

PRESS RELEASE

United Nations Development Programme

Afghanistan Country Office, Shah Mahmood Ghazi Watt, Kabul



Afghanistan

Northern Parliamentary Elections Female Candidates to Start the Campaign with Confidence

Kabul, July 1, 2010 -- Over seventy female candidates for the upcoming parliamentary elections from nine Northern provinces attended a three-day training programme on women's political participation and rights to practice parliamentary elections campaigns started on 29 June in Mazar-e-sharif.

This programme was technically supported and funded by UNDP Gender Equality Project which is a pilot component of a wider programme in different regions of Afghanistan to support women's political participation with focus on the electoral process, especially the upcoming parliamentary elections in Afghanistan.

"Political illiteracy, influence of wrong social and cultural practices, and novelty of the democratic experience in the country are the main obstacles preventing women from obtaining their political rights. Initiating such programmes will enhance women's political participation and enable them to reach a reasonable percentage in both the Parliament and Provincial Councils." said Mr. Zahir Wahdat, the Balkh Province Deputy Governor opening the training programme.



This training workshop was to enhance knowledge and skills of female candidates of the parliamentary elections on election preparations and campaigning. The participants learned much about the campaign functions, particularly on building a campaign team, developing a clear message and techniques for delivering a message to the public in their provinces. Also, educational sessions were conducted on the laws and regulations that promote women's participation in the elections as part of women's political participation process.

"Women participation in electoral processes involves much more than just voting. Political participation derives from the freedom to speak out, assemble and associate; the ability to take part in the conduct of public affairs; and the opportunity to register as a candidate, to campaign, to be elected and to hold office at all levels of government." Ms. Friba Majeed, Director of Provincial Directorate of Balkh Women's Affairs said.

In another effort, the UNDP Gender Equality Project in coordination with the Gender Studies Institute of Kabul University completed a one month certificate course on "Gender, Conflict and Development" attended by 17 lecturers of Herat University on 27 June 2010.

The chancellor of Herat University and the course participants appreciated UNDP for this certificate course and evaluated it very positive in developing their knowledge on gender issues which will help them to promote gender equality and support women empowerment.

The participants awarded with certificates by the University Chancellor, local authorities and UNDP representatives in the course closing ceremony held at Herat University.

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