



United Nations Development Programme

# PRESS RELEASE

## UNDP and Central Election Commission Work Together

**Tuesday, 27 June 2006** – With Georgia's local elections on the horizon, UNDP is supporting the Central Election Commission (CEC) to upgrade its training system.

Guram Chalagashvili, chairman of the CEC, and Robert Watkins, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, today signed a cooperation document on [improving the current Election Administration staff training programme](#).

"UNDP is providing support to the Central Election Commission (CEC) in preparation of the local elections," Robert Watkins said during the signing ceremony. "Successful elections will not only consolidate democracy but will also play a crucial role in safeguarding internal stability," he went on to say that "UNDP believes that elections enable citizens to participate in decisions that affect their lives and allow them to hold their representatives accountable for results. Governments that have come to power through transparent and fair elections are more attentive towards improvement of the overall public services. Elections also provide a critical intersection between citizens and the interlinked goals of poverty alleviation, human development, and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)".

The UNDP project will be supporting the CEC to hold the training for Election Administration along with monitoring and evaluation. A UNDP elections expert with extensive local and international experience will provide policy advice and technical assistance to the CEC. The project will thus complement ongoing CEC training activities.

The project "Support to the Electoral Administration of Georgia in Preparation of Local Self-Governance Elections" will build on the previous UNDP assistance for the 2004 Presidential and Parliamentary elections as well as for Supreme Council elections in Ajara. UNDP shares the view within the international community that the upcoming local elections will be a "litmus test" for democracy in Georgia. And this is particularly important in view of the ongoing local self-governance reform.