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IFI AG Working Group on Social Sectors Draft Conclusions

The Social Sectors Working Group of the IFI Advisory Group (IFI-AG) met for the second time on June 17, 2008. The focal theme of the meeting was “enhancing employment in the Western Balkan. The following conclusions were reached.

- The Group held in-depth discussions on educational and vocational training issues (VET) in the candidate and potential candidate countries, as well as ways and means to enhance competitiveness and human capital. The group explored scope for enhanced coordination in this area.
- It was agreed that on the basis of the rich level of information and ideas presented at the meeting, a **specific work programme will be developed to be circulated to members by mid July and discussed and finalized early September.** The work program should be inspired by the regional cooperation emerging in this area under the umbrella of the RCC, by the EU Lisbon strategy and by the countries own priorities. The work programme should include the acquisition of a better understanding of initiatives in the area of education and vocational training.
- Members agreed that Working Group should **continue to focus on employment, education, human capital and competitiveness, including gender aspects,** as this is at the core of the Commission and IFIs programmes in the region.
- Furthermore, members agreed that it would be useful to gain an overview of existing and planned actions and programmes by IFIs in the social and human development area. . **The IFI AG Secretariat was invited to prepare a concrete proposal and possibly develop a questionnaire to gather relevant information.**
- Members agreed that the Group should **interact closely with the RCC** and other relevant initiatives, both at regional and national level
- They also welcome cooperation with the European Training Foundation and the OECD and will continue to draw from their respective expertise.
- Members took note of the outcomes of the First Steering Committee meeting of the IPF of 16 June 2008. The list of priority projects was circulated to provide IFI's with the possibility of **acquiring more information on projects, particularly those for which an IFI sponsor is not yet identified.**

- It was agreed that the **next meeting of the WG should take place in the autumn 2008.** The interest to organized ad hoc needs-driven meetings to follow up on the priority areas for the WG work programmes.