

PRESS RELEASE

United Nations Development Programme

Afghanistan Country Office, Shah Mahmood Ghazi Watt, Kabul



Afghanistan

Provincial Council Members from Every Province in Afghanistan Complete Orientation

Kabul, 13 July 2010 – Over a hundred Provincial Council members from across Afghanistan have gathered for a three day “Better Representation” event designed to enhance the role of Provincial Councils in local government and development.

Provincial Council members met with President Karzai, formed working groups on administrative and financial issues and clarified Provincial Council needs in detail. Ministers and officials outlined the rights and responsibilities of Provincial Councils, newly enshrined in the Afghanistan Sub-National Governance Policy. The event is one fruit of the cooperation between UNDP and the Independent Directorate of Local Governance.

H.E. Minister Ghulam Jelani Popal told participants: “For stable and principled government we must empower Provincial Councils - ensuring the participation of local people in local decision making... The Better Representation event is a new window for Provincial Councils to develop their capacity and share experiences.”



A member of Herat Provincial Council, Fatema Jafari, speaks at the “Better Representation” event, Inter-Continental Hotel, Kabul, July 12, 2010

All Provincial Councils in Afghanistan have now completed a similar orientation in 2010.ⁱ In parallel, the

Independent Directorate of Local Governance has been training hundreds of specialist staff (from finance to IT) to place in local government offices. Such efforts as these are supported by UNDP, which has begun together with the Independent Directorate of Local Governance a five year Afghanistan Sub-National Governance Programme, working in every province in the country.ⁱⁱ ASGP II supports Provincial and District Governors’ Offices, Provincial and District Councils, municipalities, national frameworks for local governance and public administration reform in local government institutions.

UNDP Country Director, Manoj Basnyat, said: “Afghanistan needs government that can reach people’s lives at the local level and show them that government is on their side. Provincial Councils can be the authentic voice of the people and have a vital role to play. UNDP is committed to supporting Afghanistan’s efforts across sub-national governance - now and in the years ahead - and we are excited about the prospects of ASGP II.”

¹ This fourth round of Orientation hosted Provincial Council members from Daykundi, Sari-Pul, Samangan, Takhar, Ghor, Kandahar, Paktika and Herat.

² Donors to ASGP I and ASGP II include: DfID, AusAID, Switzerland, Canada, the European Commission, Italy, Netherlands, Norway and UNDP core funds.

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