

FPWC's Urtsadzor Eco-Training Center Officially Opened

On November 1st, the Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets (FPWC) invited all partners and friends to participate in the official opening ceremony of a newly constructed Eco-Training Center in Urtsadzor, Ararat region. The main objective of the Urtsadzor Eco-Training Center is to improve the capacity of local villagers for the sustainable use of bio-resources, as well as to generate income based on environmentally friendly approaches.

The project is implemented by the Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets with the financial support of UNDP/ Global Environment Facility's Small Grants



Programme. “The lands that we have given under the management of FPWC, were previously used mainly for grazing purposes and the local villagers were underestimating this initiative in the beginning,” said the mayor of Urtsadzor community Rafik Andreasyan and he continued: „While now things have changed, the villagers follow FPWC's

activities in the community, some of them are even involved in supporting works. This wonderful center has totally changed their attitude towards this great initiative!“

The Urtsadzor Eco-Training Center is located in “Caucasus Wildlife Refuge” (CWR), the first protected area in South Caucasus managed by a non-governmental organization - FPWC. The CWR project is supported by the British organization World Land Trust, the IUCN Committee of the Netherlands and VivaCell-MTS.

A number of partners which had contributed to the construction of the Center, as well as community heads, the vice-head of Ararat region were present at the opening ceremony. Among the guests was also the Deputy Minister of Nature Protection, Mr. Khachik Hakobyan. In his welcoming speech he said: “My congratulations to all of us on the creation of such a



unique center in our country. I am confident that this initiative will motivate other regions of Armenia to construct similar centers also in their communities.”

The Urtsadzor Eco-center is a real eco-building constructed with “green” technologies. The hot water is supplied by solar panels, the center is equipped with a wastewater treatment facility to prevent the environment from sewage



contamination. “This new center constructed in Urtsadzor has a prominent role among other similar initiatives development in Armenia” mentioned Armen Martirosyan, Portfolio Manager for UNDP Environmental Governance, “this is a pilot project for protected areas management which, in case of being efficient, will become a model project for applying the same approach also in other areas.”

The Urtsadzor Eco-training Center will offer eco-lessons for schoolchildren, youth and villagers in adjacent communities. Moreover, the Center will become a scientific hub, as well as offer necessary accommodation for eco-tourists and all nature lovers thus contributing to community development in a long perspective.

