

REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP ON DEVELOPING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN KOSOVO

**Airlie House
Warrenton, Virginia
February 25 - March 1, 2001**

From February 25 through March 1, 2001, forty-four presidents, vice presidents, chief executive officers, and members of municipal assemblies from throughout Kosovo met in a workshop at the Airlie House in Warrenton, Virginia, with the following objectives:

- Promoting mutual understanding and tolerance necessary in a democratic society;
- Strengthening local government through cooperation and coordination skills;
- Understanding transparency, accountability, and responsibility as fundamentals to good governance; and
- Establishing municipal assemblies and administrations as effective providers of services and vehicles of sustainable development.

The program was sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and facilitated by the United States Institute of Peace. The participants worked together in a series of discussions, exercises, and simulations. In addition, they met in three problem-solving working groups that addressed concerns in the following areas:

- Cooperation among municipalities
- Provision of municipal services
- Challenges to good governance

Each of the three working groups produced a report. They all stressed their appreciation for assistance provided by the European Union, the United States, other foreign governments, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations and underlined the importance of continuing support. These reports, which are attached, represent the consensus of the personal views of participants in the working groups. They have no official character of any sort, but are of interest as a compendium of views of a group of informed and responsible leaders of all groups living in Kosovo.

Working Group I: Cooperation Among Municipalities
February 28, 2001, Airlie House

Participants envisage an open and democratic future for Kosovo in which all groups will live peacefully, in prosperity and without fear. As the first level of government constituted from Kosovo residents, the municipalities have a critical role to play in moving Kosovo forward and taking over responsibility from the international community.

Recognizing that at present, communication and collaboration among municipalities is limited, participants want to see a future in which municipalities cooperate actively in

- Dealing with problems that are common to many municipalities or cannot be resolved efficiently by individual municipalities, such as health, road repair, protection of property rights, garbage collection, water supply, education, corruption, economic development, sports, etc.;
- Promoting the interests of municipalities vis-à-vis the UNMIK administration, which should devolve increasing authority to the responsible municipal officials, and providing the UNMIK administration with an opportunity to keep the municipalities informed;
- Professionalizing municipal administration and organizing expert teams to work on municipal projects;
- Increasing communication among municipalities and exchanging experience;
- Providing the necessary conditions and assisting the return to their homes of displaced people and refugees of all ethnic groups;
- Seeking to integrate minorities in municipalities and municipal administrations; and
- Demanding freedom for political prisoners held outside Kosovo and compiling information on people missing from Kosovo, wherever they may be.

All participants applauded the initiative of the Mayor of Gjilan/ Gnjilane in calling a meeting of Kosovo municipal leaders in February, attended by twenty-one mayors. They welcomed the continuation of this effort by the Mayor of Suhareka / Suva Reka, who will call a follow-on meeting in March.

- They stressed the importance of inviting all municipal presidents and deputy presidents, which will ensure that minorities are represented.
- Representatives of all political parties and ethnic groups agreed that they would be willing to attend such a meeting, provided there is adequate security.

Participants proposed that the meeting in Suhareka / Suva Reka consider and approve a proposal for the formation of an association of municipal officials.

- The association of municipal officials would be a nongovernmental organization without legal authority, but would serve as a professional consultative body.
- It would be transparent, holding public meetings and soliciting residents' feedback, and cooperate with UNMIK and KFOR, especially in providing security and freedom of movement.

Participants also looked forward to participating in Sister Cities initiatives with U.S. and European counterparts and looked forward to considering the possibilities further at the meeting in Suva Reka / Suhareka.



Workshop II: Provision of Municipal Services

February 28, 2001, Airlie House

Looking to the future

Major modernization and reconstruction of municipal services will be necessary throughout Kosovo over the next decade. Prioritization is essential in each municipality. The problems in most municipalities are similar, but the natural assets and needs of each require a tailored approach. Nonetheless, almost every municipality will have to focus on the human services and environmental, water, power and telecommunications infrastructure sectors.

Within five to ten years, the following will have to be achieved:

- An expanded health and education services.
- An adequate supply of drinking water, and adequate distribution systems.
- An effective sewage system.
- A sanitary, environment friendly garbage collection and disposal system including waste disposal sites, waste treatment technologies and appropriate recycling technologies
- A widened and modernized telephone and power network and internet access. Furthermore, use of alternative sources of energy should be encouraged when appropriate and economically viable.
- A larger and more heavy-duty road network.

Within five to ten years, we must open up new job opportunities. If we do not, we will lose population to areas where there are better employment opportunities and fail to develop the tax base to fund our requirements.

How do we get there from here?

1. Flexible Planning and Prioritizing: Given the financing opportunities available, and the number of projects that need completion, adequate prioritizing and planning is essential. Planning will be done in the following stages; setting regulations and standards, setting priorities after public discussion, determining the financing of key projects, determining possible sources of financing (i.e., municipal budget, foreign grants or investment); setting and approving the budget, and oversight.

2. Establishing legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms. There is a need for an accelerated implementation of a legal framework and effective enforcement to protect investment, property, and to provide a basis for privatization.

3. Possible municipal/regional cooperation on common problems: Given the commonality of several municipal problems, including drinking water, electricity, sewer systems, garbage disposal, and road construction, and the difficulty of financing separate projects, collective action is desirable.

4. Financing: Currently, most financing comes mainly from foreign sources. We must gradually shift to reliance on local, self-financing options. Finding local sources of revenue is extremely crucial.

5. Employment. Seeking to expand employment opportunities. Creating a tourism sector and the necessary infrastructure, exploring the opportunities provided by information technology and building on the current middle and small business/family base. Incentives to attract foreign and domestic investment will be developed.



Workshop III: Challenges to Good Governance February 28, 2001, Airlie House

Vision of the Future Participants in the Good Governance Working Group identified the establishment of political stability and economic development as two crucial components of a democratic Kosovo. They noted that political stability on the municipal level ultimately relies upon tolerance and unity among all Kosova's ethnic communities. This means that cooperation and a joint administration are top priorities for the future of local governance. Specifically, municipal leaders need to represent all the citizens in their jurisdiction, not just those of their own political party or ethnic group. They need to provide services for, and protect the human rights of, all people. Economic development in Kosovo would emphasize privatization and the creation of numerous small-to-medium size businesses. The role of local governance will be to help establish a political environment in which privatization can be accomplished with fairness and foreign investment will be encouraged.

Present Situation Effective local governance faces a multitude of challenges in Kosovo. These include a decade of abuse of many of the social services that effective local governance relies upon, including disrepair of the judicial, legal, educational, security, transportation and health infrastructures. As such, many of the prerequisites for good governance still need to be created and laws that facilitate its development must urgently be drafted and approved. A sound legal basis is also needed in order to effectively decentralize and reregulate the economy, essential prerequisites to reversing Kosovo's crippling unemployment. Corruption, however, remains a major impediment to stability on both local and national levels.

Specific, Concrete Steps

Development of a Legal Framework

- Adoption of a legal framework, in accord with international conventions, for Kosovo-wide governmental institutions that guarantees equal rights for all and provides for the establishment of an operational framework for municipal governments.
- Development of guarantees of human rights for all minorities according to international standards. These should also include rights to safety and security for all individuals and proportional representation of minorities in all municipal assemblies.
- Creation of an effective judiciary system.
- Creation of a fair system of taxation

Combating Corruption

- Enacting special laws that will inhibit political intimidation, including punishment for criminal behavior and protection from intimidation for all public officials.
- Establishment of an independent ombudsman office with direct authority to investigate any suspicious activity on the municipal level. At present, to be established by and accountable to UNMIK; eventually under the jurisdiction of parliament. Committee of local officials to bring concrete proposal to UNMIK officials.
- Establishment of civic initiative watchdog organizations to disclose and disseminate information on candidates for municipal office to the public prior to elections.
- Establishment of joint government/business agency charged with responsibility to monitor favoritism in local government procurement and hiring practices.
- Holding of open public meetings to provide information, solicit feedback and facilitate implementation of new ideas.
- Establishment of legal norms, requiring the disclosure of official assets.
- Creation of open, reliable and transparent system of record keeping, covering all financial and property transactions, with public access to all information.
- Creation of a code of ethics for municipal officials. This code would call public officials to be honest, pragmatic, tolerant and accountable to the citizens of Kosovo, committed to public service and dedicated to the recognition of the rights of all individuals, including minorities. Such a code would call these officials to avoid moral scandals, including financial corruption, nepotism, political intimidation, sexual discrimination or abuse, and alcohol or drug abuse.
- Provision of educational preparation for all municipal staff, in order to increase proficiency and professional competence.