

PRESS RELEASE

United Nations Development Programme

Afghanistan Country Office, Shah Mahmood Ghazi Watt, Kabul



UNDP and MRRD to Start the Third Phase of the National Area Based Development Programme

Kabul, May 4, 2009-- UNDP and the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) have signed the National Area Based Development Programme (NABDP) Phase-III project document. Through this flagship programme, UNDP reaffirms its continued commitment and support to MRRD to insure rural development progress in the area of community empowerment, sustainable livelihoods through rural infrastructure and stabilization through enhanced economic livelihoods in Afghanistan.

The NABDP Phase-III is a five-year commitment to support MRRD to move forward in the continuum of the national development programme which was started with NABDP Phase I as a priority recovery and economic regeneration programme in a complex emergency context. NABDP Phase-III will subscribe to its area-based implementation approach with a dual focus on productive infrastructure that will serve to link rural communities as part of the Government's broader agricultural and rural development strategy; and to continue its vital work on strengthening and linking District Development Assemblies (DDAs) as another novel manifestation of an area based approach, namely as a conduit for social and economic development planning.

NABDP Phase-III will focus on three main areas:

1. **Local Governance and DDAs Institutionalization:** The programme will continue the institutionalization of DDAs through expanding the scope of their role in local governance, providing a forum for conflict-resolution, increasing female participation in decision-making to strengthen their overall role as social development institutions with ever increasing geographic coverage;
2. **Sustainable Livelihoods through Rural Infrastructure Services:** NABDP phase-III will also have a tight focus filling immediate gaps in any improvements to physical infrastructure, which would promote agricultural productivity and rural economic development, such as local markets, farm-to-market roads, irrigation works and food storage facilities;
3. **Stabilization through Enhanced Economic Livelihoods:** NABDP Phase-III aims to contribute towards a more holistic resolution, which would address problems of operating in conflict and post-conflict environments. NABDP Phase-III will build upon current successes in promoting comprehensive area-based approaches in Kandahar, Helmand and border provinces which promoted greater community ownership through community-based contracting. These innovative operating platforms encompass a number of economic generation models and schemes all of which should have a stabilizing influence on local communities.

The NABDP Phase-III, which has a value of USD 294 million, will be executed under the leadership of MRRD supported by UNDP within a five year timeframe of July 2009-June 2014.

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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