



North Kivu:

Launch of Joint Project UNDP-FAO-UNICEF for the stabilisation and prevention of conflicts in Beni

Provincial Minister for Planning, Mr. Djuma Balikwisha, launched the joint project UNDP-FAO-UNICEF in Beni yesterday. The project is intended to facilitate the integration of the returnees and their acceptance by the host communities in the territory of Beni.

Funded by Spain, the US\$ 4 million-worth project is indeed aimed to facilitate a sustainable reintegration of returnees in Beni through prevention and management of intra and extra-communal conflicts, revitalization of local economies and improvement of basic social services. Scheduled for 24 months, the project will be implemented by UNDP, UNICEF and FAO.

Identified activities include the reinforcement and/or creation of community dynamism in the prevention and settlement of communal conflicts, the consolidation of peace, lasting reintegration of returnees, notably ex-combatants, and victims of sexual violence as well as economic revitalization.

Activities will also be aimed at enhancing accommodating capacity for the communities through wider access to basic social services as a general framework for the improvement of communities' living conditions with a view to reducing tensions and facilitating returnees' reintegration.

The following activities have already been identified: peaceful resolution of conflicts (by UNDP and UNICEF), violence against women and children (UNICEF). UNDP will be responsible for activities such as: capacity-building for civil society, economic recovery and the reintegration of returnees (ex-combatants, women living with HIV-AIDS, the displaced) as well as the revitalization of local economies. FAO, for its part, will tackle the dimension



Beni project will facilitate the integration of returnees into their community (MONUC Photo/Moussa Demba)

"support to farmers' organizations, the revitalization of the agricultural sector and the rehabilitation of rural markets" and UNICEF will handle basic social services, public health, sanitation, access to safe drinking water, education and training.

According to a project document, handed over by UNDP, the objective of the programme is *"to contribute to the attainment of three MDG objectives in DRC: eradication of extreme poverty and famine, gender balance and women's empowerment and sustainable environment. This programme relates to the key instruments deriving from the national policy and planning, notably the strategic document for the reduction of poverty (DSRP)."*

UNDP considers the programme to be part of the Act d'engagement signed by all the armed groups in North Kivu province on 23 January 2008

and the United Nations Security and Stabilisation Support Strategy UNSS.

In their remarks, the Administrator of the Territory of Beni and the Mayor of the town of Beni welcomed the project and expressed gratitude to the Government of the Kingdom of Spain. They expressed the hope to see the project expanded to other areas of Beni and to involve more local populations. The Administrator of the territory also urged the population, local NGOs and civil society to take ownership of the project.

The Representative of the stabilisation unit, for his part, commended the contributions by the local authorities and communities, especially women who suffered the most the consequences of the conflict, for their meaningful contributions without which the project could not be successful.