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Ukrainian Canadian Delegation Concludes Mission to Ukraine with Minister Oda

Kyiv, Ukraine- April 25, 2012 - On April 19 representatives from the Ukrainian Canadian community concluded a successful trip to Ukraine as members of the delegation accompanying International Cooperation Minister, the Honourable Beverley Oda's recent mission to Ukraine. The Minister's meetings included Prime Minister Mykola Azarov, Economy Minister Petro Poroshenko and Agriculture Minister Nikolai Pryasyazhnik. The delegation also visited the National Holodomor Museum in Kyiv, and met with representatives of oblast, regional and local government officials; representatives from civil society groups; CIDA administrators; local project partners and opposition party representatives.

"We are pleased that the government of Canada continues to stress the need for continued vigilance and monitoring of the evolving political situation in Ukraine," stated Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC) Executive Director Taras Zalusky. "Minister Oda highlighted at the highest levels the government of Canada's concern over the eroding political situation in Ukraine and urged the government of Ukraine to respect human rights. The Ukrainian Canadian community was gratified to provide input and advice to the government of Canada and Minister Oda on this important visit."

During her meeting with Prime Minister Azarov, Minister Oda noted that Canadian oil and gas services companies are prepared to share their expertise and engage in the exploration of Ukraine's fledgling shale gas industry. She also underscored the government of Canada's unwavering position on the need for Ukraine to respect human rights and reverse course on political repressions.

"Minister Oda's underscoring the important contribution to Canada's development as a prosperous democratic society by the Ukrainian Canadians individually and, collectively, as an organized community was a message that the Minister repeated at meetings," said Borys Potapenko, Executive Director of the League of Ukrainian Canadians (LUC). "It was gratifying to sit next to the Minister during her meetings and to be asked by her to comment during the discussions with government officials, representatives of NGOs and officials from the political opposition. The important role of the Ukrainian Canadian community in Canada's domestic and foreign policy was made clear, especially as this pertains to the up-coming Parliamentary elections in Ukraine," Potapenko concluded.

Canadian Ambassador Troy Lulashnyk hosted a lunch reception for the delegation at the Canadian Embassy in Kyiv where the ambassador welcomed the Minister and delegation. The reception was attended by 50-60 Canadian ex-pats and local government of Canada partners.



Minister Oda and the delegation from the Ukrainian community visited the National Holodomor Memorial and Minister Oda presented a ceremonial grain basket. The delegation then toured the National Holodomor Museum.



The Minister and accompanying delegation participated in a roundtable discussion on local and regional economic development in Ukraine which included:

Yaroslav Zhalilo, First Deputy Director, National Institute for Strategic Studies under the President of Ukraine

Vasyl Fedyuk, Director of the Department for Regional Development, National Agency on Investment and National Projects of Ukraine

Anatoliy Tkachuk, Director on Science and Development, Civil Society Institute
Larysa Olenkovska, Local Economic Development Consultant, Municipal Local Economic Development/MLED Project
Volodymyr Kazarinov, Head, Kredyt-Soyuz Credit Union, Cherkassy
Valentyna Hrinchenko, Chernihiv Credit Union, Chernihiv
Danylo Bilak, Partner, CMS Cameron McKenna, Kyiv

"The excellent round table exchange with the Minister on local self government and local economic development flagged some key areas for further cooperation between Canada and Ukraine, stated Ukrainian National Federation President Taras Pidzamecky. "The Council of Ukrainian Credit Unions of Canada was pleased that the discussions explored the important role Ukraine's credit unions can continue to play in the future in financing local small business, women entrepreneurs, and private farmers."

The Minister and accompanying delegation met with leaders of Ukraine's opposition forces on Monday April 16, 2012. At the residence of Ambassador Lulashnyk, a meeting was organized by the Embassy with leaders of several opposition parties. Those in attendance included:

Lesya Orobets, People's Deputy Verkhovna Rada, representing Front for Change Party (Yatsenyuk bloc)
Valentyn Nalyvaichenko, Political Chairman Our Ukraine Party
Borys Tarasyuk, People's Deputy Verkhovna Rada, People's Movement of Ukraine (Rukh)
Yaroslav Fedorchuk, People's Deputy Verkhovna Rada, All-Ukrainian Batkivshchyna Party
Oleh Tiakhnybok, Leader Svoboda Party

In addition, the Minister and accompanying delegation participated in several meetings in Dnipropetrovsk, including with the mayor, the head of the regional council and deputy head of the Dnipropetrovsk oblast administration.

There were 2 roundtable discussions held in Dnipropetrovsk, the first on "Municipal Local economic development" met with:

Ivan Kulichenko, Mayor of Dnipropetrovsk
Yuri Vikul, Mayor of Krivyi Rih
Ruslan Tokar, Mayor of Nikopol
Ivan Metelytsya, Mayor of Pavlograd
Vitaliy Tarelkin, Mayor of Ternivka
Oleksandr Kopytov, Mayor of Pershotravensk
Yevhen Udod, Head of Dnipropetrovsk Oblast Council
Igor Tsyrcin, 1st Deputy Mayor of Dnipropetrovsk
Svitlana Yepifantseva, Head of Standing Committee on Local Governance and Partner Relations, Dnipropetrovsk City Council

A second roundtable was held with stakeholders on the theme of "CIDA Support to Agriculture-based Economic Growth in Ukraine". Participants included:

Gary Reusche, Project Manager, Agriculture-Insurance Sector Development Project, International Finance Corp (IFC)

Larysa Tykhonenko, Area Project Manager, Canada-Ukraine Grain Quality and Safety Project, Kyiv

Svitlana Boganova, Project coordinator, Improving the Competitiveness of the Dairy Sector in Ukraine Project, Dnipropetrovsk

Stephen Wright, Field Project Manager, Ukraine Horticulture Development Project, Zaporizhzhia oblast

Maksym Maksymov, Head, Dnipropetrovsk Agricultural Extension Service

Oleksander Shtefan, Manager, Union of Agriculture Service Cooperatives "Hospodar", Dnipropetrovsk

Nadiya Kolomiyets, Head, Ukraine Women Farmers Council, Zaporizhzhia Branch

Yulia Vasilevskaya, Head, Agriculture Service Cooperative "Svitanok Oleksandrivky"

The accompanying delegation met separately with Canadian Embassy staff to discuss community concerns and priorities regarding trade, development and the political situation in Ukraine.

The Ukrainian Canadian representatives of the Minister's delegation also met with the following groups and individuals:

Volodymyr V'yatrovych - attended his book launch and met with the former chief archivist of the security service of Ukraine

Valentyn Nalyvaichenko - political Chairman, Our Ukraine Party

Volodymyr Yatsenkivskyj, Director of Relations with the Diaspora, Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The meeting focussed primarily on the ability of Ukrainians abroad and Canada in particular to vote in the upcoming parliamentary elections. The issue of Ukrainians in western Canada being required to vote in Toronto was raised.

Oleskyj Klasztorny, Chairman of the trade union National Solidarity and vice-Chairman of Ukrainian Cause, a civil society organization and coalition of human and national rights organizations. Ukrainian Cause also is a member of the 'Chesno' coalition of civil society groups

Lesia Matvyjchuk, Chairman, Center for Citizens Rights of the City of Kyiv, affiliated with the Helsinki Human Rights Group

Liza Shchepetylnykova, President, Ukrainian Association of Student Self-government, a member of European student associations.

Roman Krutsyk, Chairman of the Kyiv City Chapter of the All-Ukrainian Memorial Society, Director, Museum of the Soviet Occupation of Ukraine