

PRESS RELEASE

United Nations Development Programme

Afghanistan Country Office, Shah Mehmood Ghazi Watt, Kabul



For Immediate Release

Human Rights Treaty Reporting Project Officially Launched

November 28, 2005 Kabul - Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah and SRSG Jean Arnault have officially launched the Project on Capacity Building for Sustained Human Rights Treaty Reporting in Afghanistan at a ceremony held at the Foreign Ministry in Kabul on November 27, 2005.

Dr. Abdullah stated in his speech at the ceremony that Afghanistan had an obligation to implement the international human rights treaties it had become a party to and that his country had to report to the UN treaty bodies on the state of implementation. "It is important that we take action towards meeting our obligation to the international human right treaty bodies by developing a program that builds capacity within the government for treaty reporting," Mr. Abdullah said. He expressed confidence that capacity building at the key ministries and other government agencies would promote human rights awareness and education throughout the Government. He also said this would lead to a more human rights focused approach in policy-making.

Mr. Jean Arnault, speaking on behalf of Louise Arbour, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, expressed satisfaction at Afghan government's decision to take a consolidated approach to the issues of human rights reporting and he said that that decision was a reflection of the commitment of the Afghan government to the people of Afghanistan in protecting their human rights. He also said the reporting would be key to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals adopted by the Afghan Government.

Mr. Sarwar Danish, the Minister of Justice, also speaking at the ceremony, said Afghanistan had effectively recognized the supremacy of the international human rights treaties by undertaking in its Constitution to observe and protect the internationally recognized fundamental human rights and that the article 7 of the Constitution was a guarantee of the State's commitment to human rights.

The project which was officially launched on Nov. 27 was signed earlier on June 19, 2005 between the UNDP and the Canada International Development Agency, the main funding organization. In turn, the agreement on the implementation of the project was signed by the Government of Afghanistan and the UNDP on August 4, 2005. The project, with a budget of US \$ 297,619, has a lifetime of 15 months.

In the course of the implementation a project office is to be established within the Office of Human Rights and Women's International Affairs at the Foreign Ministry, followed by the institutionalization of sustained reporting procedures and creation of a treaty reporting database.

Afghanistan is currently a signatory to six international treaties on human rights:

- Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Covenant on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
- Convention against Torture
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (and its two optional protocols)

Afghanistan has reports overdue under all treaties.

If you would like to learn more about the project, please contact Mustafa Eric
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