Japan Supports the Extension of Regional Initiative for Sustainable Economy (RISE) Programme

In continuation of its generous support to the Regional Initiative for Sustainable Economy Programme, known as RISE, the Government of Japan has agreed to extend the duration of the programme until June 2007. This USD 12.7-million programme is fully funded by the Government of Japan under the Peace Building Grant Aid scheme, and has been in operation in Balkh, Nangarhar and Kandahar provinces. The actual implementation of the RISE activities started in March 2006 initially for the period of one year, and was recently extended until June 2007. The Japanese contribution will enable the Afghan government and international stakeholders to continue efforts for the development of rural and urban economies in Afghanistan.

The Regional Initiative for Sustainable Economy (RISE) is a project jointly implemented by three United Nations agencies – the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the UN Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan (UNMACA), together with the Ministry of Urban Development (MUD) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MAI). With the view to promote integrated regional development, the project aims at creating an enabling environment for long-term, sustainable regional economy, by providing immediate and medium-term support for both urban and rural development. It encourages appropriate synergy building between rural and urban activities, and targets the most vulnerable groups of society.

The RISE programme consists of four components: (i) Capacity development of relevant local authorities and communities in monitoring and evaluation, implemented by UNDP Urban Development Group (UNDP-UDG); (ii) Short-term employment generation & urban infrastructure support, implemented by UNDP-UDG and MUD; (iii) Empowerment of vulnerable farmers, implemented by FAO and MAI; and (iv) Mine / UXO survey & clearance and Mine Risk Education & Victim Assistance activities coordinated by UNMACA. Since its inception, the partners involved in the RISE programme have been working hand in hand towards a common goal.

UNDP-UDG’s urban infrastructure support, which includes drainage channels, market areas, disability / women’s resource centres and slaughter houses, is implemented in close coordination with MUD as well as other relevant authorities. The physical construction work involves labourers who are selected from the most vulnerable farmers.
vulnerable groups – such as ex-combatants, returnees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), disabled and wherever possible, women. Since March 2006 UNDP-UDG has been working on 56 projects of infrastructure building in Mazar-e-Sharif, Jalalabad and Kandahar that created 68,000 labour days.

Hassadullah, a 22-year-old unskilled returnee working in one of the drainage channel project sites in Jalalabad, had no money at all to support his 7-member family when they came back from Pakistan in 2005. Now, with the employment provided by UDG, he as the sole breadwinner is being able to support his family with food, clothing and medical needs. When there are no health issues within the family he can even use his income to support other relatives.

Nadir, a 43-year-old ex-mujaheddin with one leg, also working in UDG’s slab casting site in Jalalabad, is also grateful since he is learning how to work with steel bars and how to bend them to use for slab casting, in addition to the salary. The newly acquired skills give him viable employment alternatives. A labourer in one of the project sites in Kandahar also commented that, if there had not been the employment opportunity provided by the RISE project, he would have even considered joining the Taliban to earn money.

Apart from the immediate impact of short-term job creation, skills development and improved infrastructure in the urban areas, UNDP-UDG’s work extends to benefit rural populations – by providing support in rural areas for road rehabilitation, retention walls construction, irrigation canal cleaning, etc. – thus also augmenting the impact of activities of another RISE partner agency FAO.

In close coordination with Ministry of Agriculture, as well as local shuras and Community Development Councils, FAO selected 2,000 beneficiaries in the RISE target provinces, reaching out to a total of 84 villages. The selected farmers received wheat seed and fertilizer packages, together with two grain storage silos. Hand tools and vegetable seeds are also distributed. Following a technical assessment done in the villages, farmers could go for optional packages, such as fruit tree nurseries, vineyard nurseries in Kandahar plus, greenhouses and drip irrigation packages, and distribution of dairy cows elsewhere. In Nangarhar province, five fish ponds have been constructed and 2,500 carp fingerlings were provided to the beneficiaries. The aim is to enable farmers to diversify food production, and to improve their knowledge and technologies through appropriate training. FAO and Ministry of Agriculture also aim to train the farmers and herdsmen in plant protection, animal health (linked with FAO’s global Avian Influenza programme) and to strengthen their knowledge in nutrition. It shall increase the productivity of the villages at the next cropping season.

Another RISE partner agency UNMACA plays an important role in creating a safe environment for communities, in order to increase the arable land, market accessibility, and thus the general economic opportunities in the RISE target regions. In the latter half of 2006, demining activities under the framework of RISE accounted for nearly 10% of the entire nationwide demining activities carried out by Afghan NGOs. In 2007, with the approved extension of the project period, UNMACA intends to strengthen the Mine Risk Education & Victim Assistance (MRE&VA) activities under RISE, in order to reduce the risk of mines/UXOs by raising awareness through MRE activities and support mine victims in reducing socio-psychological implications of their trauma which leads to rehabilitation and reintegration of victims into the society.

The longer-term impact on regional economy through this multi-faceted, multi-stakeholder joint initiative is thus expected to result in positive outcomes in terms of socio-economic development in the target provinces and good practices and lessons learned for integrated regional development that could be replicated in the entire country. Such approach combining infrastructure improvement and capacity development, physical, social and food security and agricultural diversification, should be pursued further in order to bring security and an enabling environment for the targeted populations.
UNDP has received a contribution of NOK 20,000,000 (Norwegian Kroner twenty million) from the Royal Norwegian Government for the recently launched Afghanistan Subnational Governance Programme (ASGP). This would aim at strengthening the institutional framework for subnational governance, improve administrative capacities of the office of the governor and municipalities so that the Afghan communities can have better access to services and build the capacities of the Provincial Councils so that they can have better interface with the administration and communities. An agreement to this effect was signed by UNDP Country Director, Ms Anita Nirody, and the Norwegian Ambassador in Kabul, H.E. Jan Erik Leikvang.

Despite years of war and destruction of Afghanistan’s social fabric, a resilient albeit dysfunctional administrative structure has persisted at the subnational level. Post-conflict Afghanistan has inherited a dire situation with public services largely non-functional. The Afghanistan’s National Development Strategy has confirmed a strategy of continuing to build a strong central government while also strengthening the provincial and district administrations to provide efficient services to the people. At the same time, the government of Afghanistan is committed to make state institutions more accountable and responsive to the people, and to strengthen citizens participation in the political process and local decision-making. Strengthening local government is seen as an essential instrument for eradicating poverty and thus building the foundations for strengthening local democracy.

The ASGP was therefore formulated in collaboration with the Government of Afghanistan to address the urgent needs for developing an effective provincial and local administration and functioning local democratic process. Six months ago, the ASGP got off the ground with initial resources from UNDP. During that period the focus was on building relations with the government and ensuring a coordinated relationship with the international partners for sub-national governance reform efforts. The key partners of ASGP, the Ministry of Interior, the Civil Service Commission and the Office of Administrative Affairs now meet regularly to discuss how they can support each other’s efforts in local governance reform.

The ASGP is being implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Interior, the Office of the Administrative Affairs and the Independent Administrative Reform & Civil Service Commission and aims at: i) supporting the central government agencies responsible for formulating and implementing the sub national governance policy and developing the legal and regulatory framework; ii) public administration reform to build capacities in provincial and district administrations; iii). development of representation and participation in sub-national governance by strengthening the capacity of provincial councils and enabling citizens to participate in conflict-sensitive governance.

We have been assisted immensely in this effort with the contribution from the Royal Government of Norway. The contribution will support the overall implementation of the ASGP including a focused assistance to the province of Faryab.

Hundreds of Norwegian Troops are stationed in Maymaneh, the provincial capital of Faryab, leading a multinational Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT). The Royal Norwegian Government has supported numerous development efforts in Faryab. In 2006, Norway provided generous contributions to UNDP’s National Area Based Development Programme in various districts of Faryab Province.

The ASGP through its involvement in the Faryab Province would work towards restructuring the key provincial administration...
The Counter Narcotics Trust Fund (CNTF) of Afghanistan has allocated US$ 3,124,294 for eight Alternative Livelihood and drug awareness projects to be implemented in Farah, Faryab, Nangarhar, Balkh, Ghor, Badghis, Samangan, Logar, Baghlan, Maidan-wardak, and Laghman provinces. The projects approved by the CNTF Management Board include several flood protection and irrigation schemes, a carpet weaving initiative and a drug awareness campaign. The agreements to implement the projects were signed between the Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN) and the Ministries of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, the Ministry of Women Affairs and the Ministry of Martyrs, Disabled, Labor and Social Affairs.

In an interview prior to the signing ceremony, General Khudaidad, the Deputy Minister of Counter Narcotics said: “In addition to law enforcement, the CNTF projects approved by the CNTF Management Board will help create viable alternative livelihoods in several provinces as well as raise awareness of the dangers of illicit drug use in line with the National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS).”

According to General Khudaidad, “The projects will provide employment opportunities at the district level and thus improve the living conditions of the local communities directly and indirectly by providing 96,874 labor-days.”

The following CNTF funded projects will be implemented by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD):

1. Construction of 260m flood protection wall and 370m retaining wall in Anardara district and 54m long intake in Bala Bolook district of Farah province;
2. Rehabilitation of an integrated Water and Irrigation System in Gurziwan district of Faryab province;
3. Construction of a protection wall in two districts (Koot and Mamandara) of Nangarhar province;
4. Construction of water reservoir in Khulm district (13 villages) of Balkh province;
5. Construction of two protection walls in Shahrak and Chaghcharan districts of Ghor province;
6. Rehabilitation of AB Barik Canal and construction of Gabion protection wall in Abkamari district of Badghis province;
7. Construction of retaining walls in Daresouf Bala district of Samangan province.

The Drug Awareness project will be implemented by the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA) in the provinces of Logar, Samangan, Baghlan, Maidan-wardak and Laghman and will educate local communities on the dangers of illicit drug use as well as gather data on the number of drug users to inform future development of
drug treatment services by the Government of Afghanistan and donors.

The Carpet Weaving project will be implemented by the Ministry of Labor Social Affairs (MLSA) in the Ghor province.

The Carpet Weaving and the projects of MRRD will be implemented by sub-contractors which will be selected through an open tender process in line with new procurement law of the Government of Afghanistan. CNTF, the Ministry of Counter Narcotics and the Ministry of Finance will observe the procurement process of the projects.

The immediate beneficiaries of the projects will be farmers and farm workers who have or will be affected by poppy eradication campaigns envisioned in Afghanistan’s National Drug Control Strategy. The other beneficiaries will be communities vulnerable to poppy production who will gain significant short-term employment opportunities through participation in rehabilitation and reconstruction works through the MRRD projects. The Carpet Weaving project will provide sustainable longer term employment to vulnerable members of the community in Ghor province. The projects will ultimately contribute to the growth of local economies by providing employment and opportunities away from poppy and help reduce the migration of people for economic reasons to the overburdened cities.

The Counter Narcotics Trust Fund (“CNTF”), officially established by UNDP and the Government of Afghanistan on 29 October 2005, is to mobilize international resources needed by the Afghan Government to implement the National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS).

Prevention and treatment of drug abuse: Tens of Public Health Staff Trained on Drug Demand Reduction and Treating Drug Addicts

The Counter Narcotics Trust Fund (CNTF) – a joint UNDP and Government of Afghanistan programme - funded a training course for over 60 staff of the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) who were recently recruited for two drug demand reduction projects. The 10 days training programme was conducted by the MoPH and was designed to raise professional awareness among the recruited staff on effective treatment of drug addicts and exploring innovative ways to reduce drug demands in Afghanistan.

In order to support the drug demand reduction and treatment efforts in Afghanistan, the CNTF has approved the funding of two residential drug treatment centres and eight community based outreach centres as well as the training of skilled personnel. The 10 day training programme was delivered by experts in drug demand reduction from the MoPH, MCN and the NGO community. The comprehensive training covered a wide range of topics including: the problem of drug use in Afghanistan, the classification of drugs, causes of addiction and phases of addiction, approaches for drug abuse prevention, use of motivational and post treatment counselling, detoxification strategies and other harm reduction techniques. The training was delivered through a series of lectures, interactive sessions and practical workshops. The participants also visited the Nejat and Zendagi Naween drug treatment centres in Kabul where they had the opportunity to see treatment services being provided by doctors and nurses and learn from their experiences to better support drug addicted patients.

Speaking at the closing ceremony, H.E. Dr Mohammad Amin Fatimi, Minister of Public Health said: “The excellent training provided will ensure that the Ministry of Public Health has well trained and skilled staff in the provinces to treat drug addicts and to educate our communities on the immense dangers and harm caused by illicit drug use.” Minister Fatimi thanked the Counter Narcotics Trust Fund for supporting the MoPH drug treatment projects and raised hope that the outcomes of the training course will pave way for an addicted-free Afghanistan.

Two residential drug treatment centers, one in Jalalabad (Nangarhar) and one in Mazar (Balkh) and five community based outreach centers are being set up in the provinces of Sheberghan, Maimana, Kunduz, Bamiyan and Ghazni. Three additional community based out-
reach centers will be established in Farah, Ghor and Nimroz early next year.

Drug misuse and dependence is a growing social and health problem in Afghanistan, especially among returning refugees and women and is often linked to post-war trauma and to the fact that opium is easily available. Hence, the drug economy poses a serious threat to sustainable development in Afghanistan. The MoPH through the CNTF funded drug treatment projects will be enabled to provide integrated drug prevention, treatment and rehabilitation services in several provinces. The Counter Narcotics Trust Fund was established on 29 October 2005 and passed into the implementation stage in March 2006 with the objective to support the government to implement the National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS), which aims to eradicate illicit opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan by 2012. The Trust Fund will support counter narcotics related projects and activities outlined in the eight pillars of the NDCS, which include: Alternative Livelihoods, Building Institutions, Information Campaign, Drug Law Enforcement, Criminal Justice, Eradication, Drug Demand Reduction and Treatment of Drug Addicts, and International/Regional Cooperation.

**UNDP Supports Civil Society Consultation on Afghanistan’s National Development Strategy**

Support to the Afghan Civil Society as well as the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) remain key priority areas of UNDP’s commitment and support to Afghanistan. UNDP-Afghanistan has established a strong relationship and network with civil society organizations at national and local level to promote their participation in various activities including on good governance, rule of law, and accountability and transparency.

UNDP Afghanistan signed and approved a Preparatory Assistance Project with a budget of US$290,000 for civil society empowerment in Afghanistan. The Project comprises several activities including consultations on the various pillars of the ANDS; focus group discussions on perceptions on corruption; pre-London questionnaire analysis and reporting; and support to civil society organizations to participate in strategic regional and international events.

The civil society consultations on the ANDS is implemented in partnership with Foundation for Culture and Civil Society in eight provinces including Kabul, Balkh, Baghlan, Herat, Faryab, Kandahar, Khosht, and Nangahar.

The programme also creates opportunities for numerous other civil society actors to actively take part in the consultative process. In designing the consultations action plan women’s and youth’s participation in the process was taken into account and various mechanisms were pinpointed upon which gender equality and broader democratic participation could be enriched. One of the main objectives of consultation process is to present to the Government of Afghanistan a strong document that highlight the recommendations of various civil society actors that should be accounted in the implementation of the National Development Strategy.

The first consultative meeting was organized in Kabul City on December 9th 2006 in the Foundation for Culture and Civil Society. The consultation was attended by a large number of influential and outspoken civil society activists. In the coming consultations civil society actors, both at national and provincial levels, will also carefully review and look into each pillar and cross cutting themes of the ANDS and will come up with further concrete recommendations. These recommendations will be incorporated in the development of a fully fledged and nationally owned ANDS. Consultations on the ANDS play an important role in ensuring public ownership and participation in the ANDS process.

UNDP-Afghanistan will continue its commitment to civil society empowerment through a small grants facility under the Accountability and Transparency (ACT) project. The grants will support civil society actors to play an effective role in ensuring transparent and accountable governance and a reliable private sector.
Switzerland Supports Civil Service Leadership Development Program in Afghanistan

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) has recently contributed US$ 740,000 to the Civil Service Leadership Development Program (CSLD) in Afghanistan. An agreement was signed between SDC and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Kabul which will cover the programme activities until December 2007.

The Civil Service Leadership Development Programme (CSLD) is a two and a half year programme launched and implemented by UNDP-Afghanistan in close collaboration with Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IAR CSC). It aims at strengthening the capacities of key civil servants (in priority of the national government institutions but also in provinces) in order to contribute to the establishment of a competent and effective civil service. The programme is part of a broader UNDP initiative to build a new training and development focus for Afghanistan, leading up to the establishment of a competent civil service.

The CSLD programme focuses on 550 top civil servants in the capital and in the provinces including Deputy Ministers, Heads of Department, senior and mid-level civil servants as well as emergent civil servants, with a potential to become future leaders within their respective institutions. It will provide the participants with an opportunity to learn and to work together on issues related to leadership and management of the civil service and to set a leadership agenda for implementing changes and reforms across the civil service.

One of the biggest challenges Afghanistan is currently facing is the Reform of its Public Administration System including the re-establishment of a modern and merit-based civil service.

For more information, visit: www.undp.org.af

Also visit: www.sdc.org.af

(UNDP is not responsible for the contents of external sources)
HIV is a virus that damages a person’s immune system, the body’s defense against disease. A person infected with HIV is infected for life – there is presently no cure. Being infected with HIV is often referred to as being HIV-positive. A person can be HIV-positive for a long period of time, several years, without any sign of disease. Over time, as the immune system weakens, a person with HIV may develop rare infections or cancers. When these are particularly serious, the person is said to have AIDS. HIV can only be passed on through the transfer of blood, semen and breast milk.

The two main ways in which a person can become infected are:

- sexual intercourse (without a condom) with an infected person
- using a needle or syringe that’s already been used by someone who’s infected

An infected pregnant woman can also pass the virus to her unborn baby, before or during the birth. Other potential routes of transmission include:

- Blood transfusion if the blood is not tested and significant amounts of HIV-infected blood pass from one person to another.
- Contact with used needles and syringes.
- Seeing a barber, dentist, doctor or nurse who do not use sterilised instruments.
- Kissing and giving/receiving oral sex if a person has cuts or sores in their mouth.

Fighting and biting:
There have been extremely few cases of infection in such cases. It’s important to emphasise that even though the risk of transmission through any of the above is small, it still remains and care should always be taken.

HIV isn’t passed on by:
- sharing crockery and cutlery
- touching, hugging or shaking hands
- using the same toilet, insect or animal bites.

Preventing HIV transmission:
There are several ways in which you can prevent HIV being passed on:
- using a condom during sexual intercourse using a clean needle every time if you inject drugs.

There are also a number of steps an HIV-positive woman can take to reduce the chance of passing on HIV to her child during pregnancy. These include:
- taking an anti-HIV drug towards the end of pregnancy and at the time of delivery.

- considering having a caesarean section delivery giving the baby formula milk instead of breast-feeding.

Who’s at risk?
You’re only at risk of HIV if you’re involved in a high-risk activity.

Initial signs and symptoms:
There are no immediate signs or symptoms after infection. Research has shown that after a few weeks some people experience flu-like symptoms, but these symptoms usually go undiagnosed. The only way to know if you are HIV-positive is to have a test.

Testing:
The HIV test looks for HIV antibodies in the blood. It normally takes three months for antibodies to develop, so if you have a test soon after possible infection, the result may be inaccurate. You’ll need to be tested again after three months to get a definite result.

Treatment:
There’s no cure for HIV, but there are a number of drugs that can help prevent someone who’s HIV-positive becoming ill.

Treatment consists of taking several drugs every day, which is known as combination therapy. These drugs aren’t a cure for HIV infection but they can increase enormously the life expectancy of someone with HIV. If the drugs aren’t taken correctly, the treatment will stop being so effective and the person may become ill.

Research continues around the world to develop a HIV vaccine. Great progress is being made, although it’s likely to be a number of years before such a treatment is widely available. Free HIV test in Voluntary Counseling and Test Centers (VCCT) in Kabul, Mazar-e-Sharif, Jalalabad, Heraat and Qandahar regions of Afghanistan are available.

For more information on HIV/AIDS, please visit: www.unaids.org
Overview of UNDP in Afghanistan

UNDP has been present in Afghanistan since 1956, providing development assistance to the country and helping build the capacity of national institutions. During the Taliban regime, UNDP continued to provide assistance to communities throughout the country from its relocated offices in Islamabad. During that decade, UNDP delivered US$200 million of assistance to Afghanistan. In early 2002, UNDP inaugurated its new office in Kabul.

The human development challenge for Afghanistan is enormous. According to Afghanistan's National Human Development Report (NHDR) 2004, the Human Development Index ranks Afghanistan at 173 out of 178 countries worldwide and its MDG indicators place it below the majority of Sub-Saharan African countries. The depth of poverty in Afghanistan is reflected consistently in all human development indicators, revealing a mosaic of a nation in need of sustained assistance. Not surprisingly, therefore, Afghanistan has been identified as a global priority for addressing the Millennium Development Goals.

Since the Bonn Agreement was signed in December 2001, UNDP has delivered more than US$1 billion of assistance to Afghanistan. In 2005, UNDP delivered USD 349 million of development assistance, mainly for elections, disarmament, reconstruction and institution building.

UNDP operates within the framework of the integrated United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) and within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). In December 2005, UNDP signed a three-year Country Programme Action Plan with the Government of Afghanistan focusing on three development areas: state-building, democracy and civil society empowerment and sustainable livelihoods. UNDP new Country Programme focuses on capacity development, national ownership and policy dialogue. UNDP aims to enhance government institutional capacity to deliver public services in an equitable and sustainable manner and to create an enabling environment for legitimate livelihoods.

The expected results are pursued in line with the Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) objectives and benchmarks. In particular, UNDP supports the Government in achieving a number of development benchmarks in the field of security and the rule of law, administrative reform, transparency and accountability, local governance, political processes (elections and parliament), civil society empowerment, gender equality, human rights, environment and rural energy, the reintegration of former combatants into society, the implementation of the national counter-narcotics strategy, as well as rural development planning and private sector development.

All UNDP activities are undertaken in close collaboration with the Government of Afghanistan, sister UN agencies and other development stakeholders.

UNDP has built strategic partnerships with a number of government institutions such as the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry for Rural Rehabilitation and Development, the Ministry of Interior, the Civil Service Commission, the Independent Election Commission, the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission and the Ministry of Women’s Affairs. UNDP’s top ten donor partners in Afghanistan are the US, the EC, Japan, CIDA, UK, Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Norway and the World Bank. Between 2002 and 2006, UNDP mobilized more than 1.3 billion.

UNDP is thankful for the support and confidence lent by its national and international development partners.

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