

PRESS RELEASE

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UNDP OPENS A DIALOGUE ON DEVELOPMENT TO KABUL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND FACULTY

Oct 25, 2004-Kabul, Afghanistan- Today, Kabul University and UNDP Afghanistan played host to an exciting, in-depth and, at times, rather heated discussion on development in Afghanistan. A gathering of some 350 Kabul University students and distinguished Faculty members accepted invitations from University Chancellor Mohammad Akbar Popal to miss their regular morning classes and assemble in the campus auditorium to engage in the landmark discussion with representatives of civil society and the United Nations.

The event was the first of its kind in Afghanistan – a panel of fellow Afghans with expertise and experience in development issues hosted a town-hall style discussion about the nation’s Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and, notably, focused their attention on the role that young Afghans will play in the future development of their country.

“This is a very important discussion for all Afghans to have with one another,” said Lida Mangal, a young Afghan who accepted the invitation to participate as a panel member and contribute her perspectives on the role that youth and young women play in continuing development in Afghanistan. “It is really necessary for young people especially to learn about the Millennium Development Goals for Afghanistan. These are the building blocks for our recovery.” Recently in September, Ms Mangal represented Afghanistan at the Pan-Asian Youth Leadership Summit in Hiroshima Japan, where topics such as the MDGs were discussed. Another young panel member from today’s discussion, Jawed Nadir, also represented at the Summit.

Earlier this year, Afghanistan became the 191st signatory to the Millennium Declaration, representing the Afghan Government’s determination to achieve the multiple dimensions of human development – economic, social and political. Today’s event, entitled “Opening the Dialogue on Development to Youth: the Future of Afghanistan”, emerged from a cooperative initiative between the Government of Afghanistan, Afghan civil society organizations and the United Nations that seeks to move this commitment forward and to provide critical perspectives on how the MDGs should direct the future leadership towards responsible development policy.

Other members of the panel included Jamila Afghani, coordinator of Rights and Democracy Fund for Afghanistan, Abdul Wakil, coordinator for youth projects for Save the Children USA, Eng. Mohammad Yousef, director of Aschiana, and Abdul Wassay Arian, coordinator of the civil society consortium Hamkari. The discussion was ably and enthusiastically moderated by the distinguished Kabul University Professor of Law, Dr Maroufi.

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