

PRESS RELEASE

United Nations Development Programme

Afghanistan Country Office, Shah Mahmood Ghazi Watt, Kabul



Afghanistan's international backers ready to provide support for the parliamentary elections, pledging to fill the funding shortfall

Kabul, 11 May 2010 — UNDP signed an agreement with the Afghanistan Independent Election Commission (IEC) to provide financial and technical assistance to support IEC in the conduct of the parliamentary elections scheduled in September 2010.

The Chairman of IEC, Fazal Ahmad Manawi said the agreement had resolved an election funding shortfall and he is optimistic that security problems could also be sorted out.

"We all know that the international community is committed to helping Afghanistan as well as committed supporting democracy in Afghanistan. And we know that the basis for democracy is elections," he said.

"Security is still a problem, but I am pleased to say discussions are ongoing. I hope that we will solve this problem."

Speaking at the press conference Staffan de Mistura, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Afghanistan highlighted that UNDP ELECT Programme Document, which was signed before the meeting, is of crucial importance in facilitating the support of the international community to the Afghan electoral authorities in the preparation and conduct of the 18 September parliamentary elections. He outlined that the Project Document crystallizes the new approach of the UN in support of the elections in Afghanistan- a focused approach that concentrates on "core support" to the electoral authorities. Staffan de Mistura said lessons had been learned from previous elections, "We have a chairman and members who are enthusiastic and committed to see a better election than the previous one,"

Approximately, 2,500 Afghan men and women have nominated themselves for the upcoming parliamentary elections.

Afghanistan held its first ever parliamentary elections in 2005 and it would be the second parliamentary elections after fall of the Taliban regime.

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