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Newsletter

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Afghanistan

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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.

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 tar-

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.



Afghanistan has the potential to export fresh and dry fruits to regional markets

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

gets 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)

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

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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



An Afghan boy at an open market in Samangan Province

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 herders 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 multifaceted, 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.

Norway Contributes NOK 20,000,000 for 'Afghanistan Subnational Governance Programme'

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 citi-

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.

zen 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

preparatory phase of 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 subnational 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.

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.

A mission was under-

taken to Faryab jointly by representatives from UNDP and the Government of Afghanistan representatives to understand the critical capacity gaps in the province. Faryab province which is located in the north of Afghanistan, and shares a border with Turkmenistan has many districts and villages with poor accessibility to the district administration. Snow cuts off some of the districts in the winter. The challenges in Faryab remain formidable. The rule of law is extremely weak and general provincial governance is quite removed from the structures of Kabul.

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 of the key provincial administration

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structures i.e., the Governor's Office, district administration and municipalities. The Governor's office requires considerable support as they have a crucial role in the coordination of the development process at the Provincial level. A system of governance that provides services effectively and

efficiently is critical for the revitalization of the Afghan community. As restructuring moves ahead in Faryab, ASGP will concentrate on building systems and capacities of the civil servants to provide practical opportunities for provincial, district and municipal staff so that they are able to put their new skills to

work in a manner that generates more revenues, better capacities to produce tangible services to the people of Faryab. The Provincial Council members are a crucial link between the government and the people of Faryab and must be able to effectively represent the concerns of their constituents in

matters related to development, access to services and assistance in conflict resolution. Strengthening the capacity of elected Provincial Councils – both men and women – to better understand and represent the concerns of the Faryab citizens – is one of the core elements of the programme in Faryab.

Counter Narcotics Trust Fund Allocates over US\$ 3m for Eight Counter Narcotics Project in 11 Provinces

The Afghanistan Sub-national Governance Programme (ASGP) – a new UNDP-Afghanistan Programme – received NOK 20,000,000 (Norwegian Kroner twenty million) from the Norwegian Government to support the empowerment of state institutions, governance and public administration in the Faryab province. An agreement was signed by UNDP Country Director, Ms Anita Nirody, and the Norwegian Ambassador in Kabul, H.E. Jan Erik Leivang, which states the programme goal as: "The democratic state and government institutions strengthened at all levels to govern and ensure quality public services through advocacy, policy advice and capacity development."

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In the Faryab Province, the ASGP has set an ambitious objectives plan through which a sub-national strategy would be finalized and provincial bodies i.e. the Governor's Office, district administrations and municipalities will be strengthened and

people of Faryab. Strengthening the capacity of elected sub-national bodies - provincial councils and provincial development group – is one of the core elements of the programme in Faryab. The programme aims to support the elected sub-national bodies in Farayb Province to undertake their respective roles in better representation of Faryab citizens, improved public services monitoring and applying efficient conflict resolution mechanisms.

The overall beneficiaries of the programme are the citizens and public institutions of Faryab Province. Nonetheless, the programme will specifically target the local offices of the Ministry of Interior; the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Services Commission; the Provincial Council; the Office of the Governor; and the Municipal-



Poppy production has soared up in Afghanistan, since the collapse of the Taliban in October 2001
(Photo Getty Images)

Programme in various districts of Faryab Province. The NOK twenty-million contribution received for the empowerment of sub-national governance in Faryab Province covers the programme expenditures between December 2006 and June 2007.

supported in institutional capacity building. The programme also intends to upgrade the skills and knowledge of civil servants in various government bodies and empower them to efficiently manage and provide basic services to the

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ity of Maymaneh. Extra attention will be focused on improving the working relationship of the targeted bodies to ensure that all state and public institutions interact in a collaborative and professional manner.

In addition to the restructuring and reform of the Governor's Office the programme will ensure that members of the Provincial Council in Faryab will have increased capacity to perform their roles and

functions and have an improved relationship with each other. The Office of the Governor will be, meanwhile, supported to have access to updated, useful and reliable information based on which the coordination, monitoring and evaluation of various development programmes would be achieved in close cooperation with the Provincial Development Committee.

The Afghanistan Sub-national Governance Programme plays a key a

role in developing capacity and systems to ensure effective implementation of the governance strategies outlined in the Afghanistan National Development Strategy and the Afghanistan Compact addressing the challenges identified for sub-national governance. The programme has four major components: 1) support to central government agencies responsible for formulating and implementing the sub national governance policy and developing the legal and regulatory framework; 2) sup-

port to the public administration reform strategy to build capacities in provincial and district administrations (in particular the governor office who has the coordinating role for development planning); 3) support to participation at sub national level through capacity building of the provincial councils, awareness raising and civic education campaigns; and 4) support to strengthening national capacities in planning, budgeting and implementing.

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." Minis-

ter Fatimi thanked the Counter Narcotics Trust Fund for supporting the MoPH drug treatment projects and raised hope that the



Seeking treatment at a rehabilitation center in Kabul

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-

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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 activi-

ties 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

ghanistan's

By: Abdul Basir Stanikzai

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 I-ANDS; focus group discussions on perceptions on corruption; pre-London questionnaire analysis and reporting; and support to civil society organiza-

tions 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, Khost, and Nangrahar.

The programme also creates opportunities

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.



Rep. from various civil society organization discuss Afghanistan's National Development Strategy

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

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 (IARCSC). 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 lead-

ership 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)

Photo of the month *Kabul, January 2007*



Tips on HIV/AIDS transmission and protection

By: UNDP-Afghanistan We Care team

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

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

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.

- considering having a caesarean section delivery giving the baby formula milk instead of breastfeeding

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.

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





Afghanistan

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 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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