



Ministry of Finance

Press Release

UNDP and Ministry of Finance partner to fight corruption in Afghanistan

For immediate release

Kabul, 28 September 2007: The Accountability and Transparency Project, which will be implemented jointly by the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) formally inaugurated by Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Ahady and Anita Nirody, UNDP County Director in Afghanistan.

Realizing that fight against corruption is one of the top priorities for the Government of Afghanistan, UNDP developed the Accountability & Transparency (AcT) project after extensive consultations with government counterparts, civil society and donors which is in line with the Afghanistan Compact and Afghanistan National Development Strategy (I-ANDS) The first phase of the project will last until June 2008.

The AcT project – with a total budget of around USD 2.4 million – will be based in the Ministry of Finance, given its political leadership, strong relationships with other public entities and a keen interest in promoting a broad-based approach to develop anti-corruption policies and programmes. Close partnership is ensured with key government institutions involved in the fight against corruption. The project will coordinate closely with all relevant development partners in the fight against corruption.

The main goal of the ACT project is to support the government of Afghanistan, in view of achieving the Compact Benchmarks and developing a broader anti-corruption strategy within the ANDS, in preparing the groundwork for strategic anti-corruption policies and programmes by testing pilots in key public institutions, providing an integrity monitoring system including the necessary diagnostics and surveys, and by raising awareness and educating the public at large, as well as the civil service.

This project will improve institutional, legal and policy environment to support the implementation of anti-corruption policies and programmes in line with the Afghanistan Compact and the ANDS, enhance integrity and accountability in pilot ministries and in aid management and increase awareness raising and understanding of corruption in Afghanistan.

To achieve these goals, the project will support the Ministry of Finance in developing Vulnerability to Corruption Assessments (VCA) which will look into the business processes in the Budget Department and Administration Department and propose recommendations on how to mitigate possible areas of corruption. In addition the project will support the Audit Department in further development of the Audit Manual. Regarding Ministry of Justice the project will provide support in

reviewing UNCAC legislation and also develop Vulnerability to Corruption Assessments in the Ministry of Justice.

In thanking the UNDP and other donors including the governments of Italy and Norway for the project support, Minister Ahady added: "Corruption is like a deadly disease that is sickening our society. It is the professional and moral duty of every Afghan, be they service deliverers or service recipients, to fight corruption. And we here at the Ministry of Finance are committed to doing so. The AcT project will be particularly helpful for us, as it complements our other efforts to curb corruption."

The opening of this project marks yet another major step by the Ministry of Finance in its drive against corruption. In a workshop last week, Dr. Ahady publicly introduced the anti-corruption educational program that is raising the awareness of MoF employees all over Afghanistan about corruption, its causes, its scope of damage to society, and about the new anti-corruption programme the Ministry of Finance is launching.

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