A charity concert in support of the crowdfunding campaign to open Künde café held in Astana

**July 23, 2017, Astana** - The United Nations Development Programme together with “MEGA Silk Way”, Künde, “Public association of disabled people “Bakyt” and the Medical Center of Mental Health have organized a charity concert to support the crowdfunding campaign¹ to open Künde Café – a venue where people with special development and mental health needs can integrate into society.

Künde is an innovative social entrepreneurship project. The goal of the project is to enable people with special development and mental health needs to start working in the Künde café. This will help them rehabilitate, learn, communicate, provide for themselves and their families, and become fully included into society.

Künde consists of 102 workers of Medical-Industrial Workshops, their parents, friends, psychologists and psychiatrists, students of Nazarbayev University, and professionals from the catering business. The project started one year ago in collaboration with the Astana Medical Center of Mental Health on the basis of Medical-Industrial Workshops for people with special needs.

The charity concert, organized at Mega Silk Way in the framework of the crowdfunding campaign, pursued two aims. Firstly, to raise funds to open Künde café. Secondly, to increase awareness on the issues that people with mental and development needs face every day.

The concert was held within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), whose central message is to ‘leave no one behind’, by helping provide good health and well-being, decent work and economic growth, and reduce inequalities.

“When given an opportunity, people with special needs can become fully included into the society, and bring in transformative ideas, great knowledge and a wealth of experience. UNDP has been working to create and promote such opportunities for people with special needs for a long time and in over 170 countries around the world, “ said UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative Norimasa Shimomura.

¹ **Crowdfunding** is the practice of funding a project or venture by raising monetary contributions from a large number of people.
“What’s important to realize is that the strength of crowdfunding is in its double benefit for the society – it both helps raise money for a good cause and raise awareness about the opportunities that come with promoting this cause. I hope that the opening of the Kunde café will be an engine to spread efforts beyond this project, and will help create more opportunities for people with special needs in other segments of the job market,” he said.

“My aim is to work in the social café, get on my feet, make money, and improve the quality of life. I want to achieve all of that myself. I would like to create a family. My goal is to achieve all of that and not give up,” said Kuanysh Nogaibayev, one of the future workers of Künde café.

To date, approximately 600,000 people in Kazakhstan live with special mental needs. Less than 3% of those people have jobs. The launch of Künde Café will provide people with special needs an opportunity to sustain themselves and their families, to socialize, and to successfully integrate into the society.

If you would like to support this campaign and become a part of Künde’s success story, you could become a donor and buy one of the perks that we prepared for you on the website: https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/lets-open-kunde-a-cafe-for-everyone-community#.

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