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Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Education for Peace Institute of the Balkans (EFP-Balkans)

The signature of the “Minutes of Meeting” for the project “**Education for Peace – A Comprehensive Education Social Development Project for Children and Youth**” was held today at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The document was signed by Dr. Zijad Pašić (Minister of Education and Science, the Federation of BiH), Dr. Gojko Savanovic (Minister of Education and Culture, the Republic of Srpska), Mr. Sreto Tomasević (Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport, Canton Zenica-Doboj), Mr. Jago Musa (Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport, Canton Herzegovina-Neretva), Mr. Branislav Mandić (Acting Assistant Minister, Department for Economic Multilateral Relations and Reconstruction, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of BiH), Mr. Keiichi Muraoka (Resident Representative, JICA Austria Office) and Ms. Naghmeh Sobhani (Director, EFP-Balkans).

The project is a joint initiative undertaken by JICA and EFP-Balkans and will involve a 2-year Intensive Education for Peace program with aim to foster inter-ethnic harmony in 4 selected primary school communities. The 4 schools, which were reconstructed by the Grant Aid of the Japanese Government, represent the 3 major ethnic communities of BiH and are located in East Sarajevo, Mostar, Oštra Luka and Doboj. Project participants include approximately 2,100 students, 180 teachers, 4,000 parents/guardians and other community members. In addition to the participation of these school communities, JICA and EFP-Balkans also look forward to working together with relevant local and national educational authorities in BiH whose support are imperatively significant for the success of the project. The funding from JICA totals € 250,532 and will begin in January 2005.

JICA is an Independent Administrative Institution established by Japanese law for the purpose of implementing technical cooperation on a governmental basis under the category of Japan’s bilateral grant aid. Funding of the Education for Peace Project is the continuation of JICA’s support towards peace building in Bosnia and Herzegovina within the priority areas of Long-Term Development, Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Conflict Prevention.

JICA organizes a special training course for Bosnian education professionals. The course, named as “Building Education Network for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, takes place in Japan for one month and includes visit to Hiroshima. This year’s training took place in October and 8 school teachers and 1 official from Pedagogical Institute participated in the course and expressed their satisfaction. JICA intends to continue with this training course for next 2 years as its larger approach in supporting Bosnia’s education reform.

The Education For Peace Institute of the Balkans is a non-profit humanitarian organization that provides comprehensive social development programs in the Education for Peace framework to school communities in over 60 localities across Bosnia and Herzegovina. EFP-Balkans is the branch office of EFP-International, based in Switzerland. EFP-Balkans enjoys the full support of all BiH Ministries of Education and Pedagogical Institutes for the on-going implementation of its programs in schools across the country.

For further information please contact:

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