



# UNDP Afghanistan Newsletter

02 April 2006

**“This training will help them effectively report the news from the National Assembly to the people”**

**Tahera Shairzay**

The SEAL project (Support to Establishment of Afghan Legislature) is supported by France, Denmark, EC, CIDA, GTZ and Italy.

**Inside this issue:**

- Afghan civil servants receive leadership training **2**
- DIAG moves forward full steam **2**
- Hi-Tech geographical training **3**
- From Nepal to Afghanistan **4**
- Development fellowships **4**
- ANBP staff benefit from project management training course **5**
- US\$ 13.5m from CIDA **5**
- Calendar of events for the month of April **6**

## Training for National Assembly journalists

More than 50 journalists accredited to the National Assembly attended a two day seminar organised by the SEAL project (Support to Establishment of Afghan Legislature) in a major effort to empower journalists to comprehensively report the legislative programme to the population.

National and international experts took part in the March 28-31 seminar and discussed issues surrounding the language, ethics, functionality and importance of parliamentary journalism.

Two days were devoted to journalism training and a third day to training staff from the Department of Information and Public Relations of the National Assembly.

Discussions at the seminar also focused on the functioning of the legislature and the importance of the public's participation in the legislative process through the media.

For the National Assembly staff issues covered included

how to write a press release, preparing for press conferences and giving interviews.

Speaking at the opening of the seminar Anita Nirody, UNDP Acting Country Director, said: "As Afghanistan also begins to take steps on the path to a stable and functioning, full-fledged democracy, it is only natural that the media should be empowered to perform its task of observing the governing structures to ensure that the public good is the main concern for all of them, before the political and personal interests of those at the helm."

Speakers and trainers included Tahera Shairzay, General Director of Information and Public Relations, National Assembly of Afghanistan; Peter Lunding, SEAL Technical Adviser; Maseeh Rahman (India), trainer; Bjarke Larsen (Denmark), trainer; Cem Rifat Sey (German), trainer; and Adrienne Woltersdorf (German), trainer.



*The Wolesi Jirga of the National Assembly*

Tahera Shairzay said: "Journalists reporting the National Assembly had lots of problems in reflecting the true picture of parliamentary proceedings. One of the problems they had was a lack of knowledge on the proceedings and the terminologies that were used during the assembly sessions. This training will help them effectively report the news from the National Assembly to the people."

One journalist at the training, Zulmai Ahadi, from Bakhabar Studio, part of Salaam Watar Radio which broadcasts nationwide, said: "Most of the journalists don't know about parliament and the proceedings. This training will help us raise questions and get information about the assembly, the rules and the regulations of its operations."

The SEAL project of the UNDP supports the laying of the groundwork for the functioning of the Afghan parliament in a democratic fashion.



*Tahera Shairzay General Director of Information and Public Relations, National Assembly of Afghanistan*

## Afghan civil servants receive leadership training

**The two and a half year project will target civil servants at three different levels, including younger staff that show potential for future development.**

A major long term training programme for 550 civil servants is underway.

Civil servants will receive training to give them adequate skills in a bid to consolidate the implementation of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS).

The programme, launched with a ceremony on April 1, is part of the support to capacity building in public administration, UNDP's Civil Service Leadership Development Project (CSLD).

The two and a half year project will target civil servants at three different levels, including younger staff that show potential for future development.

In the course of the project's life time, four Top Leadership (TLP) courses, seven Senior Leadership courses (SLP) and eight Emerging Leaders (ELP) courses will be conducted with each session accommodating up to 30 participants.

To maximize the actual impact of the training programmes and change in the workplace, the SLP and the ELP programmes will combine training with extensive coaching on the job.

The trainees will be overseen and advised as they apply their new skills in performing their regular tasks. The coaching sessions will be preceded by actual training sessions.

UNDP's Civil Service Leadership Programme CSLD, implemented jointly with the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC) is aimed at addressing one of the biggest challenges that Afghanistan is currently facing: the reform of the Public Administration system including the re-establishment of a competent and efficient civil service.

CSLD is geared towards the top civil servants in the capital and the provinces including deputy ministers, heads of departments, senior and mid-level civil servants as well as young civil servants.

## DIAG moves forward full steam

Yet another step was taken in the DIAG (Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups) process in March with the handover of more than 530 light and heavy weapons by a former field commander to government control.

A ceremony, marking the handover, was held in the Baharak district of Badakhshan province. Sardar Mohammed, the former commander of the 29th Division, confirmed his loyalty to the country's Constitutional Government by turning in the massive arms cache.

Officials said about one third of the weapons handed over were "junk" but that the rest were in a perfectly usable condition.

The Ceremony was attended by Munshi Abdulmajed, the Governor of Badakhshan, the Commander of Badakhshan Police, the Chief of the National Security Department, other civil servants and by community elders as well as local religious leaders.

In a speech Governor Abdulmajed emphasized that under the Constitution only government forces were allowed to carry arms. He thanked Sardar Mohammed for complying with the DIAG process. The Governor called on all other former field commanders to follow the example set by Sardar.

The arms cache includes Kalashnikov AK-47 rifles which are now to be transferred to Afghan military and police units.



DIAG in Badakhshan

## Hi-Tech geographical training

The specialized training will allow ministries to plan development and improve decision making.

AIMS core funding comes from the EC, USAID and UNDP.

40 staff from 15 government ministries, four from UN agencies and six from AIMS have attended ten days of training in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) as part of a greater effort to optimize utilization of mountainous Afghanistan's precious agricultural land.

The specialized training will allow ministries to plan development and improve decision making.

For example by using satellite images from different seasons the Ministry of Agriculture can compare different land areas for cultivation, irrigation, forestry and soil types.

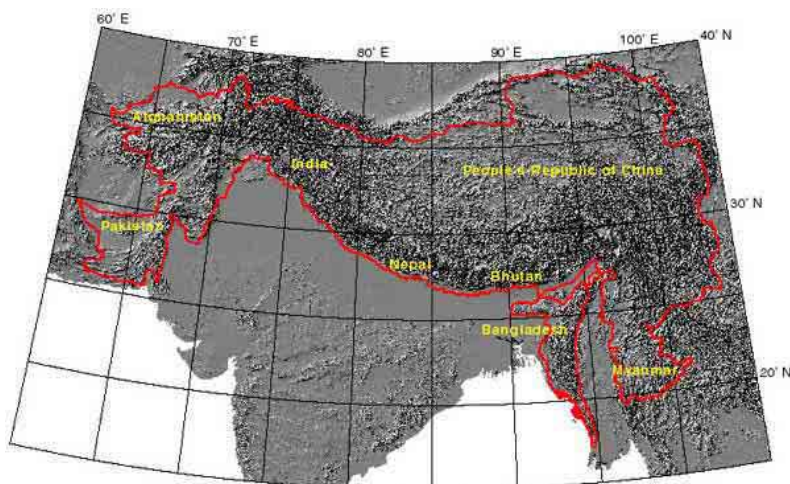
Suitable areas for certain crops and the growth of vegetation in an area can also be identified.

Ministries will also be able to use the training and software to look at other issues such as road planning, mapping of mined areas and settlement concentration.

AIMS has provided training for staff in 15 ministries and handed over software, training manuals and exercise data so the learning can continue.

Staff from WFP, UNMACA, FAO and NGO Health Net International also attended the training as they are involved in areas that could use the GIS effectively, such as mapping undernourished people or agricultural land needing additional irrigation.

At a closing ceremony and certificates presentation on March 27 2006 in the AIMS training centre, AIMS Programme Manager Neal Bratschun urged the participants to pass down the skills they had learnt: "You have an opportunity to train others" he



Afghanistan is part of the greater Himalayan region

said. "Share what you've learnt here with others."

The training was carried out by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) based in Nepal.

The centre serves eight regional countries of the greater Himalayan region, including Afghanistan.

The Minister of Communications Ameerzai Sangeen also attended the closing ceremony.

He addressed the participants on the importance of using

new technology, information management and GIS.

At the same time he encouraged the trainees to use their knowledge and information gained from the course, for the development and sustainability of the strategic and long term plans at their ministries.

For more information about AIMS please visit:

[www.aims.org.af](http://www.aims.org.af)

For more information about ICIMOD please visit:

[www.icimod.org](http://www.icimod.org)



Neal Bratschun addresses the participants on the final day

## From Nepal to Afghanistan

Mahima Malla is preparing to say goodbye to Kabul at the end of her 18 month UNV assignment as a Gender and Reproductive Health Specialist with the UNFPA in Afghanistan, with the satisfaction of having accomplished her difficult task under difficult circumstances.

“Working in Afghanistan as a gender person is, itself, a big challenge. A person who gets an opportunity to work in Afghanistan can work in any part of the world” said Mahima as she was preparing for her journey back home.

A 48-year-old Nepalese national, with a Master’s degree in Population and Family Planning Research, Mahima’s tasks included responsibilities in capacity building among the staff of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA), supervision and implementation of UNFPA projects in support of MoWA and Provincial Women Development Centres (PWDC) and other gender related activities.

But her primary role was with a project that aimed to improve the status of women in Afghanistan by creating an

enabling environment to enhance women’s opportunities. She relied heavily on advocacy for women’s rights, through the enhancement of capacity among MOWA staff on mainstreaming gender into development planning. PWDCs of the Ministry

**“Afghanistan is the country where gender discrimination is highest among all.”**

proved to be the most important operational base for Mahima’s endeavours to promote the cause of reproductive health of women, especially through creating opportunities for women’s literacy.

“In most of the Asian countries, the demographic profile and developmental indicators show the disparity between males and females and the omnipresent gender bias

against females,” said Mahima. “But Afghanistan is the country where gender discrimination is highest among all.”

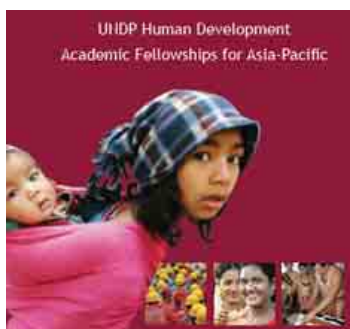
Despite the odds, Mahima believes she has had a successful assignment in Afghanistan, conducting many training programmes targeting not only women, but also journalists and other people at key positions to promote the understanding of reproductive health.

Mahima describes volunteering as an important means of selfless humanitarian service by which an individual could gain new skills and acquire new experiences. Quoting an Afghan proverb “One flower can not bring spring,” she calls on all those interested to join UN Volunteers to contribute to development in general and to the empowerment of women in particular. As for her own Afghanistan experience, she says the most precious skill she acquired is to “cope with a crisis patiently and calmly.” She believes this will help her cope with other possible crises in the future.



Mahima Malla

## Development fellowships



Download brochure from:  
[www.undp.org.af](http://www.undp.org.af)

The Asia Pacific Regional Human Development Initiative (APRI), Regional Centre in Colombo, UNDP, has announced the opening of two types of Human Development fellowships for citizens of the Asia Pacific countries. The deadline for receipt of applications for both the fellowships is April 30 2006.

The Human Development Academic Fellowship is intended for young Ph.D. students who are at an advanced dissertation stage working on a topic related to

human development – theoretical, applied or policy oriented. The idea is to push the boundaries of the discipline by encouraging creative, high quality academic work.

The Human Development Media Fellowships are intended to support mid-career media professionals to communicate on human development themes in mainstream media. The theme for this year’s fellowship is *International Trade and Human Poverty in Asia and the Pacific*.

The Academic Fellow will receive financial support of US\$10,000 and the Media Fellows will receive support based on a proposal and budget. Fellows must submit written proposals of around 2,000 words.

Further details are available online at:

<http://www.undprcc.lk/ifp.asp>

Brochures are also available from the External Relations department of the UNDP Afghanistan Country Office.

## ANBP staff benefit from project management training course

**“The workshop has definitely helped in the way I work. I learnt about planning tools and how to follow a project life cycle.”**

**M. Rafi Hameedi**

Afghanistan's New Beginnings Programme (ANBP) organised a special five-day project management workshop for national staff last month. The workshop conducted by Professor Azhar Khan Mansur, a professional trainer from Pakistan, focused on developing proposal writing skills, project organisation, resource mobilization and an introduction to Microsoft Project software.

Professor Manzur who has been conducting project management training and teaching for 24 years took ANBP staff through ten separate modules emphasizing both theory and practical discussion - first introducing new project concepts and then working with staff in small groups to apply the principles they had just learnt to common-day project management issues. In addition to lectures, team building, group discussions and problem solving were important components of the learning process.

Mohammad Rafi Hameedi, a Programme Associate with Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR), one of three main programmes implemented or supported by



*ANBP staff training*

ANBP attended the workshop. “The workshop has definitely helped in the way I work. I learnt about planning tools and how to follow a project life cycle.” Hameedi whose main task with DDR is to review financial reports submitted by ANBP’s implementing partners that assist in the reintegration of ex-combatants, exclaimed that the concepts he learned from the workshop will assist him in the future: “I have learnt about many new ideas that will help in my career. I will be more confident in interviews because of these skills and can contribute more.”

The workshop was attended by 24 ANBP staff from different programme units including monitoring and evaluation, public information, operations, human resources, policy and ANBP projects. In addition to staff based in Kabul, colleagues from regional centres in Bamyan, Gardez, Herat and Kunduz were also in attendance.

ANBP considered the workshop a success and will consider future training courses to increase the capacity of its staff.

## US\$ 13.5m from CIDA

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has signed five agreements with the UNDP committing a total of CAD\$ 15.4 million (approx US\$ 13.5 million) to support five projects currently being implemented.

**DIAG:** Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups, a project aimed at collecting the armaments still controlled by former field commanders and former Mujahideen formations and transferring these weapons to Afghan government for use by Afghan military and police (contribution CAD\$ 4 million).

**DIAG - Ammunition:** A similar

programme aimed at collecting the ammunition and ordnance from former military and Mujahideen formations and their destruction (contribution CAD\$ 4 million).

**SEAL:** Support to Establishment of Afghan Legislature project, designed to support the newly created Afghan National Assembly through capacity building for both the elected members and the staff of the Assembly (contribution CAD\$ 1.2 million).

**NABDP:** National Area Based Development Programme-Phase II, Integrated Alternative Livelihoods Programme in

Kandahar, a project aimed at empowering local population to adopt legitimate ways of earning livelihoods (contribution CAD\$ 5 million).

**CNTF:** Counter Narcotics Trust Fund, a wide ranging programme implemented jointly with the Afghan government to support endeavours to stem the cultivation and trade of poppy and drugs (contribution CAD\$ 1.2 million).

CIDA has contributed a total of US\$ 81,640,958 to UNDP programmes and projects since 2002.



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.

United Nations Development Programme  
Shah Mahmood Ghazi Watt  
Kabul  
Afghanistan  
+93 20 2101682-91

**For more information on any of these stories, or to make contributions, please contact:**

Mustafa Eric  
Senior Public Information Officer  
+93 (0)70 157 494  
mustafa.eric@undp.org

**or**  
Dominic Medley  
Media Relations Officer  
+93 (0)70 691 985  
dominic.medley@undp.org

[www.undp.org.af](http://www.undp.org.af)

## Calendar of events for the month of April

- △ **April 1** Beginning of the Civil Service Leadership Development Programme
- △ **April 4** Mine destruction event to mark International Mine Action Day
- △ **April 5** Completion of the training in Dubai for all members of the Meshrano Jirga
- △ Donation of books to the National Assembly Library by the SEAL project
- △ **April 15-17** International Conference organized by the SEAL project on "Effective Legislative-Executive Relations" to be hosted by the Meshrano Jirga
- △ **April 23-26** WTO Trade policy training course for policymakers from both government/public sector and private sector
- △ **April 25-26** First National ICT Conference
- △ **April 27** ANBP Q1 Donor Conference
- △ Throughout April NPAD (National Plan of Action on Disability) plans to establish links, units and/or departments within the Ministries of Education, Public Health and Labour and Social Affairs
- △ NPAD also plans to conduct capacity building seminars for senior managers at the Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled

## An image of Afghanistan

Photo by: M. Nasser

