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**PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF ALL HUMAN RIGHTS, CIVIL,
POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS,
INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT**

**Note verbale dated 27 September 2009 from the Permanent Mission of
the Republic of Serbia addressed to the Office of the United Nations
High Commissioner for Human Rights**

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Serbia to the United Nations Office and other international organizations at Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the secretariat of the Human Rights Council, and has the honour to convey herewith information concerning the rights of Roma, in particular the solutions reached on the issue of housing, as raised during the dialogue with the High Commissioner.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Serbia requests the secretariat of the Council to circulate the present note verbale and its annex* as a document of the twelfth session.

* The present letter is circulated in all official languages. The annex to the letter is circulated as received, in the language of submission only.

Annex

Ministry for Human and Minority Rights

Republic of Serbia

I N F O R M A T I O N

Measures undertaken for adequate housing of Roma

The Republic of Serbia is integrated in the socio-economic processes in Central and South East Europe as well as the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015, and it is a signatory to the Declaration of the Decade of Roma. Until June of this year it presided over the Decade and the priorities accorded by it during that period were: legalising Roma settlements; preventing discrimination in the education of Roma children; building a system of evaluation and monitoring; and an active participation in developing a Europe-wide Roma policy. On 9 April 2009, the Government adopted an important document, the Strategy for Improving the Situation of Roma and an operative Plan of Action for the Strategy's implementation. This proves that the state is systematically included in addressing and improving the situation of the Roma community, in particular in those areas where the Roma population is the most vulnerable.

Belgrade City, which is faced with a huge problem of substandard informal settlements that emerged over the last twenty or so years as a result of the wars waged in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, approved a document entitled "Amendments to the Plan of Action on Resettling Informal Settlements in Greater Belgrade Area in 2009". This PoA served as the basis for resettling the most notorious substandard informal settlement under Gazelle Bridge. According to some analysis previously made, the residents of this informal settlement were split in two groups: Group A, which consisted of 114 resident Roma families and Roma displaced from Kosovo and Metohija; and Group B, consisting of 64 families in total of the Roma who were mainly resident in southern Serbia.

The new concept of resettling these families implies that they should be accepted by all municipalities or boroughs of Belgrade City, except for its boroughs of Stari Grad, Vracar, Novi Beograd and Savski Venac, to prevent the ghetto-like settlements and concentration of poverty in one place. The housing provided to them consists of containers having the basic infrastructure such as water, sanitation and a bathroom.

Group B were moved back to their places of residence and they were initially assisted in integrating into their original environments. Towns to which these families were returned are Bojnik, Surdulica, Vranje, Leskovac, Lebane, Merosina, Prokuplje and Kovin.

The same concept will be used to resettle also the Belville informal settlement as well as five or six other smaller slums.

The Republic of Serbia is interested and determined to implement its strategic documents and is seriously working to promote the condition of this most vulnerable population group in Serbia, in which assistance by the international community is both necessary and welcome.

Belgrade, 16 September 2009
