

## **UNICEF and partners discuss rights based child protection services in Mitrovica and Zvecan municipalities**

**Mitrovica, 23 September 2009** - UNICEF and partners in Mitrovica and Zvecan municipalities are getting together to discuss the findings of a recent assessment of services for children in need of social protection. Experts and officials from Centres for Social Work, local municipality authorities, schools, health care institutions, civil society organisations as well as children and youth will participate in the workshop.

The workshop comes as a result of a UNICEF-supported assessment on the social protection situation in Mitrovica and Zvecan municipalities, implemented by the local NGO Mission of People of Good Will. The assessment considers what happens to children at risk who fall victim to domestic violence and abuse, children who abuse drugs and alcohol, and children who commit violence and criminal acts. It also analyses whether there are enough services for children with disabilities and whether children in pre school and primary school are protected. Further, it also focuses on children from most marginalised groups and the quality of care for those children.

Speaking at the workshop, the Head of UNICEF Office, Mr. Johannes Wedenig said 'It's important to highlight that this assessment is for you as a community to follow up on; despite the difficult situation in Mitrovica, you, as a community, including local authorities, teachers, parents and young people, have different responsibilities and roles to play in ensuring all children in your region have the opportunity to grow up in a protective environment. There are lots of challenges to be overcome in fulfilling children's right to protection, as the assessment shows, but there are also a lot of opportunities that we can build on together'

The assessment was developed with the full participation of all stakeholders, including children themselves, and it provides a set of recommendations to authorities and local and international organisations. The recommended measures can improve services for children in the two municipalities and will form the basis of an action plan to be developed and implemented with the local authorities with support from UNICEF.

*This activity is part of Area-Based Development Programme (ABD) for Mitrovica south/north and Zvecan that aims to contribute to the development of the area, and to the overall peace building and peace consolidation process. The programme engages individuals, communities, and institutions to effectively address diverse threats including poverty, social exclusion, rights of men, women and children and it promotes equal access to quality public services. The ABD programme is a joint partnership with five UN agencies in Kosovo (WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF, OHCHR, UNDP/UNV).*

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