



# UNDP-Afghanistan Newsletter

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## NEWS

### **1. National Human Development Report launched**

Afghanistan's first National Human Development Report, *Security with a Human Face*, was launched on 21 February at the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul. Over 250 people attended the ceremony, which was chaired by Fakhruddin Azizi and Marzia Zafarzada and included speeches by H.E. Haneef Atmar, Minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development; UNDP Associate Administrator Zephirin Diabré, Canadian Ambassador Christopher Alexander, UNDP Resident Representative Ameerah Haq, and World Bank Country Director Alistair McKechnie. The NHDR was initiated in 2003 by the Government of Afghanistan and UNDP. Its conclusions rank Afghanistan 173rd out of 178 countries surveyed in terms of human development, and identifies jobs, health, education and dignity as crucial elements in warding off Afghanistan's potential descent into the category of a failed state. For more information, please visit the NHDR's website: <http://www.undp.org.af/NHDR04.htm>

### **2. UNDP Associate Administrator Zephirin Diabré visits Kabul**

UNDP Associate Administrator Zephirin Diabré visited Kabul from 20-23 February to support the launch of Afghanistan's first NHDR. Besides speaking at the NHDR's launch ceremony on the 21<sup>st</sup>, Mr. Diabré met with UNDP staff, President Karzai, UN Heads of Agencies, the SRSG, key donors and government ministers. He also visited a DDR reintegration site for ex-combatants.

### **3. Anti-corruption mission visits Afghanistan**

A two-person team is in Afghanistan for twelve days to assess the government's vulnerabilities to corruption in Afghanistan. Mr. Keith Henderson, from the United States, and Ms. Koechlin Jappert Lucy, from Switzerland, will be speaking with government ministers, key donors, civil servants, NGOs and other key actors to produce a preliminary assessment of the scope of corruption in the civil sector in Afghanistan. The mission is here at the request of the government, and aims to produce a preliminary framework for long-term measures required to improve accountability, transparency and integrity in public service in Afghanistan. This assessment will inform the government's future decisions and provide the basis for effective interventions on targeting corruption.

### **4. UNDP develops country programme**

UNDP Afghanistan conducted a strategic retreat on 15-17 February at the UNOCA compound to begin formulating the new UNDP Country Programme for 2006-2008. A number of guest speakers were invited, including Haneef Atmar, Minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, and Karl Harbo, from the European Commission. UNDP staff discussed what the programme's strategic focus should be and what challenges they will face in the future. The discussions held at the retreat are a seed for the Country Programme document, which will be submitted to the Executive Board of UNDP in September 2005.

To participate in the retreat and help formulate the draft Country Programme, Omar Noman, Senior Advisor to UNDP Deputy Administrator Hafeez Pasha, Taimur Khilji and John Oshima from UNDP's Asia Pacific Bureau in New York visited Kabul for a period of two weeks.

## **5. MRRD Initiates Alternative Livelihood Planning for Ministry Officials**

The Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) organized a planning workshop from 13-16 February on the issue of counter-narcotics and alternative livelihoods, with assistance from UNDP's National Area-Based Development Programme (NABDP). The workshop was designed to train key government staff with the skills essential for leading participatory and constructive interactions with local people on issues surrounding poppy cultivation.

More than fifty government staff from the Ministries of Public Works, Rural Rehabilitation & Development and Agriculture participated in the workshop. After completing the training, the participants will be divided into teams and visit those districts throughout the country that have particularly high rates of poppy cultivation. Each team will consist of four people, and will spend 2-3 weeks conducting preliminary needs assessments and discussions with provincial authorities and communities to identify those alternative livelihood projects that need immediate support.

## **6. UNDP builds new partnerships for Parliament, DDR and Justice**

UNDP is solidifying three partnerships in its support to the Afghan government in bringing about peace and stability in the country. In support to the establishment and functioning of the Afghan legislature, UNDP entered into an agreement with the Government of France and the Afghan Civil Service Commission that will ensure that the incoming parliament is given proper support to do its work. To help increase access to justice for Afghans, the European Commission signed an initiative with UNDP to strengthen judicial institutions at the district level. And the Japanese Government has committed to contributing an additional \$28.85 million toward the reintegration activities of Afghanistan's New Beginnings Programme.

## **7. AIMS provides support to the MRRD**

The AIMS Jalalabad office is building capacity in the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation by providing office equipment and skills training in computers and English. After the eleven staff members enrolled complete these courses, they will receive database and Geographic Information Systems training. Upon the request of H.E. Haneef Atmar, Minister of MRRD, AIMS is also now conducting a rapid assessment of MRRD's information management needs. This report will provide a strategic guideline for developing a comprehensive information management and geographic information system unit in the ministry.

## **3. New staff join UNDP-Afghanistan**

A number of new staff members have joined UNDP-Afghanistan over the past month:

**Frederick Lyons** has become the new Country Director. Mr. Lyons has worked for UNDP for over thirty years in a wide range of countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean. Three assignments have been to UNDP headquarters in

NY. He is fully fluent in English, French and Spanish, and also speaks some Russian. He studied politics, philosophy and economics at Oxford, and has been serving as the Resident Coordinator and Representative in Iran since 2003.

**Zohra Farokhi** joins the Programme Unit as the Secretary to the Country Director. She completed high school and English classes in Islamabad and has worked in administrative positions with the International Foundation of Hope, Tearfund, the Woman's Association for Reconstruction Construction and Afghanistan, and UNDP's Voter Registration and Elections Projects.

**Ahmad Naseer Durrani** has joined the Democratization & Civil Society Empowerment Unit as Programme Secretary. Mr. Durrani studied political science and internet technology in Pakistan, and previously worked as an Administrative Assistant in the Ministry of Public Health.

**Thusitha D.Pilapitiya** has joined the Democratization & Civil Society Empowerment Unit as a consultant on the new project "Support to the Establishment of the Afghan Legislature." Ms. Pilapitiya has fourteen years of experience in the design and management of democracy and governance programmes, and has worked extensively with UNDP, the World Bank and USAID. She studied international development, international relations and law, and has worked in Sri Lanka, Cambodia, the United Arab Emirates, Japan and the United States.

**Younus Payab** has joined the State Building & Government Support Unit as a Programme Officer working on the Counter-Narcotics Trust Fund and LOTFA. Mr. Payab was educated in engineering and general management, and has worked for the Ministry of Water and Power and the Farhah Reconstruction Foundation. He has worked for the UN for the past five years, as Deputy Regional Coordination Officer, Deputy Area Coordinator and Programme Officer for UNAMA.

**Feroza Ibrahim** joined the State Building & Government Support Unit as Programme Secretary. She completed the 12<sup>th</sup> grade in Peshawar, along with English and computer courses. She has previously worked as a Secretary and Gender Coordinator for several NGOs in Peshawar, as well as working for UNOPS in Jalalabad as a Secretary and Office Assistant.

## **NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

UNDP's report on the Voter Registration and Elections process has been completed. Please see Sarah Hegland if you are interested in a copy.

Please see Fakhruddin Azizi if you are interested in a copy of the National Human Development Report.

To make a submission to the next newsletter, please e-mail [gary.holub@undp.org](mailto:gary.holub@undp.org)