

# PRESS RELEASE

United Nations Development Programme

Afghanistan Country Office, Shah Mehmood Ghazi Watt, Kabul



Afghanistan

## Attorney General's Office one step closer to delivering justice for narcotics-related crime

**Kabul, Afghanistan; 14 May 2005:** This afternoon, UNDP handed over a new building for the Departments of Monitoring and Counter-Narcotics to the Attorney General's Office. In the presence of representatives from Afghan Justice Institutions and donor countries, the ceremonial ribbons were cut. The event included a reception and press briefing, and guests were invited to tour the facility.

The brand new building was constructed under the management of the UNDP Justice programme. Taking over the building will be the Deputies Attorney General for Monitoring and Counter-Narcotics – two branches of the Attorney General's Office. The Department of Counter-Narcotics is a new body within the justice institutions of Afghanistan, whose mandate is to take the lead in the prosecution of crimes related to illegal drug production and narcotics trade in the country.

UNDP's Justice Programme aims to rebuild and strengthen Afghan justice institutions, to develop Afghan law faculties while revising their curricula, and to enhance overall access to justice in the country. This latest contribution to institutional development in the justice sector is more significant than infrastructure and equipment. It contributes to the overall ability of Afghan institutions to administer justice with regard to narcotics-related crime – and to monitor the effectiveness of justice institutions throughout the country. The Project is funded by Italy, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

UNDP Country Director, Mr. Frederick Lyons, stressed that reconstruction is not only physical, stating "We are engaged with our counterpart institutions to assist in developing their human capital, through training and capacity development". He added: "UNDP plays a lead role in helping the institutions review their mandates and operations – the support given by UNDP to the revision of the curriculum in the Law Faculty, the support and advice provided to the Ministry of Justice and Supreme Court on a daily basis, are just some examples of our involvement".

H.E. Sarwar Danish, Minister of Justice, expressed the hope that the international community would continue to support the justice institutions with infrastructure and equipment, as well as badly needed human resource development.

“Today thanks to the work of the Afghan Government and to our donors, we are all witnessing the reconstruction of this country’s justice system.” stated Mr Lyons, “Half a year after the end of the Bonn-mandated transitional period, the institutions have grown quite considerably, and are on the way to self-reliance”.

He addressed the need to extend justice and rule of law country-wide: “One of our current priorities is to help bring the rule of law to all districts – a heavy challenge, which UNDP is keen to take on. For this reason, UNDP is about to start implementation of a district-focused Access to Justice project funded by the European Commission with a contribution from Italy”.

Four ribbons were cut, allowing guests to tour the new building. These proceedings were aimed to symbolize the unity and synergy among the Afghan justice institutions, donor countries, and UNDP. The four ribbons were cut by the following attendees:

- H.E. Abdul Mahmood Daqeeq, Attorney General, together with Mr. Frederick Lyons, UNDP Country Director.
- H.E. Sarwar Danish, Minister of Justice, together with H.E. Ettore Sequi, Ambassador of Italy.
- H.E. Bahauddin Baha, Chairman of the Judicial Reform Commission, together with Mr. Simon Buckle, Chargé d’ Affaires of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
- H.E. Qyammuddin Kashaf, Judge of the Supreme Court, together with Mr. Yannick Hingorani, Acting Head of the Canadian International Development Agency

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