



## PRESS RELEASE

### UN and Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sign new Programme on Enhancing Inter-Community Relations

**29 June, 2009** – Today at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Skopje, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Zoran Petrov and the acting UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Sheldon Yett, signed a new joint UN Programme “Enhancing Inter-Ethnic Community Dialogue and Collaboration”, with a \$ 4 million USD budget provided by the Government of Spain.

The three year programme is designed to encourage mutual understanding and respect between different ethnic communities and, more broadly, help resolve issues that may divide communities. These goals will be achieved by working with the media, with young people and the education system, and through fostering inter-community cooperation within and between municipalities, so to facilitate inclusive decision making and problem-solving.

The Programme will be implemented jointly by the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in close partnership with the Secretariat for the Ohrid Framework Agreement and other national and local partners. Funding for the programme has been provided by the Spanish Government’s Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund.

*“The Government was greatly involved in the development of the Programme’s priorities and I am very pleased that today the Government can officially endorse it. The UN is a respected and valued partner in the country and together we will work to make the programme a success”,* said Deputy Minister Petrov.

*“The UN very much welcomes the official signature of the Government today, marking the launch of this important initiative. This initiative embodies core principles of the UN, that of promoting tolerance and mutual respect. It is an ambitious programme that will enhance trust among communities so as to secure a peaceful society for present and future generations in this country”,* said acting UN Resident Coordinator, Sheldon Yett.

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