Social Audit of Public Services Delivery in Pakistan receives US$ 1.3 Million from the Swiss Government

18 December, 2003

The CIET social audit of public services delivery in Pakistan, commissioned by the National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB), received a significant boost from the Swiss government, which made a US$ 1,300,000 contribution, through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), to fund this landmark study in the 24 districts of Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) over the next five years.

The Swiss funding represents 25% of the total cost of the five year social audit programme, and will be channeled through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The formal agreement between the donor agency and UNDP was signed on December 18, 2003, at the United Nations office in Islamabad. The ambassador of Switzerland in Pakistan, Christian Dunant; the UNDP Resident Representative, Önder Yücer; and the SDC Deputy Resident Representative, Kaethy Schneitter, attended the event.

"We are happy to support this work and to do it through the UNDP", said ambassador Dunant at the ceremony. "We have been engaged in the devolution process, because we believe in local participation. And I have seen the results in Pakistan. I do a lot of traveling all over the country, and whenever I ask people about devolution, their answer is very positive. Of course they expect more, and this social audit will measure the results over the next five years", he remarked.

Mr. Yücer welcomed the contribution on behalf of UNDP, and noted that the agency has made devolution one of its priorities in Pakistan. "The social audit tracks citizen's views and experiences of public services, and monitors the improvement of public services delivery under devolution in all districts of Pakistan. Having this kind of information will certainly be in the best interest of the local governments", he added.

The baseline survey, which assessed the situation at the beginning of the devolution process, was supported by the government of Canada through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and it built on a 10 district pilot study funded by UNDP and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). The results of this first study were officially released to the public in October 2003, and are now being shared widely through a series of meetings with provincial and district authorities across Pakistan. The next national survey will start in January 2004.

The SDC was set up in 1961, as part of the Swiss Foreign Ministry, to extend technical, financial and humanitarian aid in the developing world. It has contributed to development projects in more than 50 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. Bilateral cooperation amounted to US$ 316 million in 2002. The agency also participates in multilateral efforts with the UN, the World Bank and regional institutions like the Asian Development Bank. The first agreement between the SDC and the government of Pakistan was signed in 1966, and the organization set up its Islamabad office in 1977. Throughout the years, the SDC has supported a wide range of initiatives in Pakistan, from sustainable land use to community empowerment, always focusing on the poorer areas of the country and the most vulnerable sectors of society.

Önder Yücer (left), UNDP Resident Representative in Pakistan, and Christian Dunant (centre), ambassador of Switzerland in that country, sign the agreement whereby the Swiss contribution to the social audit is channeled through the UN agency in Pakistan. Kaethy Schneitter (right), Deputy Resident Representative of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) was also present at the event.

For further information, contact cietpakistan@ciet.org.