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PRESS RELEASE

Earth Day Initiative Kicks Off a New Approach to Keeping Fier Clean and Beautiful

FIER, APRIL 22, 2010 Under the slogan *Give a Hand for a Clean City* and in recognition of the international Earth Day celebration, today dozens of citizens, civil society organizations, businesses, and students took part in the first citywide clean-up in Fier.

The Earth Day event was made possible with the support of the Municipality of Fier, the private sector, and several international donors including USAID, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). USAID contributed over \$17,000 for large and small trash bins, cloth bags, and community outreach. Two businesses, Bank Popullore and Euromarket, contributed money for trees and cloth bags respectively.

The clean-up effort was one of several activities conducted recently in Fier to support environmental awareness and policies. With the support of USAID and OSCE, the Municipality organized workshops on environmental issues with youth and media to increase their engagement on environmental issues. In primary schools, students learned how materials decompose and other lessons on environmental awareness.

Today also kicks-off the Municipality's long-term plan to improve solid waste management and beautify the city as envisioned in the draft Solid Waste Management Strategy supported by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The strategy will improve solid waste collection and management, extend the service area to more areas of the city, provide a full-cost financial operational and investment plan, and introduce city-wide recycling. The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Municipality will each invest 110,000 Euros towards the implementation of the strategy.

According to USAID's Mission Director, Joseph Williams, the strategy will go a long way in improving citizen services and attracting investments in Fier. USAID's Local Governance Program (LGPA) will continue to work with Fier to foster local economic growth, improve local governance, and strengthen civic and private sector engagement in local development projects in the community.

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