NEWS

We Care – HIV policy arrives at UNDP Afghanistan
From April 17 – 20, UNDP Afghanistan hosted an implementation team, Sheba Phurailatpam and Manoj Pardesi, from UNDP’s We Care initiative. We Care is a global programme that offers HIV and AIDS awareness workshops; bringing information about the virus, methods of protection, treatment options and general advice. We Care is designed specifically to inform and protect UNDP staff members from taking unnecessary physical risks in the line of duty while serving abroad and frequently travelling.

While the initiative is primarily aimed at UNDP staff and their families, its broader objective is to develop an understanding among international and local UN staff about the present health risks and realities of the countries where they serve. Facilitating dialogue and awareness about HIV/AIDS among UN colleagues helps to support a broader base of awareness in the country and, in turn, helps to support the establishment of legislation, policy measures and community initiatives that prevent stigma and discrimination.

The presence of HIV/AIDS and prevention awareness are nascent concepts in Afghanistan. Conservative social and religious attitudes prevail and bridging the information caveat has proven challenging. Nonetheless, the importance of raising the issue cannot be underestimated. We Care implementation teams work very carefully with local audiences to address some of the myths surrounding the virus and its transmission, the realities of infection and the need for prevention.

Government of Australia puts AU$1 million forward for support to Civil Service Leadership training
With the support of the Government of Australia, UNDP Afghanistan has begun the implementation of a Leadership Development Strategy to support the Afghan Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC). The project is aimed at identifying and addressing significant gaps in leadership that currently exist at the senior management levels of the Afghan civil service. Developed and approved by the IARCSC, the Leadership Development Strategy offers streams of senior level development training, which include Career Development as well as External Development training programmes.

As a component of the larger UNDP project “Support to IARCSC – Training and Development”, a detailed Training and Development framework was formulated to help identify and assess leadership competencies. Already applied to a group of senior managers in Kabul in April, the IARCSC using the training/development framework across the country in a series of regional Training Needs Assessments. The initial target group of senior Afghan managers helped to identify the precise development needs that will be addressed by the strategy – and now they will embark on the leadership development training.
The IARCSC is the Afghan institution responsible for strengthening the machinery of government. By focusing on the efficiency and competencies of civil service leadership, the IARCSC expects to achieve three objectives: i) to establish a civil service that can effectively implement the Government’s vision for national reconstruction and development; ii) to reform and nurture a new public administration and service culture; and iii) to create a network of leaders to facilitate further cooperation between ministries and promote excellence.

The total budget for the project implementation is US$3.3 million. UNDP contributed US$450,000 of its core funds while the Government of Australia has committed AU$1,000,000, or approximately three quarters of US$1 million.

**UNDP assists in flood prevention at Chak-e Wardak Dam**

April 2005—As the heavy snowfalls of winter melted into spring, potential disaster lay await in Wardak Valley where an antiquated, badly maintained dam almost broke its banks. Chak-e Wardak Dam lies at the top of a deep valley extending from Wardak to Loghar; countless villages are situated in the valley floor, each vulnerable to the impending floodwaters. Constructed prior to WWI and the oldest dam in Afghanistan, Chak-e Wardak Dam had been poorly maintained. The rusted main gates, and even the safety gate, were jammed shut and impossible to lift, thereby preventing the water to flow through. Surplus water was crossing over the top of the gates causing a pressure that was soon to make the entire dam structure break.

UNDP, the Afghan Emergency Trust Fund, and the Ministry of Energy and Water, took emergency action to address the threat. The co-operative effort saw a rapid response through immediate financing, planning and implementation of a 16-metre ancillary gate that could hold the water whilst the rusted gates were opened. As the waterflow came under control, the pressure was eased off the dam structure and the risk of flooding ceased. Villagers who had evacuated themselves in fear of the floods, returned to their homes and farms.

The entire cost of the project was US$18,000, a small amount of money that had untold affect on the lives and livelihoods of Wardak residents. Central to the success of this project was the timely co-operation of all participants: UNDP, AETF and the Ministry of Energy and Water.

**Government of Australia puts AU$2 million forward for support to the Elections**

The Australian Government recently committed AU$2 million to Phase II of the Afghan Elections Project. The duration of Phase II is from 1 January to 31 December 2005. The overall objective of Phase II is to facilitate “accepted and legitimate elections” that will take place in Afghanistan in 2005, and the “creation of a durable foundation for the national government of accepted and legitimate elections in the future.”

These elections will build on the success of the 2004 Presidential elections and mark a vital step in the establishment of a fully representative government for Afghanistan as outlined in the Bonn Agreement. The estimated budget for the parliamentary elections is US$148.6 million.

**AIMS Technology Awareness Workshop at Ministry of Mines and Industries**

On 13th April, AIMS organized a Technology Awareness workshop at the Ministry of Mines and Industries. The main focus of this workshop was to provide awareness on geo-spatial technology to 25 senior staff of the ministry. The senior officials are required to master the use of information technology in their daily work, and must also be aware of, and address, new challenges. Therefore the workshop had three objectives:

- To enable high officials in the Ministry of Mines and Industries to acquire an overview on GIS, GPS and RS technology.
- To raise awareness and understanding of GIS, GPS and remote sensing technology for planning and monitoring activities.
- Introduction of database, and its application in decisions making process.

During this workshop presenters from GIS, Database, Government Service, and Remote Sensing Departments are presenting their activities and showing practically how do they manage Information and
deliver necessary geographical services to the Ministries, and it would encourage the senior management team of the Ministry about understanding the benefits of using advanced technology in the future.

**Over 200 justice sector staff gather to debate challenges and solutions**

From 10 to 12 April, the Ministry of Justice hosted a seminar on the current justice system. Over 200 justice sector staff from around Afghanistan participated with the aim to discuss and exchange views on current justice sector activities, challenges and solutions. The discussion included topics such as the UNDP-funded Priority Reform and Restructuring (PRR) programme, provincialization, and law reform among others.

UNDP’s Justice Programme funded this seminar as part of its efforts to strengthen Afghanistan’s justice system, under the project “Rebuilding the Justice Sector in Afghanistan” (RJSA). The event was hosted by H.E. Sarwar Danish, Minister of Justice. It saw the participation of H.E. Mawlana Fazl Hadi Shinwari, Chief Justice and Director General of the Supreme Court; H.E. Masooda Jalal, Minister for Women Affairs; representatives from the justice institutions and law faculties; and H.E. Yolanda Brunetti, Special Coordinator of the Justice Lead of the Government of Italy.

**Ministry of Justice embarks on PRR reform process**

On 26 April, the Ministry of Justice received approval for Phase II of the Priority Reform and Restructuring (PRR) programme for eight of its departments. The purpose of PRR is to assist ministries and agencies through a reform process, promoting institutions that are clean, efficient, and able to deliver good services to the public. It will promote the appointment of competent and experienced professionals, while at the same time provide training and scope for improvement for all employees.

The eight departments will hire a total of 1,498 positions, for which some 10,000 applications are expected. The recruitment process, which is open to current employees and external candidates, will include written tests and interviews. Current employees who lose their jobs as a result of PRR, will continue to receive a salary for up to 24 months while they seek a new job, and will also be offered training opportunities. A UNDP National Institutional Development Specialist, Fakhria Assad, will advise the Task Force through this task.

**Law students take part in major international legal competition**

On 6 April, the four Afghan Law students who participated in the *Philip C. Jessup Moot Court Competition*, Fakhria, Masoud, Zemar and Edrees, returned from Washington DC. They did not make it to the final rounds against the world's top universities. However, UNDP Justice Programme Manager Siphosami Malunga, who accompanied them, reports that they did phenomenally well, and believes Afghans should be proud of them.

The Afghan team pleaded against India, Poland, Malaysia, and Japan. Their very presence at the competition is viewed as a success. UNDP’s Justice Programme has supported and sponsored their participation in the competition as part of its legal education reform efforts. The project “Rebuilding the Justice Sector in Afghanistan” (RJSA) aims to rebuild and strengthen Afghan Justice institutions, to develop Afghan law faculties, and enhance overall access to justice in the country. The project’s major donors are Italy, Canada, and the UK.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan nominates former Turkish Finance Minister Kemal Dervis to head UNDP

United Nations, 26 April 2005—Secretary-General Kofi Annan submitted the name of Kemal Dervis as his preferred candidate for the post of UNDP Administrator.

Mr. Dervis, 56, served for two years as Turkey’s Finance Minister following his 22-year tenure at the World Bank, where he was both Vice President for Middle East and North Africa and Vice President for Poverty Reduction and Economic Management. He also led the World Bank’s reconstruction efforts in war-torn Bosnia after the Dayton peace accords.
The Secretary-General said at the outset of his search for a new UNDP Administrator three months ago that he was seeking a leader with first-hand development experience, either in a major development institution or in the government of a developing country. Thus, Mr. Dervis would become the first Administrator from a UNDP programme country rather than from a donor nation. The current incumbent, Mr. Malloch Brown, is a British citizen, and his five predecessors in the job were Americans.

Mr. Dervis, a widely published economist and recognized expert on global economic governance, is credited with leading Turkey out of its worst economic crisis while serving as Turkey’s Minister for Economic Affairs and the Treasury from 2001 to 2002. His reform policies put an end to a prolonged recession and triple-digit inflation, putting Turkey on a path towards sustained growth and building the economic foundation of its eligibility for membership in the European Union.

The new Administrator of UNDP is expected to take office before the annual fall meeting of the General Assembly.

UPCOMING EVENTS

GIS services make their mark on the map
Since 2002, Afghanistan Information Management Service (AIMS) has been working in Afghanistan to build GIS capacity in Afghan governmental departments. Geographic Information System (GIS) maps are widely used by various UN, humanitarian agencies and government institutions for reconstruction, development and re-building of Afghanistan. In order to exchange ideas amongst users, the first GIS User Group meeting in Afghanistan will take place on 2 May 2005, in Kabul. The main focus is to bring GIS technology users together in Afghanistan to discuss various technical issues in relation to GIS mapping technology.

The renewed focus on government activities enabled AIMS to build greater level of confidence and cooperation with partners. Although the volume of delivery is high, the quality of the services and products is a primary concern of AIMS. Poised to expand again in 2005, AIMS is ready to make an even larger impact on information management in the government. Since inception of the project, AIMS has trained 248 Afghan nationals in GIS. Most of them are from government ministries and departments.

For more information, please contact:
Golam Monowar Kamal, golam.kamal@aims.org.af

Democratic governance needs assessment: Mazar-e-Sharif
In response to the growing need to build and improve the competencies of civil servants in the provinces, municipalities and districts, the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC) is collaborating with the UNDP to conduct a series of regional Training Needs Assessment (TNA) workshops across the country throughout the spring of 2005.

Receiving support and technical assistance from UNDP, the Training and Development Department of the IARCSC is conducting the second TNA workshop for sub-national civil servants in Mazar-e-Sharif from 9 to 11 May. The workshop is specifically designed to strategize and focus on the immediate needs for sub-national training and capacity building.

The workshops are attended by senior provincial administrators, district administrators, heads of line ministries, provincial directors and selected mid-level staff from provinces and districts. A total of 105 participants from Balkh, Samangan, Jozjan, Saripul and Fariab provinces will attend the Mazar-e-Sharif installment. The workshop focuses on gathering data on the administrative functions and procedures, identifying competency and capacity levels of civil servants of different grades and categories and assessing their training needs at the sub-national level.

For more information about the TNA workshop series, please contact:
Anna Lappay, anna.lappay@undp.org 079 440 398
NEW STAFF

Moses Kibirige (Uganda) has joined UNDP Justice Programme as Graphic Designer and Materials Development Coordinator. He comes from JEMB and spent two years in Afghanistan, prior to which he was in East Timor.
moses.kibirige@undp.org
Tel 070 152 759

Emma Sutcliffe (New Zealand) joins the UNDP Country Programme Office as Communications Associate. Emma has been with Aïna for the last six months, prior to which she worked in various countries as a PR and media consultant.
emma.sutcliffe@undp.org
Tel 070 152 874

Yukari Ota (Japan) has joined UNDP as Programme Officer for the UNDP Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration programme. She joins us after serving as a field programme officer with DDR in Mazar-i-Sharif for the past five months.
yukari.ota@undp.org

To make a submission to the next newsletter, please e-mail gary.holub@undp.org