



## LEGISLATIVE STRENGTHENING

### Political Party Leadership Forums Address Campaign Activities

**T**hirty-eight party leaders and activists from nine Kosovo Albanian political parties attended the first of four Political Party Leadership Forums.

The activity brought together party decision-makers and international practitioners to engage in discussions on how to strengthen political parties through more effective citizen outreach and campaigning. The March 10 event was designed by USAID's partner, the National Democratic Institute (NDI), as part of the Political Parties, Legislative Bodies, and Supporting Organizations Program.



Jim Loftus, described modern techniques used in the last U.S. elections, while Donika Kadaj, Member of Parliament listened.

The party activists expressed interest in using techniques described by Jim Loftus, former advisor to the Obama campaign, such as utilizing internet, telephone and cell phones to reach voters, as well as doing more research to improve understanding of their parties' base and craft better messages. Loftus held one-on-one meetings with each party following the forum, in which parties described their problems and discussed possible solutions.

The Political Party Leadership Forum consists of four modules, including such topics as campaign planning; and framing the campaign. Each module will examine current practices and provide an exchange of experience. The forums and one-on-one follow-up consultations will be held over the next three months, helping

parties prepare for the anticipated fall local elections.

The Political Parties, Legislative Bodies, and Supporting Organizations Program has been working with political parties and the Assembly of Kosovo to support the ongoing process of democratic strengthening of political parties and processes in Kosovo.

## SAFETY IN COMMUNITIES

### Municipal Councils for Safety in Communities Become Active

**A**n Administrative Instruction defining procedures for Municipal Councils on Safety in Communities was described at a ceremony in Pristina on March 20.

"The concept of security goes beyond petty crime or national security in the "classic" sense -- it includes insecurity caused by inadequate public services and poverty," said Patricia Rader, USAID/Kosovo Mission Director. She joined Zenun Pajaziti, Minister of Internal Affairs (MIA), Sheremet Ahmeti, General Director of the Kosovo Police Service, and Shpend Tërdeva, Deputy Minister for Local Governance Administration (MLGA) in welcoming the effort to establish such councils in each municipality of Kosovo.

The Administrative Instruction was drafted by a working group convened by MIA with participation of MLGA, and technical support from the USAID-supported Kosovo Municipal Councils on Safety in Communities (KMCSC) project and USAID's Effective Municipalities Initiative.

The KMCSC activity, implemented by East-West Management Institute, aims to improve the public's trust in the ability of local-elected leaders and domestic security structures to provide public safety. It is hoped these councils will become a sustainable mechanism for communication among civil society, local-elected leaders and security structures at the municipal level, and that councils can help implement measures to improve public safety.

The Kosovo Municipal Councils on Safety in Communities project includes a combination of training, technical assistance, and grants.

It is anticipated that the Councils will address such issues as promoting multi-ethnic cooperation; improving security and freedom of movement, strengthening municipalities' emergency preparedness; and developing crisis response plans.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### MLGA Staff Increase Research, Comparative Analysis and Legal Writing Skills

Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLGA) staff is gaining new skills and strengthening their abilities in legal and report writing as part of a training program offered by USAID's Effective Municipalities Initiative. Skilled staff will be crucial to carrying forward reforms in local government as part of the decentralization process.

The Effective Municipalities Initiative is helping to build and strengthen staff members' capacities in the areas of research and comparative analysis, including effective writing, writing high-level reports, legal writing and reasoning.

Six consecutive training sessions were completed from January through March. Participants were introduced to research methods, the importance of thorough data collection, and reporting differences between qualitative and quantitative research.

The training sessions are being followed by the Effective Municipalities Initiative's coaching component, consisting of demand-based meetings with MLGA senior staff to provide advice and assistance as they undertake their daily activities. The Effective Municipalities Initiative is implemented by RTI International.

## SPECIAL INITIATIVES

### Government, Civil Society Representatives Discuss Regional Economic Development

Approaches to regional sustainable development were discussed by mid- to high-level managers from government and civil society from Albania, Kosovo, and Macedonia at the Hope Fellowship Regional Dialogue in Pristina March 5 and 6.

The dialogue provided a platform for discussion, sharing of experiences and exchange of ideas on how to practically work toward sustainable regional economic development in the Balkans. The 21 participants also included students, political parties' representatives, and the media.

During the discussions, participants discussed topics such as mutual water resources and energy production; exchange of knowledge and know-how; regional-tourism and cross-border cooperation; and integrating resources and industries. Participants noted that through additional regional meetings, writing articles in their local newspapers on regional cooperation, and initiating joint regional projects they can help acceleration of regional sustainable development.

The speakers at the dialogue included Enver Hoxhaj, Minister of Education, Science and Technology; Besim Beqaj, Kosovo Chamber of Commerce; Mustafë Hasani, Investment Promotion Agency of Kosovo; Milva Ekonomi, an expert on economic issues; Shpend Ahmeti, Institute for Advanced Studies; and Peter Duffy, USAID/Kosovo Program Officer.

This is the fourth Regional Dialogue organized by the Hope Fellowships Program, administered by National Albanian American Council.

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