“Sheber Keruen” artisans’ fair empowers Kazakhstani craftspeople

8 June 2017, Keruen shopping mall, Astana – The United Nations Commissioner-General to EXPO-2017, Cihan Sultanoglu visited “Sheber Keruen” artisans’ fair and met with craftspeople. The fair, organized by UNDP and the Union of Craftsmen of Kazakhstan aims to increase economic opportunities for craftspeople and promote national art.

“Your craft is of great importance for the country, your communities, your families and, of course, for yourselves, in so many ways. Through art you revive the traditions and customs of the people of Kazakhstan: you’re telling magnificent stories about your beautiful country through the language of colors and creativity. Indeed, this is a universal language that everyone - children and youth included, understands,” said Cihan Sultanoglu.

The fair was conducted for the fourth time. Aside from the sale of traditional crafts, the program included a fashion show presenting the works of regional designers and master classes for the public. The fair became a platform for experience sharing, networking, and economic empowerment of Kazakhstani craftspeople.

“Artisanship can create decent and sustainable jobs that cannot be taken away by oil crises or other shocks, helping diversify the economic base. When such businesses grow, they disproportionately benefit women-led small- and medium-led enterprises thus contributing to overall gender equality,” said UN Commissioner-General to EXPO-2017 Cihan Sultanoglu.

The United Nations actively supports vulnerable groups of people, including women, children, and individuals with disabilities. UNDP Kazakhstan has been assisting craftspeople through its grants program since 2014. During that period, over 100 artisans have been trained in various fields to start their own businesses and to disseminate knowledge among the new generation of craftspeople. This allows to popularize traditional forms of creativity, while contributing to the development of handicraft production and creation of decent jobs for those in need, which is in the heart of Sustainable Development Goals. Such initiatives as “Sheber Keruen” artisans’ fair attract the attention of the Government and the public, resulting in far-reaching changes in the regulatory framework and substantive support of local craftsmanship.

More information about UNDP’s presence in Kazakhstan can be found here: www.kz.undp.org; information about UN’s presence at EXPO-2017 is available here: http://www.un-expo.org/

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