

Medium-Term Strategy for Official Development Assistance of the Slovak Republic for the years 2009-2013

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„Human dignity is independent of national borders. We must always defend the interests of the poor and the persecuted in other countries.“

Kjell Magne Bondevik (former Prime Minister of Norway)

INTRODUCTION

As a member of the European Union (EU) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Slovak Republic ranks among the most advanced countries in the world. In light of its positive macroeconomic development, Slovakia graduated from the World Bank's operations in 2008, which means that Slovakia ceased to be a recipient and became a donor of development assistance. Under the Medium-Term Strategy for Official Development Assistance for the years 2003-2008, the Slovak Republic has, since 2003, been engaged in bilateral development assistance programmes and projects carried out in developing countries, in addition to providing trilateral and multilateral assistance and humanitarian aid (Slovak Aid)¹. Since 2004, as an EU Member State, Slovakia has been engaged in the funding of development activities carried out by the European Commission.

Slovakia's top ODA priorities for the years 2009-2013 period include the strengthening of stability and good governance in regions and countries that are among the priority areas of Slovakia's concern, including in terms of Slovakia's economic interests, as well as encouraging development, thus reducing poverty and hunger in developing countries through more effective and better-targeted development and humanitarian aid.

For that purpose, the Medium-Term Strategy for Official Development Assistance of the Slovak Republic for the years 2009-2013 (the Medium-Term Strategy) has been designed. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic prepared and submitted to the Slovak Government this strategic policy paper in compliance with §7(1)(b) of Act No. 617/2007 Coll. on Official Development Assistance and on amendments to Act No. 575/2001 Coll. on the Organisation of the Government Activities and on the Organisation of Central State Administration, as amended (hereinafter referred to as Act No. 617/2007 Coll. or the ODA Act).²

The strategy was approved by the Government on 4 March 2009³.

Pursuant to Act No. 617/2007 Coll.⁴, the strategy represents a crucial planning instrument for official development assistance (ODA). Along with Act No. 617/2007 Coll., the strategy will serve as the basis for further planning and programming documents for the next five years (in particular for annual national ODA programmes, as well as for bilateral agreements with developing countries and assistance strategies for individual priority countries).

The Medium-Term Strategy was prepared after intensive consultations both within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, including Slovak embassies and

¹ The Medium-Term Concept approved by the Slovak Government on 5 June 2003 by resolution No. 432/2003 defines specific goals, priorities, principles and partners of Slovak development assistance for given years. The mechanism for the provision of Slovak humanitarian aid was approved by the Government on 12 April 2006.

² More information about Slovak development assistance, including the ODA Act and the Medium-Term Strategy, is available at www.slovakaid.sk

³ Approved by the Slovak Government by resolution No. 170/2009.

⁴ Under §5 (ODA planning instruments) of Act No. 617/2007 Coll., a Medium-Term Strategy prepared for a period of at least five years shall define, in particular:

- a) focus and principles of official development assistance;
- b) sectoral priorities of bilateral official development assistance;
- c) territorial priorities of bilateral official development assistance;
- d) priorities of trilateral official development assistance and multilateral ODA (par. 1).

The Medium-Term Strategy serves as the basis for the preparation of national ODA programmes, adopted by the Slovak Government each year, which define, in particular, priorities of bilateral ODA for a respective budgetary year (par. 2).

permanent missions, and between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic with other ministries and partners involved in development assistance activities – the Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation (Agency), non-governmental development organisations represented by the Platform, the private sector and the UNDP.

The strategy reflects the developments in Slovak foreign policy interests, the change Slovakia has attained as a new donor since 2003, including the completion of the development assistance system, experiences gained, and Slovakia's commitments arising under its EU membership.

On that account, the Medium-Term Strategy includes detailed rules for the provision of development assistance by the Slovak Republic, strengthens a targeted approach to bilateral development assistance (drafting agreements on the provision of development assistance and assistance strategies for programme/project countries), and governs Slovakia's participation in EU development policy, multilateral as well as humanitarian aid. In addition, it defines measures to improve the effectiveness of assistance provided by Slovakia, including the specification of tasks to be subject to evaluation. In this way, Slovakia wants to contribute to the effective provision of development assistance, reduction in administrative requirements on partner countries, and meeting development assistance objectives. When providing development assistance, Slovakia intends to build in the upcoming years on its comparative advantages, especially its experience from the transition to a democracy and market-oriented economy, as well as its knowledge of the territory of priority countries. Slovakia will gradually shift from project assistance to programme assistance and to using more flexible and proactive direct aid, as well as to the utilisation of targeted cooperation with international organisations. By the same token, it will strengthen the capacities of actors that provide development assistance, evaluation and monitoring of Slovak development assistance and public awareness. In addition, it will make more flexible and speedy use of a separate item under national ODA programmes for urgent humanitarian aid falling within the powers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic.

The Medium-Term Strategy consists of nine sections:

- I. Global Challenges and Development
- II. Basic Parameters of Slovak Development Assistance
- III. Bilateral Development Assistance
- IV. Trilateral Development Assistance
- V. Multilateral Development Assistance
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- VII. Capacity Building in Slovak Official Development Assistance Actors
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I. GLOBAL CHALLENGES AND DEVELOPMENT

Combating global poverty is not only a moral commitment, it also helps to build a more stable, peaceful, prosperous and equitable world. Even though the largest share of responsibility for their advancement is borne by developing countries themselves, the advanced countries also have a great deal of responsibility⁵.

Slovak development assistance is an inseparable part and instrument of Slovak foreign policy, which shapes, to a large degree, Slovakia's relations with recipients, international organisations such as the UN, OECD, the World Bank Group, the European Commission and other donors – EU Member States in particular.

Development assistance already provided has helped recipients, made Slovakia more visible, deepened our links with partner countries, opened the door for Slovak entities to become established abroad, and generated new institutional and expert capacities in Slovakia.

Development assistance provided by the Slovak Republic complies with international documents, treaties and declarations to which it has acceded, namely the UN Millennium Declaration and the UN Millennium Development Goals⁶, the Paris Declaration, and the Accra Agenda for Action.⁷ Further, it acts in line with the commitments made at the UN International Conference on Financing for Development held in Monterrey, and confirmed at the Doha Conference⁸. As an EU Member State, Slovakia acts in compliance with the European Consensus on Development⁹ and the conclusions of the European Council and the Council of the EU addressing various aspects of the EU's development policy¹⁰. The so-called "Aid for Trade" initiative also constitutes an important part of the EU's development policy¹¹.

⁵ Cf. the European Consensus on Development – introduction.

⁶ The UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were adopted at the World Summit held from 6 to 8 September 2000 in New York. Characterised by a multidimensional approach to existing problems, the MDGs are as follows: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education for all, promote gender equality and empower women, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensure environmental sustainability, and develop a global partnership for development. A high-level UN General Assembly meeting on the MDGs, held on 25 September 2008 in New York, renewed commitments to achieving the MDGs.

⁷ The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, endorsed at the Second High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness on 2 March 2005 in Paris, lays down a practical, action-oriented roadmap to improve the quality of aid and its impact on development. The Accra Agenda for Action, adopted at the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness held from 2 to 4 September 2008 in Accra, upholds international commitments to encouraging reforms necessary in order to provide effective development assistance and achieve the MDGs by 2015.

⁸ The International Conference on Financing for Development – Monterrey, 18-22 March 2002; Doha, 29 November – 2 December 2008.

⁹ The European Consensus on Development is a joint statement adopted by the European Council, the European Parliament and the Commission on 20 December 2005. The document is divided into two parts: the first one specifies common principles of the development policy of the EU and its Member States, the latter one concerns the European Community development policy implemented by the Commission.

¹⁰ Conclusions of the European Council of June 2005; conclusions of the European Council of 19-20 June 2008; conclusions of the Council of May 2005; conclusions of the Council of April 2006 on Policy Coherence for Development.

¹¹ Conclusions of the Council of 15 October 2007 on an EU Aid for Trade Strategy; the strategy encourages demand-driven reforms in trade policies and removes supply-side constraints connected with production capacities, economic infrastructure and trade-related regulations. In 2005, the European Union pledged to raise its spending on Aid for Trade to €2 billion a year from 2010 – of that, €1 billion would be in the form of Community assistance and €1 billion annually in the form of bilateral assistance by EU Member States.

Under its membership in the OECD, Slovakia may participate in the work of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC-OECD), having an observer status, thus far.

The European Union provides over half of the world's official development assistance and represents the most important trade partner for developing countries. Slovakia supports the EU's goal to improve quality and effectiveness of development assistance. In 2007, Slovakia completed the creation of its institutional and legal framework on development assistance. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic established the Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation in 2007; Act No. 617/2007 Coll. entered into force on 1 February 2008 to make Slovakia a development aid donor with a defined legislative and institutional framework. Slovakia participates in European development policy by means of EU external assistance instruments, coordination of its efforts, and cooperating with other EU Member States and the Commission. The principles of the European Consensus on Development (2005), in whose preparation Slovakia was actively engaged, will be reflected in the implementation of Slovak development assistance more intensively. In the upcoming period, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic will therefore step up its activities with respect to participation in the preparation of EU development policy, including through paying increased attention to the EU's eastern neighbours. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic will closely cooperate with Slovak non-governmental organisations in this purpose.

II. BASIC PARAMETERS OF SLOVAK DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

Slovakia provides development assistance in compliance with Act No. 617/2007 Coll. This Act defines official development assistance as activities and measures designed to promote sustainable development in developing countries financed from public funds of the Slovak Republic, used in accordance with the DAC-OECD rules on official development assistance for the provision of bilateral, trilateral, and multilateral official development assistance and humanitarian aid¹².

Development assistance activities planned for the years 2009-2013 are a follow-up to the Medium-Term Strategy for Official Development Assistance for the years 2003-2008.

Having committed itself to the fulfilment of the UN Millennium Development Goals in compliance with the main objective of EU development cooperation, i.e., poverty reduction, the Slovak Republic endeavours to contribute to reducing poverty in developing countries and to promoting their sustainable development. In the case of middle income countries, to which Slovakia provides development assistance, the crucial objective is their sustainable development based on good governance, respect for human rights and addressing political, economic, social and environmental issues.

The Slovak Republic provides development assistance primarily based on the following grounds:¹³

a) **Co-responsibility for global development**

Co-responsibility is based on the values of peace, solidarity, social justice, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, the rule of law and good governance.

b) **A desire to be an active player in international policy and an active member of the donor community.**

Slovakia's activities within the UN, including its non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council (2006-2007), and the EU have proven the country's ability to participate in the shaping and implementation of international policy. In addition, it may take advantage of its notable and unique experience with a development, transformation and reform process (political, economic, legislative, and institutional) in all aspects of public life. Due to such experience, Slovakia enjoys a specific position within the international donor community.

c) **Moral obligation and commitments arising under its membership of international organisations, of the EU in particular.**

Slovakia feels a moral obligation to provide development assistance with respect to the values of democracy, solidarity and the rule of law, to which it is committed. Slovakia has gone through a **challenging process of transformation from a recipient to a donor country**. As an EU and OECD member, it ranks among the world's most advanced countries. The membership in these international organisations and institutions entails obligations Slovakia endeavours to pursue through its activities.

¹² Pursuant to §2 (a) of Act No. 617/2007 Coll.

¹³ Pursuant to §3 and §4 of Act No. 617/2007 Coll.

Slovak official development assistance goals are defined by Act No. 617/2007 Coll.¹⁴ and the UN Millennium Development Goals. They include:

- a) reducing poverty and hunger in developing countries;
- b) promoting sustainable economic, social and environmental development in developing countries;
- c) ensuring global peace and security, in particular by enhancing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and good governance in developing countries;
- d) promoting universal access to education in developing countries;
- e) improving the quality of basic healthcare services in developing countries;
- f) promoting economic cooperation with developing countries;
- g) raising Slovak public awareness of the needs of developing countries and development assistance provided by Slovakia.

Slovakia will pursue its official development assistance goals under Act No. 617/2007 Coll. mainly through the following measures and actions:

- a) engagement of Slovak and local stakeholders in developing countries into implementation of the Slovak Medium-Term Strategy;
- b) sharing Slovakia's knowledge and experience with social and economic transformation;
- c) engagement of Slovak experts and actors in international development activities, mechanisms and international development projects;
- d) coordination of efforts with other donors and inclusion of Slovak development assistance into international projects;
- e) bilateral, trilateral and multilateral development assistance provided in the form of grants, micro-grants, public contracts, financial and in-kind donations, and other forms of assistance as defined in Act No. 617/2007 Coll.;
- f) humanitarian aid;
- g) improving the monitoring and evaluation of development assistance provided by Slovakia;
- h) education and information on global development and development assistance;
- i) ensuring sufficient information and awareness raising with respect to Slovak development and humanitarian aid through sufficient funds earmarked within national ODA programmes and the use of the Slovak Aid logo in all activities performed under Slovak development assistance.

Basic rules and principles for the provision and evaluation of Slovak official development assistance

The Slovak Republic provides official development assistance in accordance with the basic rules and principles that comply with its priorities in foreign policy and the economy and are consistent with the principles of international development policy and the European Union. The basic rules include aid effectiveness, coherence and flexibility. Slovak development assistance is governed by the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action, bearing in mind aid effectiveness.

- 1. Effectiveness is a key rule** that enhances the effects of development assistance. Aid effectiveness is primarily based on the principles of ownership, alignment, harmonisation, result-oriented management, and mutual accountability and transparency, as well as on other principles (cost-effectiveness, predictability, relevance, quality, etc.).

¹⁴ Pursuant to §4 of Act No. 617/2007 Coll.

a) Ownership

The Slovak Republic cooperates with governments of priority countries (programme countries in particular) on the development of their national strategies, underlying recipient country ownership, and their stronger leadership in shaping those strategies. An important aspect that is taken into account is the long-term financial support for such strategies. A differentiated approach to priority countries is applied during the preparation of such strategies in order to prepare special, custom-made programmes that respect their needs, priorities and resources. These underlying aspects are defined in a Country Strategy Paper (CSP).

b) Alignment

In order to ensure aid effectiveness, it is necessary to work with recipient country governments to align systems through which development assistance is delivered. This, in particular, involves the strengthening of capacity building programmes in recipient countries, development of financial management systems that comply with international standards, and provision of information about time plans for planned financial support and preparation of a support schedule for a given period of time so that the recipient countries have a clear view of the financial support provided.

c) Harmonisation

The Slovak Republic wishes to cooperate with donors, both at the government and non-governmental sector level, with international organisations and other donors, on the clear division of labour in order to reduce the number of donors working in the same sector in a priority country. Another goal is to reduce the administrative burden on recipient countries and transaction costs. In doing so, Slovakia acts in compliance with the EU Code of Conduct on Complementarity and the Division of Labour in Development Policy¹⁵ and other documents issued by the OECD, the UN and the Commission.

d) Result-oriented management

Result-oriented management represents a significant principle in aid delivery. The aim is to deliver and manage development assistance focused on the achievement of desired results and providing feedback to enhance decision-making. An inseparable part of result-oriented management is the assessment of a positive change delivered by development activities and the sustainability of results.

The Medium-Term Strategy reinforces the aspect of result-oriented management through the monitoring and evaluation of development assistance provided by the Slovak Republic. Slovakia is currently introducing a system for the monitoring and evaluation of public expenditures. This system supplements the existing system of programme budgeting, thus contributing to better public finance management. Good monitoring, evaluation and statistical reporting requires that all organisational units engaged in the provision of development assistance and linked to a public budget step up their efforts in budget preparation and transparently define components, projects and programmes with measurable goals. This will also help create a transparent and comprehensible basis for subsequent statistical reporting by the Slovak Republic.

¹⁵ The EU Code of Conduct on Complementarity and the Division of Labour in Development Policy was adopted on 15 May 2007 at the level of EU ministers for development co-operation.

The public expenditure monitoring and evaluation system is complemented with an emerging system for the monitoring and evaluation of development assistance provided by Slovakia. This system should be applied and improve consistently, based on Slovakia's own experiences, as well as on information and recommendations gained from the DAC-OECD or other major donors.

It is necessary to improve reporting on development expenditures in line with DAC-OECD requirements. The proper programming, evaluation and monitoring will simplify and unify the collection of information necessary for statistical reporting on development assistance.

e) Mutual accountability and transparency

The Slovak Republic implements its general government budget in compliance with a three-year budget planning process. Financial resources earmarked for development assistance from public funds are planned on a three-year basis in budgetary chapters of individual government authorities and agencies, which enhances the predictability of development assistance funding and enables the priority countries, programme countries in particular, to reckon in advance with the aid provided and include it among their priorities in accordance with Country Strategy Papers. This strengthens mutual accountability and transparency in the use of funds earmarked for development assistance.

- 2. The second basic rule** of Slovak official development assistance is **coherence for development policy**¹⁶, meaning strengthening the coherence of Slovak development policy with the country's priorities in foreign, security, economic and migration policies. At the same time, it is necessary to boost the link and coherence between bilateral, trilateral, multilateral and humanitarian aid (namely in terms of territorial, sectoral and other priorities of Slovak development assistance specified in the Medium-Term Strategy and national ODA programmes for particular years) in order to make use of their possible synergies.

At the EU level, Slovakia also intends to promote strengthening the coherence among EU external policy instruments and the coherence between the EU's development policy and other Community policies at the meetings of the Council of the EU working groups/parties and Commission bodies.

- 3. The third basic rule** is **the flexibility** of the mechanism for the provision of official development assistance. This flexibility is necessary in order to appropriately respond to the needs and changes in developing countries, in particular with respect to the provision of humanitarian aid, and to topical global challenges, as well as to better target and improve the effectiveness, impact and sustainability of Slovak development assistance efforts.

For the purpose of a more flexible delivery of Slovak development assistance, decisions on solving a pressing development or humanitarian problem are adopted by the Foreign Affairs Minister. To that effect, national ODA programmes contain special (budgetary) items that enable the Foreign Affairs Minister to promptly respond to humanitarian crises¹⁷ and pressing development challenges.

¹⁶ Pursuant to §7(1)(e) of Act No. 617/2007 Coll.

¹⁷ Humanitarian aid item was already included in the 2007 National Programme and the 2008 National Programme.

A DAC mini-Peer Review is a good way to obtain information on the effectiveness of the Slovak official development assistance system. Slovakia plans to apply for a mini-Peer Review, which could be performed in 2010.

Implementation of the Medium-Term Strategy

The Medium-Term Strategy is implemented and its objectives are pursued through one-year national ODA programmes. As defined by the ODA Act, a national programme is a programming document that builds on the Medium-Term Strategy objectives and specifies in more detail the focus of Slovak development assistance and its financial framework for a given year. In addition, it accommodates the current needs of recipient countries and humanitarian aid needs.

A national ODA programme defines measurable task indicators for individual types of development assistance, which are used in the evaluation of the accomplishment of the objectives set out under the Medium-Term Strategy.

Forms of development assistance funding

In order to accomplish the Medium-Term Strategy objectives, the Slovak Republic will employ all forms of funding in compliance with the ODA Act through international organisations, international financial institutions, contributions to the EU budget and European Development Fund, establishment of trust funds, provision of project and programme aid as well as other means for the simplest and most effective implementation of activities and accomplishment of set objectives in compliance with international documents to which Slovakia has acceded or will accede.

During a five-year period defined in the Medium-Term Strategy, the established Agency-operated system of calls for project proposals for priority countries and sectors will be supplemented with a more flexible way of utilising Slovak development assistance funds through public contracts. Public contracts are announced for recipient countries that have their Country Strategy Papers prepared in line with the Medium-Term Strategy and national ODA programmes for the relevant year.

If new financial (innovative) instruments become available, which Slovakia has not used before but wishes to use, or if it decides to provide development assistance by establishing a financial institution to provide risk capital, the use of such instruments is conditioned upon their effectiveness and compliance with Slovak development policy and the Medium-Term Strategy.

Well-functioning domestic and international trade is crucial to the development of any country, as it helps improve citizens' living standards and welfare and, at the same time, safeguards sustainable development of the country. Slovakia endorses the building of infrastructure related to trading and production capacities of recipient countries, which is necessary for their effective engagement in international trade in goods and services, through investments and technical assistance provided to priority countries under the "Aid for Trade" initiative.

III. BILATERAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

1. Bilateral Development Assistance Provided by Slovakia

Under Act No. 617/2007 Coll., bilateral development assistance means in particular development programmes, development projects and donations provided by the Slovak Republic for a priority country.

After 2003, bilateral ODA projects were performed by government agencies and local authorities, Slovak non-governmental organisations and businesses¹⁸.

After 2003, Slovak development assistance was curtailed by limited capacities (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, Agency, and aid implementers), the low and stagnating volume of funds available for bilateral development assistance, and the need to concentrate development assistance activities in order to increase their effectiveness.

In light of the experience gained by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, Agency, and Slovak diplomatic missions, the Ministry arrived at the conclusion that more narrowly focused activities had been more effective, resulting in a stronger impact of development projects, better visibility of aid, and full utilisation of their synergies.

The current Medium-Term Strategy takes the narrower territorial and sectoral focus, as defined in the 2003-2008 Medium-Term Strategy, even further.

2. Territorial and Sectoral Priorities of Bilateral and Trilateral Development Assistance for the years 2009-2013

Slovakia's comparative advantages as a new donor, including mainly its experiences with the transition to democracy and market economy backed by its knowledge of the territory of priority countries, represent the most notable added value that Slovakia may bring to the donor community. Slovakia has only limited financial and human resources for development assistance at its disposal. Therefore, it needs to specialise and concentrate its development assistance on a limited number of countries and sectors. In order to meet its international commitments and perform in an effective and visible way in the programme and project countries to which Slovakia provides official development assistance, it is also necessary to increase the volume of funds earmarked for bilateral assistance under the Foreign Affairs Ministry's budgetary chapter.

Territorial Priorities of Slovak Development Assistance

Priority countries were selected using the following criteria:

1. Political and economic criteria:

- coherence with Slovak and EU foreign policy;
- possibilities to utilise comparative advantages and potential of Slovak ODA;
- Slovakia's economic activities (quality of economic cooperation, or its potential).

¹⁸ The result is more than 223 development projects worth over SKK 775 million implemented from 2004 to 2007. More information about Slovak Aid projects is available at www.slovakaid.sk.

2. Development criteria, including criteria for allocation of resources based on needs and performance*:

- level of social, economic and political development (Human Development Index - HDI**, accomplishment of MDGs – based on data provided by the UN and the OECD***);
- urgency for assistance (based on needs identified in documents prepared by international organisations, in national strategies and CSPs);
- progress made in country's development and reforms taken to improve social, economic and political development, and progress made in the utilisation of funds provided under development assistance;
- coordination of development efforts with other donors and availability of complementary financial resources for Slovak projects from other donors (possibilities of trilateral cooperation).

3. Logistical and practical criteria:

- existence of a Slovak diplomatic mission and its technical and human capacities that may be used in order to promote Slovak development projects in a given country (selection, monitoring, evaluation);
- existing activities and experiences of Slovak actors – private companies, governmental agencies and local authorities, NGOs, experts, historical bonds between that country and Slovakia, existing cooperation;
- conditions or obstacles for ODA (degree of democracy, security situation, economic and political stability, legislative conditions, quality of governance, level of corruption), experiences by Slovak Aid and other donors with effective ODA utilisation.

4. Success and Effectiveness of Slovak Development Assistance Provided So Far

Impact and sustainability assessment; number of submitted and approved projects and the volume of aid for Slovakia's priority countries in the 2003-2008 period; assessment of estimated success rate and potential of Slovak development assistance projects for any new priority countries.

Based on the aforementioned criteria, similar to those included in the Medium-Term Strategy for the years 2003-2008, the following indicative list of priority countries was prepared and approved by the Foreign Affairs Ministry's senior officials in October 2008.

The programme countries under the Medium-Term Strategy are Afghanistan, Kenya and Serbia.

The project countries under the Medium-Term Strategy are Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Ethiopia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia (FYR), Moldova, Mongolia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Vietnam.

The priority countries are listed as **programme and project** countries pursuant to Act No. 617/2007 Coll.¹⁹ Pursuant to the OAD Act, a recipient country²⁰ is a country recognised by

* The needs criteria include population, income per capita and the extent of poverty, income distribution and the level of social development. The performance criteria include political, economic and social progress, progress in good governance and the effective use of aid, and in particular the way a country uses scarce resources for development, beginning with its own resources.

**Human Development Index (HDI) is a figure that helps to compare poverty, literacy, educational attainment, life expectancy, birth rate and other factors for countries worldwide, developed by the UN. It is a standard means of measuring human development.

*** The DAC-OECD list of developing countries.

the DAC-OECD as a developing country and included on the list of programme and project countries of the Slovak Republic under the Medium-Term Strategy or based on a decision adopted by the Slovak Government.

Act No. 617/2007 Coll. also includes definitions of a development programme and a development project²¹.

Development assistance is provided to the programme countries on a longer term basis and with a larger amount of financial resources. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic will make sure that national ODA programmes include a substantially larger indicative amount of funds earmarked for a programme country than for a project country.

Any changes within country categories are made through national programmes approved by the Government. Taking into account Slovak foreign-policy priorities, the volume of Slovak development assistance will be gradually reduced in those countries that make major progress in their EU accession process (acceding countries). Slovakia will stop development assistance for those developing countries that cease to be developing countries pursuant to the guidelines of the DAC-OECD.

Slovak bilateral development assistance will be provided on three continents: Europe, Asia and in the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. Slovak development assistance projects will be implemented in four regions: five Western Balkans countries, three Eastern European countries, eight Asian and Caucasian countries, and three Eastern African countries.

Sectoral Priorities of Slovak Development Assistance

The 2003-2008 Medium-Term Strategy defined the following sectoral priorities:

- building of democratic institutions and market environment;
- infrastructure (including social infrastructure);
- rural landscaping, environmental protection, agriculture, food security and utilisation of mineral resources.

Specific sectoral priorities were defined for programme countries (Montenegro, Serbia):

- development of civic society, social revitalisation and regional development;
- local infrastructure reconstruction and development;
- assistance with integration into international bodies and organisations.

The Medium-Term Strategy pursues an approach of a narrower sectoral focus.

The basic principle behind the sectoral focus is to specialise in selected sectors and activities. It should help to better align Slovak development assistance potential with the needs of aid beneficiaries, as well as with activities performed by other donors in the same field. The aim is to avoid dissipation of resources and to concentrate on selected sectors where Slovakia has more potential and advantages compared to other donors.

¹⁹ Pursuant to §2(b) of Act No. 617/2007 Coll.

²⁰ Pursuant to §2(b) of Act No. 617/2007 Coll.

²¹ Pursuant to §2 of Act No. 617/2007 Coll., a development programme is a coherent set of short- and medium-term development objectives focused on the sustainable improvement of conditions of persons or groups of persons in a recipient country; a development project is a detailed, in terms of its content and form, plan of official development assistance activities in a recipient country.

Pursuant to Act No. 617/2007 Coll.²², the following choice of four sectoral priorities for Slovak development assistance should primarily facilitate sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) of developing countries.

A. Building of democratic institutions, the rule of law, civic society and peace

Slovakia remains prepared and willing to share its transformational experiences and knowledge of the reform process in key sectors such as democratisation, the building of the rule of law, civic society development, promotion of good governance, and/or security sector reform²³. The Slovak Republic has also numerous experiences with peacekeeping operations led by the UN or other international organisations; therefore, it can provide, for example, mediation programmes and/or mine-clearing works.

B. Social development – health sector, aid to persons with disabilities, awareness-raising, prevention and treatment of infectious and epidemic diseases (HIV/AIDS in particular), child and adult education programmes, social services, and drug prevention. Slovakia can also share its experience with health sector transformation and social reforms.

C. Economic development, building of market environment, strengthening of macroeconomic environment, public finance management, support to small and medium-sized enterprises

Slovakia will share its experience with and knowledge of economic reforms. It mainly concerns development of a market economy, public finance reform, trade policy reforms, creation of a business environment, including support to employment growth and support to small and medium-sized enterprises, for example through micro-loans, changes in ownership structures, as well as other public sector reforms.

D. Infrastructure development with a positive impact on sustainable development and environmental protection

Based on an analysis of the needs of priority countries and Slovakia's capacities in relevant priority sectors, Slovakia will support the building of trade-related economic infrastructure (transport and logistics infrastructure, communication infrastructure, energy production and distribution), the building of production capacities (industry, agriculture, mining and quarrying, tourism), sewerage systems, wastewater and water treatment plants, waste management policies, ecological technologies, projects and engineering services in drinking water supply and landscaping, environmental protection, agriculture, food security, and utilisation of mineral resources.

A strategy for the implementation of Slovak development assistance in a programme and/or project country will define two sector-specific priorities (and one more complementary priority/sector, as the case may be), including appropriate indicators. Narrower sectoral priorities may be defined under national ODA programmes for all priority countries, if necessary.

²² Pursuant to §4 - 'Official development assistance goals' of Act No. 617/2007 Coll.

²³ For example, through support to local non-governmental organisations, activating local communities, regional development, human rights advocacy activities, volunteer programmes, good governance programmes for state and local administration.

3. Tasks

- prepare Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) for Afghanistan, Kenya and Serbia;
- prepare development assistance agreements with selected priority countries;
- define sector-specific priorities for priority countries under national ODA programmes;
- review possibilities for individual announcement of calls for project proposals for priority countries by sectors and actors (governmental agencies, local authorities, Slovak non-governmental organisations, and businesses);
- engage Slovak diplomatic missions in the provision and monitoring of bilateral development assistance projects;
- engage Slovak diplomatic missions in priority countries in the provision and monitoring of micro-grant projects.

IV. TRILATERAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

1. Trilateral Development Assistance Provided by Slovakia

As defined by Act No. 617/2007 Coll., trilateral development assistance means participation in development programmes and development projects implemented in a recipient country co-financed by the Slovak Republic and other donor countries. This type of assistance is provided in compliance with territorial and sectoral priorities of Slovak bilateral development assistance for the years 2009-2013.

Pursuant to the provisions of the Paris Declaration, the Accra Agenda for Action and the EU Code of Conduct on Complementarity and the Division of Labour in Development Policy, coordinated donor efforts and cooperation with other donors are among crucial requirements for a successful operation in a developing country.

Cooperation with more experienced traditional donors is a great opportunity for Slovak development assistance sector and Slovak ODA stakeholders to build their own capacities and learn from those donors.

Slovakia's major trilateral official development assistance partners include mainly EU Members States.

2. Territorial and Sectoral Priorities of Trilateral Development Assistance for the years 2009-2013

As a follow-up to the results achieved in cooperation with the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), new cooperation modalities will be defined for the 2009-2013 period²⁴.

Slovakia will implement other trilateral partnerships in cooperation with more experienced donors with a specific expertise in a relevant region, e.g., Africa, in deployment of volunteers, or where Slovakia is able to offer its specific expertise and knowledge of a given country (e.g., trilateral cooperation in Ukraine, the Western Balkans).

Forms of trilateral cooperation:

- a) support to joint projects in priority countries;
- b) capacity building of stakeholders engaged in development cooperation;
- c) promotion of a development policy dialogue both on the governmental and non-governmental level;
- d) support to cooperation on the governmental, parliamentary and non-governmental level.

3. Tasks

- continue with trilateral cooperation with the Austrian Development Agency – ADA;
- organise joint programmes and consultations between the ADA and Agency;
- increase the number of development projects implemented by Slovak stakeholders, co-financed by the ADA;
- identify strategic partners for trilateral cooperation;

²⁴ On 21 January 2009, a Memorandum of Understanding for 2009-2011 was signed between the Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA).

- continue with trilateral cooperation with development agencies with which Slovakia cooperated in the past and establish new contacts with other development agencies and/or donors;
- increase the number of joint programmes and projects performed in trilateral cooperation;
- jointly monitor trilateral development projects;
- encourage development cooperation with V4 countries.

V. MULTILATERAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

1. Multilateral Development Assistance Provided by Slovakia

Pursuant to Act No. 617/2007 Coll., multilateral development assistance means development programmes and development projects financed by the Slovak Republic, performed by an international organisation, and contributions paid by Slovakia to international organisations to be spent on their development programmes and development projects.

Slovakia provides multilateral development assistance primarily through multilateral organisations and institutions, the United Nations System, the World Bank Group, the European Commission, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development in particular.

World Trade Organization (WTO)

In 2002, the WTO members approved, as part of the Doha Development Agenda, establishment of a so-called Global Trust Fund (GTF) in order to raise funds in excess of regular membership contributions to the WTO to fund yearly trade-related technical assistance plans for developing and least-developed countries, as well as for countries with transition economies. Contributions to the GTF are paid on a voluntary basis. Slovakia made the first contribution to the GTF in 2008 and will make further contributions in line with the EU's Aid for Trade Strategy and its own Medium-Term Strategy.

United Nations System

Slovakia considers expert bodies, funds and programmes of the UN System an important international instrument for the promotion of economic and social development in the world. The UN embodies international energy, resources and expertise to support the accomplishment of the global development agenda, which may be utilised for effective cooperation.

Slovakia is resolved to continue actively cooperating with UN System organisations, especially with its specialised agencies such as the United Nations Development Fund (UNDF) that plays a pivotal role in coordinating efforts under the UN development agenda, the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), with which Slovakia has signed an agreement on cooperation, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) which focuses on problems of children with respect to health, education and protection of children's rights, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and other specialised agencies with which Slovakia has signed agreements on cooperation, or to which it may decide to provide financial contributions based on the criteria for development aid effectiveness.

World Bank Group

Upon its graduation from the World Bank, Slovakia joined the group of countries with an advanced economy and was granted the status of a development aid donor. In light of its new status, Slovakia should enter a more advanced partnership level. To that account, Slovakia made a pledge to the 15th replenishment of the International Development Association (IDA) resources for 2009-2011. Slovakia is expected to participate in future IDA replenishments as well. Also, it will consider establishing trust funds with the World Bank. Demand for services supplied by consultancy agencies and Slovak experts is expected to increase, and they will participate in projects financed by the World Bank.

International Monetary Fund

As in the past, Slovakia will also participate in the IMF's Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI).

European Commission

Being an EU Member State, Slovakia makes contributions to the European Commission's budget in the form of yearly determined percentages and participates, through the Commission, in the funding of EU development assistance activities. In addition, as a regular member of the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) for the support of African, Caribbean and Pacific states, Slovakia participates in the EDF's financing.

Member States may increase financial resources for development assistance in the form of an additional contribution to the European Development Fund; such resources are included in annual action plans and make the Member State's contribution visible.

European Investment Bank

Pursuant to the Internal Agreement between the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States and in accordance with the Partnership Agreement between the members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States and the European Community on the provision of financial aid to overseas countries and territories, the Slovak Republic, as an EIB member, will provide a guarantee in proportion to its share in the EIB's capital and will act, along with other EIB's shareholders, as a guarantor of all financial obligations incurred by debtors under agreements signed with the Bank on loans provided from the EIB's own resources. In cases where Slovakia makes a payment to the EIB based on the application of guarantees, the contribution is recognised as development assistance.

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) is an international financial institution established under the Agreement establishing the EBRD. Its mission is to support CEE countries and countries of the former Soviet Union committed to the principles of democracy and pluralism in developing market-oriented economies. Slovakia is soon expected to graduate from the EBRD's financing to be granted a donor status.

A proposal to set up a Fund for the Western Balkans was approved at an Annual Meeting of the EBRD's Board of Governors. The Fund focuses on Western Balkan countries with the purpose of mitigating disparities between those countries and their more advanced neighbours. Slovakia is a Fund member and financial contributor.

Based on its active cooperation with the EBRD, Slovakia plans to set up a special technical assistance fund of the Slovak Republic. The fund will exclusively concentrate on supporting activities performed by Slovak actors in order to aid transforming Eastern European and Central Asian countries in their transition to a market economy, with the emphasis put on support for the private sector.

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Slovakia will continue financing deployment of Slovak observers in OSCE's election monitoring missions to CIS and Western Balkan countries, which seems to be an effective and committed contribution to the building of democracy in those countries.

2. Priorities of Multilateral Development Assistance for the years 2009-2013

One of the most important criteria for the assessment of appropriateness of the provision of Slovak development assistance through an international organisation is the relevance of that organisation; i.e., an assessment is made of its purpose and tasks, their compatibility with the objectives of Slovak development assistance, the organisation's international status, its functioning and effectiveness in providing development aid, aid distribution and achievements, as well as of the possibilities for the Slovak Republic to gradually join development assistance activities and programmes implemented by that organisation.

To improve the effectiveness of multilateral development assistance, Slovakia uses available monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in order to decide whether to participate in cooperation efforts.

Mandatory contributions paid by Slovakia to international organisations arise from the country's desire to be a member, while contributions represent the minimum condition for membership. With respect to mandatory contributions, it is necessary to seek improvements in the effective functioning of international organisations.

Slovakia will pay more attention to voluntary contributions as a possible means to improve the effectiveness of multilateral assistance. Slovakia will preferably use voluntary contributions committed consistently to projects that comply with territorial and sectoral priorities of Slovak ODA, or in which Slovak entities and individuals may participate.

Voluntary contributions to relevant international organisations and funds within the UN System can be provided even without them being specifically committed to particular projects and programmes, provided that their use is subject to a decision by the respective organisation in compliance with its agenda or priorities. Slovakia will seek to influence the spending of such resources through its membership of, or as an observer in, the organisation's executive bodies which assess and approve its budget, agenda and/or priorities, and oversee the transparency of its actions.

It is equally necessary to considerably increase the amount of financial resources to be spent on Slovakia's voluntary contributions to international organisations from the Foreign Affairs Ministry's budgetary chapter and from budgetary chapters of other central government bodies engaged in Slovak development assistance.

Slovakia is very keen to actively cooperate with major international organisations with the aim of more effective utilisation of appropriate means, improving their effectiveness, and linking development, political, security and other dimensions. For this purpose, the following steps should be taken:

3. Tasks

- strengthen partnerships with international organisations and financial institutions;
- make more intensive use of knowledge, capacities and infrastructure of multilateral donors in providing Slovakia's multilateral development assistance;
- deepen cooperation with relevant organisations of the UN System, the UNDP in particular, with respect to development and reconstruction of developing countries;
- ensure a gradual increase in voluntary contributions paid by Slovakia to international organisations and coordinate the provision of such contributions at the national level;

- deepen cooperation with the Commission and EU Member States in drafting EU development policy, including with respect to increased attention to be paid to the EU's eastern neighbours and the Central Asian region;
- facilitate more intensive cooperation between EU Member States and OECD members with respect to development and reconstruction of developing countries;
- deepen cooperation with NATO member countries with respect to development and reconstruction of developing countries with a Slovak military presence;
- use targeted contributions to international organisations, with Slovakia clearly specifying a project and/or region it wishes to support with its voluntary contribution;
- engage Slovak actors in development projects financed with Slovak cooperation within an international organisation (e.g., through trust funds);
- encourage Slovak actors to participate in EU external assistance programmes, including the European Development Fund (EDF);
- draft an Aid for Trade strategy;
- promote better participation of partner countries, primarily African countries, in international financial institutions (the World Bank, the IMF);
- provide financial contributions to the FAO Trust Fund for Food Security which supports agricultural investment projects to promote food self-sufficiency in developing countries;
- provide voluntary contributions from the Slovak Government in the form of financial resources (exceptionally in the form of commodities) for food aid through the joint UN/FAO programme – the World Food Programme (WFP), for urgent calls and in emergency situations caused by natural disasters or famine;
- support the Global Trust Fund of the World Trade Organization (WTO) that finances activities to support trade in developing countries;
- cooperate with the V4 countries to pursue their joint interests within international organisations and financial institutions;
- engage Slovak permanent missions in the monitoring of multilateral development assistance.

VI. HUMANITARIAN AID

1. Humanitarian Aid Provided by Slovakia

Act No. 617/2007 Coll. defines humanitarian aid as an expression of solidarity with people in need, whose primary objective is to provide assistance and support, save lives, maintain human dignity and alleviate the suffering of people in the case of natural disasters, man-made crisis, famine and malnutrition situations or in similar emergency situations, as well as to assist and support prevention and emergency programmes, especially in high-risk areas.

The same Act also specifies the forms of humanitarian aid²⁵.

Humanitarian aid constitutes a significant component of official development assistance but is subject to specific conditions that require specific decision-making instruments and mechanisms. They result mainly from a time framework, instability and security risks, etc. The provision of humanitarian aid is a dynamic process that requires a very flexible approach, including continuous improvements in aid mechanisms. Unlike bilateral, trilateral and multilateral assistance, all of which represent a long-term process, urgent humanitarian aid cannot be programmed; humanitarian crises require a prompt and speedy response.

Slovak humanitarian aid is provided under a mechanism²⁶ approved by the Slovak Government in 2006 and in accordance with national ODA programmes adopted on a yearly basis. It builds on international principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality. The aim is to further promote and reinforce the basic humanitarian principles and apply the principles of good humanitarian donorship.

A positive change was made in 2007, when a budgetary item was earmarked under a national ODA programme for the first time²⁷, which does not require any further approval by the Slovak Government. All decisions on the use of the funds earmarked under this item are made directly by the Foreign Affairs Minister. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic is therefore able to provide financial aid through a selected implementer²⁸ in a speedy and targeted manner.

The existing experience has shown that the flexibility in providing in-kind humanitarian aid is limited by the lack of financial resources to cover transport costs in cases of a humanitarian crisis in remote countries.

²⁵ Pursuant to §6(2) of Act No. 617/2007 Coll., Slovak humanitarian aid is provided in the specific forms of:

- a) rescue operations;
- b) delivery of humanitarian material, especially through donation of movable property;
- c) financial donations;
- d) projects delivered by Slovak humanitarian organisations.

²⁶ The mechanism for the provision of Slovak humanitarian aid was approved by the Government in its resolution No. 310 of 12 April 2006. The mechanism describes in detail a decision-making process, specifies the division of powers and competences of major actors and provides details on individual aid forms; it anticipates stronger cooperation with the Slovak non-governmental sector, as well as with international humanitarian organisations. Under a Government resolution to this material, a humanitarian aid sub-programme has been created within the Foreign Affairs Ministry's budgetary chapter. The Ministry is entitled to use these resources, when a crisis situation occurs, to fund the implementation of projects by Slovak non-governmental organisations, or to provide financial contributions to humanitarian organisations.

²⁷ The item represented SKK 10 million in 2007 and 2008.

²⁸ Financial resources may be provided to Slovak humanitarian organisations, UN System agencies, Red Cross and Red Crescent organisations, or the IOM, either directly or through a competent Slovak diplomatic mission.

2. Priorities of Humanitarian Aid for the years 2009-2013

As far as humanitarian aid is concerned, the Foreign Affairs Ministry's major partners include the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic, other central government bodies and Slovak humanitarian organisations, UN agencies (WFP, OCHA, UNICEF, UNHCR), organisations of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent (ICRC, IFRC), and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

The main challenges for the upcoming years include increasing the effectiveness of humanitarian aid, in particular strengthening actors' capacities, building stronger partnerships, and improving the flexibility, targeting and transparency of aid provided.

Building on its previous experience, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic will make greater use of a flexible humanitarian aid mechanism which will be updated, if necessary, with the aim of providing humanitarian aid in a more speedy and effective way, and will include a sub-programme for foreign countries in individual national ODA programmes. Slovakia will support humanitarian aid cooperation with renowned international humanitarian organisations and Slovak humanitarian organisations that comply with standard international criteria; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic will consider signing long-term partnership "framework agreements"²⁹ with such organisations.

Slovak humanitarian projects remain to be implemented in compliance with a bilateral development assistance mechanism. Calls for humanitarian aid project proposals will be made and managed by Agency, subject to a decision by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic.

The Slovak Republic may provide humanitarian aid even to countries not specified on the indicative list of priority countries for Slovak development assistance included in the Medium-Term Strategy.

The main challenges for the upcoming years include increasing the effectiveness of humanitarian aid, in particular strengthening stakeholders' capacities, building stronger partnerships, and improving flexibility, targeting and transparency of aid provided.

3. Tasks

- create a transparent system for establishment of long-term cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic and national and/or international humanitarian organisations;
- update the humanitarian aid mechanism in order to provide humanitarian aid in a more speedy and effective way;
- examine possibilities to make simplified calls for humanitarian aid project proposals with a fast-track approval in order to effectively respond to a crisis;
- safeguard promptness, flexibility and quality in providing humanitarian aid;
- Slovak diplomatic and permanent missions abroad observe development of humanitarian crises and monitor humanitarian aid provided by the Slovak Republic.

²⁹ A framework agreement is an agreement on a long-term partnership, under which an entity involved in humanitarian aid activities submits to the Foreign Affairs Ministry, in the case of a humanitarian crisis, a proposal to provide humanitarian aid.

VII. CAPACITY BUILDING OF SLOVAK OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE ACTORS

In order to increase the professional aspect and effectiveness of development assistance, as well as the effective use of financial resources, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic further actively supports capacity building of Slovak entities engaged in Slovak development assistance efforts.

Under the applicable law, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic is a national ODA coordinator, responsible for capacity building of organisations engaged in Slovak development assistance efforts. To that end, it works in cooperation with Agency, other central government bodies and local authorities, the private sector and academic circles, and non-governmental organisations³⁰.

The Ministry's key development assistance coordination instrument is a Coordination Committee for Slovak Official Development Assistance³¹. The Coordination Committee serves as an advisory body to the Foreign Affairs Minister. The Committee is chaired by a Foreign Ministry statutory representative and is comprised of members from central government bodies and other partners providing development assistance.

The building of expert capacities on all levels of ODA management and implementation is a crucial requirement for a successful ODA. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic is building a human resources development assistance department with the necessary expertise to manage ODA, including multilateral development assistance. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic is improving the department's capacity in order to provide methodology guidelines to Agency³². The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic provides comprehensive training and educational activities to other state administration bodies involved in the implementation of Slovak development assistance.

Agency prepares and carries out activities related to the provision of Slovak development assistance, especially bilateral and trilateral, and manages and controls the implementation of bilateral assistance programmes and projects, humanitarian aid and reconstruction projects, and education development projects³³. In this context, it is necessary to systematically strengthen Agency's expert, executive, management and control capacities.

Slovak diplomatic missions play an important role in the implementation of Slovak development assistance, since they have good knowledge of the environment and country where aid is provided. The experience so far has shown that there is a need for stronger involvement of Slovak diplomatic missions in preparation of Slovak development policy, as well as in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development assistance projects carried out in the country of their operation. To that effect, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic and/or Agency will take measures, by 2011, to ensure that personnel assigned with development assistance tasks are placed in diplomatic missions in selected priority, in particular programme, countries.

³⁰ Pursuant to §6(1)(h) of Act No. 617/6007 Coll.

³¹ The Coordination Committee for Slovak Official Development Assistance was established by Government's resolution No. 223 of 7 March 2001.

³² Pursuant to §7(1)(l) of Act No. 617/7007 Coll.

³³ Pursuant to §10 of Act No. 617/2007 Coll.

Since other ministries and public authorities also play an important role in the provision of Slovak development assistance, increased attention should be paid to the building of their expert capacities. Each body is responsible for the strengthening of its own expert capacities. At the same time, it is necessary that they coordinate their training and educational activities with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic to ensure that a uniform methodology approach is applied to the implementation of development assistance.

Various actors and stakeholders wishing to participate in development projects funded not only by the Slovak Republic should be familiar with a development assistance structure and procedures on how to apply for such financial support. In order to better inform about ODA efforts, Slovakia will consider establishing a contact point for the business and non-governmental sectors. The contact point will provide all necessary information that facilitates participation in the utilisation of international development aid resources and enhance the presence of Slovak businesses and NGOs in developing countries.

Important partners of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic include the Platform of Non-Governmental Development Organisations (the NGDO Platform) and the European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD). Non-governmental organisations perform important tasks in the implementation of Slovak development assistance; therefore, it is necessary to pay increased attention to providing them with necessary information and encouraging them to further build their own capacities.

Effective capitalisation of Slovakia's unique experience with the transformation process is also enhanced through deployment of Slovak experts and volunteers in development projects carried out by international organisations under Slovak bilateral assistance and other forms of aid. Deploying Slovak experts and volunteers helps build Slovak personal capacities, of young people in particular, who are given a chance to gain hands-on experience working in developing countries. Slovakia intends to create a functioning and practice-tested legislative and institutional framework and an ODA financial instrument to support the deployment of experts and volunteers. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic will initiate the setting up of a legislative and institutional framework for the deployment of Slovak experts and volunteers.

The capacities of all Slovak development assistance actors need to be reinforced in such a way as to improve the quality of submitted proposals and, subsequently, increase the number of Slovak entities successfully applying for those funds available from the European Commission or other donors. It is necessary to continue co-funding such projects through Slovak development assistance and build a system to support the participation of Slovak entities in EU external assistance calls and tenders, as well as those made by other donors.

Tasks

- build expert capacities of the Foreign Affairs Ministry's organisational units that provide Slovak development assistance;
- ensure that the Coordination Committee meets regularly;
- create financial and time conditions for professional training of Agency personnel and increase their expertise focusing on commanding new tasks concerning the identification and formulation of projects implemented through public contracts;
- build expert capacities of state and local administration bodies participating in Slovak development assistance;
- build expert capacities of organisations that provide Slovak development assistance;

- enhance active participation of Slovak representatives on the Council and European Commission committees and working groups that focus on the provision of development assistance;
- increase the number of Slovak organisations with expertise to perform development assistance projects;
- increase the number of Slovak entities successfully applying for financial support for their development projects from funds granted by the Commission or other donors; improve the quality of project proposals submitted by such organisations;
- build a system to support participation of Slovak entities in international tendering procedures or in tendering procedures announced by the Commission and funded from the EU budget or the EDF;
- carry out training and education courses focused on capacity building; monitor their outputs and continue with educational activities;
- encourage development of a practice-tested legislative and institutional framework, strategy and method for the financing of expert and volunteer deployment;
- increase the number of experts and volunteers participating in projects carried out by international organisations;
- increase the number of experts and volunteers deployed in countries that are recipients of Slovak development assistance;
- increase the number of experts and volunteers deployed under bilateral development assistance in cooperation with the UNDP and under international projects in cooperation with UNPD regional offices in Slovak ODA priority countries;
- continue cooperating with the UNDP in providing Slovak development assistance in 2008-2010³⁴.

³⁴ An agreement between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic and the UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre to continue with cooperation with Slovak official development assistance for 2008-2010 was signed in April 2008.

VIII. DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

Development education and public awareness is an integral component of Slovak development assistance. Public awareness-raising activities focused on the importance and relevance of ODA for developing countries are among the priorities of the Foreign Affairs Ministry's information policy. They help to better know the problems of the developing world, identify possible solutions, and enhance transparent use of public funds for this purpose.

Cooperation will intensify among the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, Agency³⁵, which is responsible for development education, the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic and its organisations, as well as other central government bodies engaged in ODA efforts, non-governmental organisations, academic circles and other relevant institutions in order to find room for development education both within the education system and life-long learning, and to define a basic strategy for development education and public awareness-raising that will facilitate coordination of efforts made by all stakeholders.

In this context, cooperation with other donors will be encouraged and intensified, with the focus given to the exchange of experience, information and education practices.

Tasks

- ensure regular communication and harmonisation of practices among institutions and actors involved in development education activities;
- jointly propose a strategy for development education and public awareness-raising;
- systematically inform the general public about plans, objectives and results of Slovak development assistance in compliance with the communication strategy (by means of regularly updated websites of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, Agency and other stakeholders, press and electronic media releases, etc.).

³⁵ Pursuant to §10 of Act No. 617/2007 Coll.

IX. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGY

Performance under the Medium-Term Strategy for Official Development Assistance of the Slovak Republic for the years 2009-2013 is monitored by means of a mid-term and final review. The evaluation will be performed on a cumulative basis so that the review for 2013 will also be considered an overall evaluation of the Medium-Term Strategy. Accomplishment of the objectives set out under the Medium-Term Strategy is measured by means of defined task indicators for individual types of assistance under national programmes.

The aim of the Mid-Term Review is to assess how much the Medium-Term Strategy priorities are reflected in the activities performed under Slovak development assistance and in the accomplishment of the set targets. The Mid-Term Review will be completed by the end of 2011, taking into account the conclusions from the evaluation of the 2003-2008 strategy.

Results, conclusions and recommendations from the Mid-Term Review will then be used for the planning of Slovak development assistance for 2012 and 2013 and for the preparation and evaluation of national ODA programmes.

The aim of the final review is to assess the impacts of Slovak development assistance for the the years 2009-2013 period and the extent in which the Medium-Term Strategy priorities have been met. Results, conclusions and recommendations from the Mid-Term Review will be used for the drafting of a new Medium-Term Strategy for 2014-2018 and serves as the basis for further strategic planning of Slovak development assistance priorities and activities, as well as resources necessary for their accomplishment.

Review activities are performed jointly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, including Slovak diplomatic missions in priority countries, Agency, other government agencies and public authorities that provide development assistance, as well as representatives of the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee, NGO representatives and selected representatives of the business sector. The evaluation uses documents prepared in cooperation with representatives of priority countries that receive Slovak development assistance.

The Coordination Committee, under the supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, is responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the Medium-Term Strategy and proposes revisions to practices to achieve the set objectives.

The final review will be completed by 30 June 2014.

Tasks

- by the end of the first half of 2011, prepare a report on the fulfilment of Slovakia's commitments under the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action;
- complete the Mid-Term Review by the end of 2011;
- complete the final review by 30 June 2014;
- engage all relevant Slovak development assistance stakeholders in the evaluation of the Medium-Term Strategy.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CONCORD	European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
DAC-OECD	Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EDF	European Development Fund
Commission	European Commission
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
HDI	Human Development Index
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDA	International Development Association
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MDRI	Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - UNOCHA
UN	United Nations Organisation
Agency	Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Programme
WTO	World Trade Organization