



UNDP Afghanistan Newsletter

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1400 houses to be built for landless IDPs and returnees in Kabul

The Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Government of Australia and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) officially launched the 'Alice-Ghan project' through an official signing ceremony held on September 28, 2006 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). The project, Alice-Ghan, will construct a housing settlement of approximately 1,400 houses for landless Afghan returnees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Barikab area, to the north of Kabul. This project will be implemented in accordance with Presidential Decree No. 104 on Land Distribution for Housing for Eligible Returnees and IDPs.

In his remarks at the project's signing ceremony H.E Engineer



*H.E Engineer Yusuf Pashtoon
Minister of Urban Development*

Yusuf Pashtoon, Minister of Urban Development and Housing, said: "The name Alice-Ghan has a profound historical background. Alice is a



city in central Australia where a large number of Afghans live since 150 years. Afghans played a crucial role in the construction of railways in Australia. I am optimistic that the Australian support will generously contribute to the construction and thereafter the expansion of Alice-Ghan settlement. I express my sincere gratitude to the Australian government for funding this project. I also extend my sincere appreciations to UNDP for helping us implement this very important project."

The Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, and the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriates have played a leading role on the design of the scheme – supported by UNDP and the Australian Government Ministry for Immigration and Multi-Cultural Affairs.

Signing the project documents H.E Mr. Mohammad Akbar, Minister of Refugees and Returnees said: "Alice-Ghan is a clear indication of our commitment in providing shelter

and protection for all landless Afghan returnees. The government plans to build 49 similar settlements in 29 provinces of the country."

The Alice-Ghan project is funded by the Government of Australia through a contribution of USD 7.3 million. The objective is to support peace and stability in Afghanistan by promoting the sustainable return and reintegration of hundreds of landless refugees. Speaking to the participant of the ceremony H.E. Brett Hackett, Ambassador Designate Embassy of Australia in Kabul, said: "The Alice-Ghan project is both important and unique. We all have a stake in its success, and with our partners in the Afghan Government and the UN, we will make it a success – the people of Afghanistan deserve nothing less. The project can be a model for others to emulate and for this reason the Australian Government will continue to follow the development of Alice-Ghan closely. I would like to congratulate all parties concerned and thank them for

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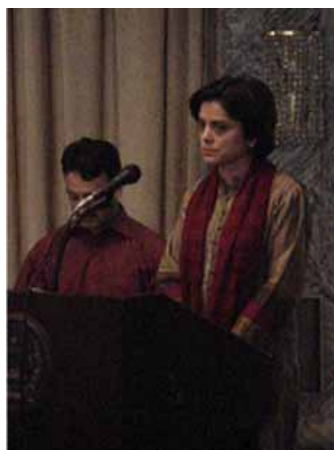


H.E. Brett Hackett, Ambassador Designate Embassy of Australia

their hard work and support which has led us to today's signing ceremony. It is an important step, but it is not only a step in brining project to life."

The UNDP Country Office in Afghanistan has been assigned by the two governments to manage the project. The project is vitally important for addressing issues of urban poverty reduction – a target of the Millennium Development Goals

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to which Afghanistan is now a signatory. In her remarks to the ceremony the UNDP Country Director in Afghanistan Anita Nirody said: "The repatriation of Afghan refugees has been an issue high on the agenda of the Government of Afghanistan, with more than 4.7



Anita Nirody, Country Director UNDP Afghanistan

million refugees and internally displaced persons having returned to Afghanistan since November 2001. Another

600,000 people are expected to return in 2006." The UNDP Country Director further emphasised that: "The settlement of these people represents an enormous challenge to the Government. Addressing the issues of resettlement for Afghanistan is crucial to enable the country to meet the human security targets reflected in its overall national development strategy as well as its Millennium development targets."

There are several significant aspects of this project:

1. The role that the refugee and IDPs are expected to play in the building of the houses. Each household will receive all necessary materials, skills training and technical supervision to facilitate the housing construction;
2. The project is about building a sustainable community, not merely a physical settlement – so there will be an emphasis

on community planning, enterprise and development;

3. Infrastructure and services are part of the project. Therefore, an important element is the provision of water sources, a school, health/community centre;

All houses will be constructed to earthquake standards – with UN specialist agencies UNHCR and UN-HABITAT being involved at key stages of the project evolution.

The Government of Afghanistan, The Government of Australia and the participating UN agencies have all worked collaboratively in the design of the project to ensure that it is capable of being replicated across the country. This has remained an objective since the housing needs of Afghanistan remain a significant challenge.

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Three other Counter Narcotics Projects are to be implemented in 12 provinces

The Minister of Counter Narcotics (MCN), H.E. Habibullah Qaderi, and the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation (MAI), H.E. Obaidullah Ramin, signed three Counter Narcotics Projects to be implemented in 12 provinces of Afghanistan.

An amount of US\$ 655,004 has been allocated to the Honey Bee Project in Kunar, Kandahar, Nooristan, Nangarhar and Paktya provinces, employing 400 local workers. This project will also contribute to the

modernization of honey bee research laboratories.

A total of US\$ 1,207,962 has been allocated for the implementation of a Gardens, Forests and Small Dams Project in 11 districts of Nangarhar province. In addition to creating considerable employment opportunities for local inhabitants, this project will help provide support for many farmers in the targeted areas, for activities to increase their agricultural production.

The Silk Worm Project will receive US\$ 507,401 for activities in Herat, Jowzjan, Saripol, Balkh, Samangan,



H.E. Minister. Qaderi and H.E Minister Ramin shake hands after signing the project documents

Baghlan and Kunduz provinces. The project also aims to renovate the Silk Worm component of Pelawari Farm, in

the Darul Aman area of Kabul.

These three projects, costing US\$ 2,330,367 in total, will be implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MAI) in line with the Afghanistan National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS).

The Trust Fund builds upon the NDCS which identifies eight pillars for intervention, namely:

1. Alternative Livelihoods
2. Building Institutions
3. Public Awareness
4. Law Enforcement
5. Criminal Justice
6. Eradication
7. Drug Demand Reduction and Treatment of Drug Addicts
8. International and Regional Co-operation

The project eligibility criteria are based on these 8 pillars. When assessing a project for funding

some general criteria are also taken into consideration. These include the geographical location; absorption capacity of the line ministries/agencies; and whether or not CN is mainstreamed in the project. The CNTF is executed through the National Execution (NEX) modality; hence the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan retains the overall responsibility for the nationally managed programme through its designated institutions – the Ministries of Finance and Counter Narcotics. The line ministries as the implementing partners of the Trust Fund work closely with the MCN to identify develop and propose counter narcotics related projects within their mandated area.

Achievements

- The Terms of Reference for

the Trust Fund were in May 2005. The Programme Document was signed by the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Counter Narcotics and UNDP Country Director on 29 October 2005. Thus the CNTF programme has officially been established and this allows UNDP to receive donor contributions and also release funding to approved projects.

- A Trust Fund Manager was recruited end of August 2005 and works with both the MCN and UNDP on CNTF matters.

- Two Management Board (“the Board”) meetings have been held and one project for three Micro Hydroelectric generators has been approved.

- Australia made the first contribution of US\$1,526,718 in June 2005, followed by New Zealand

in October 2005 with US\$352,609. In December, the European Commission (EC) signed a Contribution Agreement of 15 million Euros and Estonia granted US\$50,000. In March 2006, the United Kingdom donated US\$15,652,173 and Canada US\$1,052,632. Also, the UNDP has given from its core resources US\$400,000 to support this programme and build capacity. By the end of the first quarter of 2006, there was US\$33,151,779 deposited with the CNTF to support Counter Narcotic activities.

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UNDP We Care Team Launched Second Round of Awareness Raising and Information Dissemination on the Basics of HIV/AIDS for the Staff Members

The We Care Team of UNDP Country Office in Afghanistan recently launched the second round of training in order to ensure that every staff member, at every level allocate some time for upgrading their basic awareness on of HIV/AIDS.

In accordance to the work plan and the Term of References (TORs) set out last year, We Care Team conducted the first round of awareness raising activities on the basics of HIV/AIDS for the UNDP staff. The trainings proved to be useful in terms of sensitization and information dissemination on the basics of HIV/AIDS not only for the staff, but for their dependents and

family members as well.

Staff members were organized into different groups of male national, female national, and internationals to ensure that every staff member has the opportunity to raise questions and discuss issues and concerns in an open and participatory manner. The training was complemented by the distribution of booklets (English, Pashto, and Dari), pamphlets and posters containing important information on HIV/AIDS.

The staff attendance was high which clearly indicates their interest in learning on how to protect themselves and their family against HIV/AIDS, and individually contribute to the wider efforts for their preventing the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in



Participants at UNDP We Care Team HIV/AIDS Awareness Course

the workplace and in communities at large. Participants in the training engaged in fruitful dialogue and actively participated in the Questions and Answers segment of the session. Staff members expressed their satisfaction with the way their understanding of

HIV/AIDS was refreshed, meanwhile they committed themselves to share the information family members, friends and colleagues, and showed willingness in referring to We Care Team members if the need for further counseling and advice arises.

UNDP Country Office in Afghanistan, as Country Offices around the world, established a "We Care Team" in April 2005. The members of the team work actively on a voluntary basis to serve as resource persons to facilitate testing, treatment and counseling. The main objectives are to sensitize and advise staff

on transmission modes and treatment of this pandemic.

The We Care Team provides basic information on ways to prevent the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, and reduce stigma and discrimination in the workplace among the staff against PLWH (People Living with

HIV/AIDS).

Last but not least, it is worth mentioning that the We Care Team receives full support and commitment of UNDP Senior Management and the team is planning to broaden its mandate and scope to conduct similar trainings and information dis-

semination sessions for UNDP projects as well as regional and provincial offices.

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The Counter Narcotics Trust Fund contributed US\$ 945,000 for two new

Two alternative livelihood projects have been approved for Saripol and Nangarhar provinces providing short term employment opportunities (78,642 labor days) for the local communities.

The agreements to implement these projects were signed between the deputy ministers of the Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN), the Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW) and the Ministry of Public Works (MPW). Funding for both projects, US\$ 945,000, will be provided from the Counter Narcotics Trust Fund (CNTF).

In the Balkhab district of Saripol province, a rural road, including its culverts and bridges, will be rehabilitated by MPW. The



project will be implemented in a five-month period, for a total cost of US\$ 648,513. The rehabilitated road will benefit around 15,000 people in 15 districts.

In the Achin, Pacheragam, Chaperhar and Dehbala districts of Nangarhar province, US\$ 296,919 will fund the construction of retaining walls. The Retaining Walls will protect existing arable lands from flooding, bringing additional land

under cultivation and control irrigation. The project will be implemented by MEW in the next five months.

The CNTF was officially established on 29 October 2005 by the GoA and UNDP to support the Government of Afghanistan to implement its National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS) to fight poppy production and drug trade. The key principles that govern the Trust Fund are:

- Providing additional resources for the Government's counter narcotics efforts through the national development budget.
- Ensuring transparency and accountability in the allocation

of those resources.

- Enabling the Government to have greater ownership over implementation of its counter narcotic strategy. Promoting greater coherence in the funding of counter narcotics related activities.

The CNTF receives funds from various donors and is managed by UNDP. Counter Narcotics projects are to be assessed by a Joint UNDP and MCN Board that approves project proposals from various government institutions. Once a counter narcotics project is approved, project documents will be signed between relevant ministries. The Ministry of Finance (MoF) will then disburse allocated funds for the

Over 60 Female trainees for ex-combatants graduated from UNDP/ANBP courses

Sixty One (61) women trainees from the ex-combatant communities graduated from a Teacher Training Certification Programme in a ceremony held at the Teacher Training Certification Centre in Kart-e-Char, Kabul.

The Teacher Training Certification Programme started in June 2006 and ended on 15 September 2006 after completion of a curriculum

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developed by the Ministry of Education. In total, 335 women are targeted country wide. They are intended to complete a five-month training to be consequently able to teach primary classes at different schools in their respective provinces.

This programme is one of the reintegration options given to ex-combatants after the completion of Disarmament and Demobilization as part of DDR programme.

The completion of the reintegration phase of DDR by June 30th 2006 has marked the end of

Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration process in Afghanistan. To date, 24,536 women related to the ex-combatant community have received or are scheduled to receive additional education and income generation opportunities through development projects. In another development, ANBP has signed a Letter of Intent with the World Food Programme (WFP) to facilitate the inclusion of 4,455 women from the ex-combatant community in WFP-related projects from 2006 to 2010.

The teacher Training Certifica-

tion Programme is directly supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and in full coordination and cooperation with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA).



Student receiving certificate



UNDP is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life.

Overview of UNDP in Afghanistan

UNDP has been present in Afghanistan since the 1950s, providing development assistance to the country and helping build the capacity of many national institutions. During the 1990s, while many government institutions were jeopardized by civil war and neglected by the Taliban regime, UNDP continued to assist communities throughout the country. During that decade, UNDP delivered US\$200 million of assistance to Afghanistan, using its own resources as well as those mobilized through bilateral partners and its extensive outreach throughout the country.

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 are below the majority of Sub-Saharan African countries. There are only two countries with lower poverty indices than Afghanistan, where the majority of the population lives below the poverty line – 70 percent. The percentage of Afghans with access to safe drinking water source is one of the lowest in the world – 23 percent – while just 12 percent of the population have access to adequate sanitation. As a result, preventable diseases remain prevalent.

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\$600 million of assistance to Afghanistan.

Within Afghanistan's broad National Development Framework (NDF) are many cross-cutting priorities that address gender equality, security and the rule of law, administrative and financial reforms, human rights, environmental integrity, the return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their communities, and reintegration of former combatants into society. Guided by the requirements set forth in the NDF, UNDP Afghanistan focuses its activities on the following UNDP global practice areas: poverty reduction, democratic governance, and crisis prevention and recovery.

All UNDP activities are undertaken in close collaboration with the Government of Afghanistan, UN agencies and donors. All UNDP programme activities aim to consolidate peace, enhance security and promote respect for the rule of law. UNDP projects also enhance government institutional capacity to provide public services and to create an enabling environment for legitimate livelihoods. UNDP works collaboratively with all partners to empower Afghan women and promote gender equality in Afghanistan, ensuring that gender issues are consistently mainstreamed and carefully paced.

The UNDP Afghanistan programme remains responsive to the changing needs of a nation still in transition from conflict to peace. Afghanistan is at a crucial point in moving from state building initiatives to emerging as a newly democratic state, and the opportunity to shift focus to longer term development and government support is at hand. Accordingly, the UNDP Afghanistan programme of activities is organized thematically into three pillars: State-Building & Government Support, Democratization & Civil Society Empowerment, and Promotion of Sustainable Livelihoods.

As UNDP develops and implements its regular Country Programme in Afghanistan, a major focus on results-based management will remain. Future activities concentrate on institutionalizing accountability, transparency and integrity in the public service, continuing to strengthen democracy and democratic institutions such as the Constitution of Afghanistan, and further promoting access to and respect for justice and human rights for all Afghan citizens.

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