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JHRA convenes Lessons Learned and Future Outlook Consultation Workshop

Kabul, 3–6 August 2009: The UNDP Justice and Human Rights in Afghanistan Project (JHRA) (District-Level Component formerly called Access to Justice at District Level–AJDL) organized a four-day consultation workshop with the objective of sharing the lessons-learned from the activities



Implemented in a number of provinces in Afghanistan between 2007-2009. These activities contributed in the development of a strategy and initiating new areas of engagement in the next phase of the

project. During the workshop the major challenges faced by the Project and the future outlook was discussed as well as recommendations for the next phase of Project were forwarded. H.E. Dr. Mohammad Qaasem Hashemzai, Deputy Minister of Justice and Mr. Henri François Morand, Senior Deputy Country Director UNDP, Ms Zahra Pinero Lozano, European Union Attaché participated the workshop. In addition, 57 participants including 20 females from the Justice Institutions, Donor Agencies, implementing NGO partners and beneficiaries of the Project from the 7 provinces attended the meeting. The workshop comprised of two working groups focused on the topics of criminal law, defense counsel, family law, land law and awareness raising for religious leaders, legal education, awareness raising through media and village public awareness.

SEAL publicize Afghan Youth to Parliamentary Practices

Kabul September, 16, 2009, UNDP Support to Parliament project (SEAL) organised a study visit of Afghan Youth to the National Parliament. Eighty Young Afghan girls and boys from Kabul University and number of Schools in Kabul participated in the visit. The delegates were publicize with the parliamentary practices, role of parliament in legislation, ratification of national policies, international conventions and treaties. The event was also attended by eminent MPs and staff of secretariat from both houses.

The visit took place on the same day when Afghan Parliament was celebrating the World Democracy Day. Which contributed to discussions and

debates regarding the role of parliament in promoting democratic values, human rights and equal opportunities of development for the people.

The participants appreciated the visit as a learning opportunity facilitated by the SEAL Project.



Kabul September. 17. 2009 On this bright Thursday morning, an extraordinary procession wound its way through Takht-e-Safar Park in Herat: five hundred women carrying banners and placards, many clad in turquoise tunics emblazoned with the words 'We want peace', many wearing headscarves in the colours of the Afghan flag, shouting slogans as they marched: "Peace for women!" "We want peace!"

"Don't just talk about peace—make peace!"

Civil society representatives, underprivileged women who receive food and legal aid through the Department of Women's Affairs (DoWA) in Herat. They were girls of 12 and grandmothers of 60, and they came out not just to celebrate Peace Day, but to raise their voices in a unified demand for an end to conflict in Afghanistan, showing that women stand together in their desire for a peaceful future. On behalf

Affairs of Herat, read a declaration carrying a clear and powerful message: Insecurity and fear are strangling women's lives. Women need peace and security to be able to go to



Herat Women in a Peace Rally

work, go to schools, live without fear. And women have much to bring to the table: their potential to contribute should be recognized so they can play a bigger role in ending the conflict and rebuilding the country.

To mark the coincidence of Peace Day with the end of the month of Ramadan, the protesters dedicated the rally with a ceremonial Khatm-e-Qur'an and a collective hilltop prayer for peace, releasing a flock of white doves as a final symbol of their hope for a future without war.

The Herat women's peace rally is the only event of its kind in Afghanistan. It was founded in 2008 and revived this year under the leadership and financial support of the UNDP Gender Equality project, in collaboration with DoWA and the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission's Women's Rights Unit. This year's march was broadcast on national and local radio and television, propelling the women's call for peace to the farthest reaches of the country. Its success at raising women's profile as peace-builders has inspired DoWA to make it an annual Peace Day event.

(ACT) Project Launches the Second Round of the Accountability and Transparency Grants Facility (ACT-GF)

As part of the Accountability and Transparency (ACT) Project, UNDP is supporting the strengthening of Afghan civil society to enable and play more active role in the fight against corruption. Support is provided through the Accountability and Transparency Grants Facility (ACT-GF).

The first round of the ACT-GF was launched in late 2008 with three civil society organizations receiving grants successfully completing all activities and meeting their objectives.

These organizations successfully carried out activities in the following areas respectively: support to communities to monitor the delivery of education services in Logar Province; development of training materials for civil society organizations to conduct activities in the area of accountability, transparency

journalism and training of Afghan journalists on investigative journalism.

In August 2009 the ACT Project launched the second round of the ACT-GF, building on the lessons learned from the first round. In order to ensure wide awareness of the ACT-GF amongst Afghan civil society across the country, workshops were organized in Kabul as well as Bamyan, Herat, Jalalabad and Mazar-e-Sharif during the September and October 2009.



Awareness-raising workshop for Afghan CSOs on ACT Grants Facility

The aim of the workshops was also to develop the capacity of the participating civil society organizations on proposal writing to ensure the submission of high quality proposals as well as provide ideas for possible activities in the area of anti-corruption.

In order to ensure broad based participation in the workshops a call for contacts was announced via print and electronic media and further contacts were sought through UN organizations present in the respective provinces. In total 172 members of Afghan civil society attended the workshops all of which showed a keen interest in the ACT-GF. As a result it is expected that the ACT-GF will receive high quality proposals with an increased geographic coverage compared with the first round.