



United Nations Development Programme

PRESS RELEASE

UNDP ASSISTS KAKHETI REGION OF GEORGIA

Friday, 22 September 2006 – The authorities of the Kakheti Region and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) today signed the “Regional Development in the Kakheti Region” Project to support the region in becoming more economically diversified and thus counteract the threat of poverty.

In the Kakheti region as many as 280,000 or 70 percent of the population is dependant on the wine industry. A strategy is needed to enable the region not only to respond to the disrupted export of wine, but also to diversify the economy (in terms of markets, products, etc.). For example, Kakheti is known to have a potential for tourism (cultural, eco, and adventure).

The 24-month UNDP initiative will therefore assist the Government of Georgia to create more economic opportunities for the region, as well as to develop the capacity of the local government and set up a basis for the efficient regional policy.

“The support from UNDP combines short-term assistance to alleviate the hardships currently being endured by the population in the Kakheti region with support for long-term development,” said Robert D. Watkins, UNDP RR. “This initial UNDP contribution hopefully will be followed by other actions for the benefit of the local population.”

The funds will also be used to increase access to microfinance products, establish farmers’ associations, organize vocational and educational trainings, and conduct feasibility studies for agro-processing facilities and installation of small industrial and market sites.

Signed by Robert D. Watkins, UNDP Resident Representative, and Petre Tsiskarishvili, Governor of the Kakheti Region, at the Governor’s Office in Telavi, the programme is in full compliance and support of the latest President’s initiatives geared at better utilization of regional opportunities and reducing the unemployment levels. It will be implemented with involvement of a number of stakeholders and in close cooperation with the Ministry of Economic Development and other relevant institutions. UNDP will provide initial funding to start the project. Additional resources will be mobilized by UNDP, regional and national authorities.

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