation and expressing gratitude for the support and collaboration provided to the Project and important partnership and synergies established. She emphasized the importance of future skills and jobs development in a long-time perspective, particularly the development of foresight capacities for future skills and jobs and a future-oriented agile approach for projection of our own future. Ms. Mihaela Stojkoska also emphasized that the Project was focused on rural youth, which was a very critical element, as the majority of youth are living in rural areas, but they are not necessarily able or aware of the full potential for the right to education and employment, especially in nowadays digitalization, the rural youth are not always very much integrated into digital literacy aspects, which was instrumental in lockdown times. "Investment in the development of human capital and creation of local employment opportunities are very critical for any society and any country, but particularly for countries like Armenia that has gone through the crisis during the last one and half years, it is very much important to have an additional set of knowledge and ideas, which will help the youth to stay in Armenia and prevent or minimize the risk of brain drain. The Project was built on Russia's important experience to strategize the regional development through foresight and scenario planning, introducing a new culture of long-time visioning for each region and each economic sector. The Project has benefited a lot from the partnership with the Russian institutions, including Skolkovo school of management and its signature project- Atlas of emerging jobs".

Ms. Stojkoska concluded that as a result of the Project in-house capacity of foresight was put in Armenia within the country office and its networks and it is a strategic investment because this knowledge can be utilized in different ways.

Mr. Vache Terteryan, Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure thanked Ms. Stojkoska for her opening remarks and said that the Ministry had given an important role to this direction from the very initial stage of the Project design with UNDP and Russian colleagues, based on Russia's current experience of activation, integration, employment and education of youth especially in rural areas. The results and outcomes of the Project might serve as a role model not only for UNDP but also for communities. Mr. Terteryan expressed his gratitude to the UNDP Project team for initiation and smooth implementation of the Project and special gratitude to the Government of the Russian Federation and the Embassy of the Russian Federation for the good and sustainable partnership between the Government of the Republic of Armenia, UNDP and the Government of the Russian Federation and urgent response to challenges and diversification of directions. Mr. Terteryan expressed his hope that this partnership is continuous as there is positive feedback on implemented projects from the Russian colleagues, which is a guarantee for increasing the project portfolio within this trilateral partnership. Mr. Terteryan said that overall a good work had been done and tangible results had been achieved, taking into account the limited resources of the Project.

Ms. Anna Gyurjyan, UNDP Socio-Economic Portfolio Manager, also expressed her hope that the Project will serve as a basis for the further development of this direction and confirmed that the package of the Russian funded projects is increasing day by day.

Ms. Natalya Viktorova, Third Secretary at the Embassy of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Armenia, on behalf of the Embassy of the Russian Federation thanked everyone, especially the UNDP office in Armenia and the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure and all people who had worked for the Project and expressed her confidence that the Project had brought a lot of benefits to Armenian people, particularly to young people, and helped the country to build a better future.

Presentation was made by Ms. Hasmik Soghomonyan, Project Lead, Future Skills and Jobs for Armenian Rural Youth project.

The presentation was followed by a discussion, addressing a range of project-related issues.

Based on the discussions held, the members of the PSC meeting noted the following:

1. Mr. Kulikov thanked for the presentation and detailed information provided on the Project and asked about the percentage of young people who had passed through the Project and had started their own enterprises or had been employed by companies thanks to the Project in order to measure the Project's success. He also asked about the sustainability of the Project and the future plans in terms of maintaining the results and if some sort of career tracking mechanisms had been established to assess what worked and what didn't, to

allow the initiative to evolve further and how the Kolba Jobs initiative was integrated into other Projects funded by the Russian Trust Fund.

2. Ms. Soghomonyan responded that 14 startups had been incubated and run by the Project and now managed by the teams or individuals; out of 34 young people who had passed the remote internship, 14-15 continued their career track in the mentioned specializations. Regarding sustainability, Ms. Soghomonyan answered that there was a section in the newly launched Kolba Jobs platform featuring online courses, skill-building projects, and also vacancy announcements for freelance jobs in partnership with the local private sector like tutor.am and course.am., as well as different HR associations and vacancy announcement platforms like staff.am had expressed their interest in collaboration with the platform. Inside the UNDP, there are some initiatives targeting employment and youth empowerment that are interested in the self-assessment tool created by the Project, which is a career orientation tool. Kolba jobs is also integrated into further project development initiatives, and we are planning to launch customized online courses developed locally.
3. Ms. Armenuhi Poghosyan, Head of Department of the RA Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport expressed her gratitude to the Project and particularly to Ms. Soghomonyan for the big efforts in implementation of the project. She mentioned that during the planning stage there were more ideas, but unfortunately due to pandemic and military situation they had faced different challenges and despite this had achieved very important results, e.g. the established educational laboratories had a very important role in the educational process. Ms. Poghosyan emphasized the importance of collaboration with UNDP started since 2005-2007 and good results achieved and expressed her hope in continuation of this collaboration.
4. In response to Mr. Kulikov's comments, Ms. Stojkoska said it was important to ensure that knowledge and tools are really systematically integrated into the further work and also keep collaborating and having a dialogue with institutions and counterparts, and the important take away from this meeting was not only to celebrate what had been done and the great examples shared, but how to use these examples to promote foresight in terms of planning of required skills for jobs, and that continuous promotion of good examples and integration of the Project's results in further projects and national systems were very important.
5. Ms. Gyurjyan assured that best would be done to ensure sustainability, the overall approach to project implementation lies in ensuring the sustainability of all project interventions. Relevant activities and initiatives launched within this project had been already integrated into further projects, and there is a strong connection among the ongoing projects implemented by UNDP Armenia. Various types of successful initiatives that had been started within this Project had already been successfully scaled up in other projects, for example, the

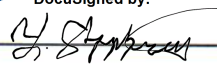
MPTF-funded project mentioned during the presentation and other projects, where relevant activities in the field of skill-building and youth employment were scaled up. We would be going forward and building up our new proposals based on the achieved results.

- 6. Mr. Averchenkov, Manager of the Trust Fund for Development, congratulated the national partners, the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure and the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport with the successful implementation of the Project and UNDP country office and asked about the engagement of Russian expertise and sustainability of this engagement.
- 7. Ms. Soghomonyan answered that there were several Russian institutions that the Project partnered with, including both educational institutions and also from the private sector. Also, there was a discussion of a couple of options for further partnership with the private sector representatives on the possibility of remote internship within the Russian private sector and Armenian youth to connect and share expertise between those two markets. Also, a variety of options were discussed with Uyar agricultural college - educational activities and joint start-up initiatives. Several agricultural development projects outside the UNDP had expressed their interest in partnership with Uyar college. Partnership with the High School of Economics had been continued, and some beneficiaries were interested in knowledge-sharing events organized by HSE and team members who had participated in the conferences on modeling and foresight.
- 8. Ms. Gyurjyan added that apart from this Project in all other projects, especially the ones focused on agricultural and community development UNDP was primarily focused and dedicated to using the Russian expertise.

Ms. Gyurjyan concluded the meeting, congratulating the team for the great results and assuring that more detailed information and pictures would be provided in the final report.

Agreed on behalf of the RA Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure

Signature: _____

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Mr. Vache Terteryan,
Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure

Date.....

Agreed on behalf of the Embassy of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Armenia

Signature: _____



Ms. Natalya Viktorova, Third Secretary at the Embassy of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Armenia

Date.....

Agreed on behalf of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP)

Signature: 

Ms. Mihaela Stojkoska
UNDP Resident Representative a.i.

Date.....

CC:

H. Soghomonyan	Project Lead, Future Skills and Jobs for Armenian Rural Youth project, UNDP Armenia	HS
A. Gyurjyan	Socioeconomic Portfolio Manager	AG