

PRESS RELEASE

United Nations Development Programme

Afghanistan Country Office, Shah Mahmood Ghazi Watt, Kabul



Afghanistan

UN Assistant Secretary General Reaffirms UNDP Support to Development in Afghanistan

Kabul, 13 October 2008 – The UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, Ajay Chhibber visited Afghanistan from 11 to 13 October 2008 to exchange views with senior members of the Afghan Government on how to strengthen UNDP’s support to development of Afghanistan.

During his visit Mr Chhibber met with a wide range of partners including government officials, donors, UN agencies and NGOs.

In a number of meetings with key government officials, the UN Assistant Secretary General exchanged views on how UNDP can continue to support the Government to strengthen its capacity to deliver services to the people of Afghanistan.

In his meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Rangin Dadfar Spanta, Mr Chhibber reiterated strong long-term support to the Government of Afghanistan for improving livelihoods, building state capacity and the on-going plans for the voter registration and upcoming elections. “Afghanistan is one of the largest UNDP programmes in the world,” said Mr Chhibber. “We believe that sustained and coordinated support to the Government of Afghanistan is vital to promoting peace, security and development in Afghanistan. UNDP is committed to providing strong support to ensure that the Government’s ability to deliver services to the people of Afghanistan.”



Understanding how to promote the extension of UNDP support to sub-national regions of Afghanistan was a key priority for the Assistant Secretary General’s visit. In a meeting with the Minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Mr Ihsan Zia, he reaffirmed UNDP’s commitment to continue the National Area Based Development Programme (NABDP), which

has initiatives to strengthen community empowerment, economic regeneration, institutional development, and energy for rural development. Closer coordination between rural development and agriculture will be very critical. Mr Chhibber also met with the Chairman of the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC), Dr. Ahmad Mushahed, to discuss progress of the UNDP Afghanistan Sub-national Governance Programme (ASGP).

“If the Government of Afghanistan is to consolidate its capacity to provide services across the country, governance and administration mechanisms must be in place at the sub-national level,” said Mr Chhibber. “We are very proud of the level of close collaboration between UNDP and the Government to strengthen the ability to deliver services outside of Kabul. Dealing with corruption will be vital to help build confidence.”

Mr Chhibber met with the Minister of Education Mr Hanif Atmar and exchanged views with him on support for girls’ education, education workforce reforms, as well as ideas on improving the security situation. In the context of UNDP support to Afghanistan’s Law and Order Trust Fund (LOTFA) programme, they also reviewed the need for reform of the police systems to improve its functioning. In their meeting Mr Chhibber and Mr Omar Zakhilwal, the Chief Economic Advisor to the President of Afghanistan, discussed the global economic crisis and its impact on Afghanistan, and support for policy-making capacity, as well as on-going efforts to attract more foreign investment into Afghanistan.

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Over the past five years more than USD 1.3 billion of international assistance has been channeled through UNDP into important security, state-building and livelihoods development programmes including support to formulation of the Constitutional Loya Jirga process, Presidential, Parliamentary and provincial Elections, Disbandment, Disarmament and Reintegration, administration of the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) to channel funds for police salaries, support to Ministry of Finance to lead in Aid Co-ordination and the National Budget and formulation of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS).

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