

Brcko Supervisor's Speech to New Members of Brcko District Government

Dear Mr. Mayor, President of the Assembly, past and new members of the Government and all of you gathered here on this occasion.

It was refreshing to hear the Mayor's presentation and congratulations to Mayor Djapo and to all of you taking your offices in this first elected District Government.

The high voter turn out of 62% in Brcko District provides the first elected Assembly and Government with strong democratic legitimacy, greater than anywhere else in BiH. This constitutes a solid basis for your work, in the interests of Brcko residents and voters, whose legitimate expectations are high. This is also a moment to recognize the strong foundation that your predecessors in the appointed Assembly and Government have laid.

In addition to democratic legitimacy, as Brcko District's first elected government, you have important assets that other communities in BiH do not enjoy. I urge you not to waste them. And let me enumerate some of them here:

- The District enjoys the unique advantage of being a unit of self-government and can decide on issue that matter to it and to its residents without waiting for others to decide for you.
- The District has progressive laws at hand and multi-ethnic institutions to implement and interpret them.
- Many businesses have settled in the District, in recognition of its advantages, not only geographic, but in terms of more business friendly policies, an open

multi-ethnic environment, and a place where decisions can be made locally, more quickly. These businesses provide employment and revenues critical to the District's economic development.

- The District is financially self-sustaining, with a regular surplus, and is able to contribute financially to the State and new State institutions.

Aside from geography, none of these assets are permanent or immutable. They can be lost unless you recognize them, strengthen them and work to preserve them.

There is one thing the District does not have: that is time.

- There is no time to wait for more energetic and focused efforts to attract invest and promote economic development;
- There is no time to delay implementation of projects to revitalize and modernize key infrastructure;
- There is no time to waste in reforming, streamlining and modernizing public administration;
- There is no time to let poorly defined competencies between departments, between the legislature and the executive, and petty personal or partisan squabbles hamper the effectiveness of government;
- There is no time to delay demonstrating pride in your multiethnic cultural and historical heritage by reconstructing and preserving Brcko's historical monuments and promoting more artistic and cultural events that enrich our hearts and minds

Almost 4 months have elapsed since elections, now you must roll up your sleeves, get to work and make up for lost time. I would like to see the Government's overall program and the Departments' priorities for the next 4 months before the end of January. In drafting them you should take into account at least three overarching priorities:

- Protection of the legal status and the interests of the District;
- Economic development to improve financial sustainability and create jobs;
- The restructuring, reform and streamlining of public administration;

In pursuing these priorities, you, I hope, keep in mind a few principles:

- As public servants, you are bound by the interests of the people and the rule of law– be honest, fair, transparent in carrying out your professional responsibilities;
- The tasks you face are for the most part complex and require joint approaches and cooperation among departments – act as a team, jointly and collectively, don't waste time on vanity or personal agendas;
- In accepting positions in Government, you are accepting a special responsibility to work on behalf of the public interest. The taxpayers of the District pay your salary. Demonstrate your respect and appreciation for the trust put in you by putting maximum efforts into your work and being responsive to the needs of the people.

This will help you achieve results that you can be proud of, and I wish you all the best success in that. Now, on this occasion, let me turn to the bigger picture, and say something about the foundation on which the District rests, the Brcko International Arbitral Awards, commonly referred to as the Final Award. The Final Award is an integral part of the Dayton Peace Accords. It was a product of serious litigation between the Entities and represents a unique solution – the “permanent delegation” of Entity powers – and responsibilities of governance to Brcko District, which was constituted as a self-governing unit of administration. Whether or not this solution proves a lasting success is largely up to you here in

the District.

Brcko District Government and residents have been given both an enormous challenge and a unique opportunity. Remarkable progress has been made, of which all can be proud, but this will not be enough to sustain the District unless the momentum which has been achieved is markedly increased and the District is able to find its place within BiH, building mutually constructive relationships with the Entities and the State, and contributing to Bosnia and Herzegovina's progress toward membership in Europe.

Brcko is small and has a unique multiethnic structure. Government, political parties, the business, religious, non-governmental and other communities, and all the citizens of Brcko District must work together to make the District a sustainable success. Success will depend on, hard work, unity and shared goals. Are you ready for this?

If you are, we are here to help you, but the Government and the voters of the District must set the course, make decisions on fundamental issues and work together to realize the District's potential and the future you want for yourselves and your children. As senior members of Government, nominated by political parties and appointed by the Mayor, you are responsible and accountable to the voters. Let me again congratulate you, and be assured that you have my best wishes and my strong support, if you work hard in the interests of the District.

Brcko's greatest asset is you – its people – all of you. You have the capacity to make the District a lasting success and a leader in the kind of reform that will make Bosnia and Herzegovina a success, not only a member of Europe, and the world community, but a contributor to greater justice, peace, and prosperity.