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Kosovo Property Agency launches claims intake

PRISTINA – Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (DSRSG) for Police and Justice Pillar Jean Dussourd, together with Minister of Justice Jonuz Salihaj, today officially launched the intake of claims by the newly established Kosovo Property Agency (KPA).

"Today is a day for the claimants," said the DSRSG, "We all know that these claimants and many others who are not here today have waited for a long time. We are fully committed to see this process through to the end, we want to achieve results, we want to give all claimants full access to justice. And we have the full commitment of the PISG, the presence of the Minister of Justice sends an important signal [of the PISG's commitment]."

The 2005 Report of the UN Special Envoy on Standards (the "Kai Eide Report") identified illegal occupation of agricultural and commercial property as one of the major factors hindering returns to Kosovo and thus requiring urgent intervention. UNMIK responded swiftly to the findings of the Report by promulgating on 4 March 2006 UNMIK Regulation 2006/10 which established an independent agency, known as the Kosovo Property Agency, to resolve immovable property claims arising out of the 1999 armed conflict, including disputes over agricultural and commercial property.

"The beginning of this process is a very important step in the reconciliation between all communities," Mr. Dussourd said.

UNMIK's initiative in establishing the Kosovo Property Agency ensures that these claims will be resolved in an expeditious and effective manner, and in accordance with a process which guarantees impartiality and fair procedures.

Starting today, any individual can file claims with the KPA at any of the six offices throughout Kosovo.

The KPA's website will be launched tomorrow, Thursday 6 April, where information on filing a claim, the mandate of the agency and up-to-date statistics may be obtained. The website can be accessed at www.kpaonline.org.