

PRESS RELEASE

United Nations Development Programme

Afghanistan Country Office, Shah Mahmood Ghazi Watt, Kabul



UNDP Hosted a Symposium on Decentralization Experiences from India

May 19, 2008, Kabul-- The Indian Minister for Panchayati Raj (Local Governance), Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar, visited Afghanistan to further strengthen the collaboration between Afghanistan and India in the area of Local Governance.

As part of a four day visit by Minister Aiyar, UNDP Afghanistan facilitated a brainstorming symposium for the main stakeholders working directly and indirectly in the field of Sub-National Governance in Afghanistan. The symposium was co-chaired by the Director General of the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG), Mr. Ghulam Jelani Popal and the Minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), Mr. Mohammad Ehsan Zia.

The purpose of this symposium was to further strengthen the dialogue and sharing of experiences between Afghanistan and India on current challenges in decentralization process in Afghanistan, as well as determining ways in which the Indian experience can complement the emerging Sub-National structures in Afghanistan.



The symposium was opened by the UNDP Country Director, Ms. Anita Nirody who expressed her sincere gratitude to have the opportunity to facilitate this symposium. Ms. Nirody noted that the meeting provided a positive opportunity for UNDP to further support South-South Cooperation in general knowledge sharing between Afghanistan and India particularly in decentralization area. The strengthened collaboration between the two countries will contribute positively by drawing on lessons learnt from activities in the Asian region to support the ongoing governance reform processes at Sub-National level in Afghanistan.

The General Director of IDLG, Mr. Popal and Minister Zia, mentioned that Afghanistan has much to learn from the Indian decentralization experiences. They, therefore, warmly welcomed the idea by the Government of India to further strengthening the collaboration between the Governments of Afghanistan and India.

Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar expressed his deepest respect to the efforts already made by IDLG and MRRD to support Local Governance in Afghanistan. He also added that he warmly welcomes the new Afghan-Indian collaboration in Sub-National Governance, which will contribute positively in exchanging of knowledge and lessons learnt from both countries. Minister Aiyar was also visiting several provinces to see the recent projects implemented by MRRD. (Ends)

Should you need further information on this press release or any other UNDP programme in Afghanistan, please contact Fezeh Hosseini, UNDP-Afghanistan Public Information Officer on (+93) 0700 475 714 or (+ 93) (0) 20 212 4098 or email to fezeh.hosseini@undp.org

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