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37th Celebration of World Food Day 2017

On 17 October 2017, the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) at MAIL conference hall observed World Food Day.

This year’s slogan for World Food Day (16 October), “Change the future of migration. Invest in food security and rural development”, dedicated to the relationship between migration, food security and agriculture, which addresses the structural drivers of large movements of people in order to make migration safe, orderly and regularly. This year’s celebration was a perfect fit for Afghanistan’s internal displacements due to conflict, drought and unfavorable economic conditions.

HE Nasir Ahmad Durrani, MAIL Minister, Mr. Tomio Shichiri, FAO Representative, Mr. Mick Lorentzen, WFP Country Director, representatives from Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW), and parliament were the main speakers and participants were from NGOs, UN Organizations, donor communities and local stakeholders took part in this event.

The 2017 WFD celebration came to its end by petting the children of MAIL kindergarten with the fruit baskets who had welcomed the chief guests.

FAO Calls for stronger collaboration on Transboundary Animal Diseases between Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Tajikistan

Chief Veterinary Officers and experts from the Governments of Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Tajikistan on (28 November 2017) met in Tehran in their first Quadrilateral collaboration meeting for addressing Transboundary Animal Diseases and strengthen harmonized actions on this issue.

Mr. Nabil Gangi, the FAO Deputy Regional Representative for the Near East and North Africa in his opening remarks highlighted that the livestock sector plays a pivotal role in the economic growth of the member countries.

He underscored that unfortunately these days the security threat becomes more eminent and important under the impact of natural or man-made crises in the conflict zones, causing significant migration of rural/nomadic people to the neighboring countries that disrupts the animal health control mechanisms by the host governments.

“Heat protracted conflicts affect many countries in the region that have driven millions of people into severe food insecurity and they are hindering regional and global efforts to eradicate malnutrition, and hunger” added Mr. Gangi - FAO Representative (interim) - Islamic Republic of Iran.

At the global and regional levels FAO is working to enhance prevention of transboundary animal and animal related human diseases in partnership with the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The two-day (28-29 November 2017) Quadrilateral Meeting of Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs) of Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Tajikistan was organized jointly by the FAO Representations in Iran and Afghanistan through close collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) of Afghanistan, supported by the Iranian Veterinary Organization (IVO), Ministry of Agriculture Jahad of the Islamic Republic of Iran.
**Dam safety workshops in Afghanistan**

The FAO/IRDP project for the development of Dam Safety Guidelines for Afghanistan launched or started in July 2016. As one of the priority demands and requests of the Government of Afghanistan and Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW), the development of the Guidelines is being undertaken by a team of International specialization, who are developing sections and delivering workshops on their area of specialty.

A Workshop relating to Hydrology for Dams was delivered in September 2017 followed by another workshop on the Social and Environmental impacts of developing new dams in Afghanistan in Oct 2017. Approximately 50 attendees participated in the both workshop held at Ministry of Energy and Water in Kabul. The Social and Environmental Workshop was prepared by International Consultants and presented in the local languages.

The Social and Environmental Workshop highlighted that the development of large dams and related infrastructure projects needs to take into account all of the social and environmental impacts in addition to addressing the technical and engineering aspects. The workshop also involved extensive discussions where the participants were able to put forward their own experiences and concerns on social and environmental issues as they relate to dams.

**FAO Reduces Greenhouse Gases (GHG) emissions through community forestry and sustainable biomass energy system, in Afghanistan**

Although Afghanistan is among the median countries in the world when it comes to GHG emissions, however, it is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change, particularly in relation to vulnerability to droughts, floods, landslides and avalanches. UNFAO and the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock with close coordination of other execution partners through financial support of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) are implementing a full-size climate mitigation project, titled “Reducing Greenhouse Gas emissions through Community Forests and Sustainable Biomass Energy.” This three years project (2016 - 2019) aims to reduce GHG emissions by promoting community forestry, and removing barriers to sustainable biomass energy, while laying the groundwork for climate change mitigation in Afghanistan.

A Three-day Community-based Natural Resource Management - Training of Trainers (ToT) delivered to FAO and MADERA technical staff in Nangarhar. For the first time, CBNRM model was introduced to participants and trainees were trained on how to calculate GHG emissions via EX-ACT, therefore FAO through the GEF interventions has initiated to capacitate national staff to estimate carbon estimation in Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sector. FAO has arranged a regional training on EX-ACT in September, 2017 in Bangkok, where representatives from Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation Development (MRRD), Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW), National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA), Kabul University and FAOAF staff have participated. The training has been cascaded to 30 national government staff in November 2017 and now for the first time this tool is being used by General Directorate of Natural Resources Management of MAIL in formulation of Kunar Forestry Project to estimate greenhouse gas emissions reduction.

A four day Capacity Development Needs Assessment (CDNA), focusing on sustainable forest and land management was conducted in close collaboration with MAIL in November 2017 in Kabul under the project. Participants from a wide range of stakeholders such as Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), Ministry of Water and Energy (MEW), Afghanistan’s National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA), Kabul University, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (UNFAO) and other development partners actively participated. Based on consultation during the workshop, a detailed framework for the CDNA was designed where 8 thematic areas were identified for the assessment.
The use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in agriculture is not an option; it is a necessity now. The advances in ICT have provided a great opportunity to address some of the challenges faced by agriculture using ICT-enabled services and solutions. Afghanistan is one of the first few countries in the world embarking on this exercise; other countries are Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Fiji, PNG and Philippines. No country in the world has a strategy for sustainable development of ICT for agriculture services. This has led to many experiments (most failed), short-lived pilots and huge waste of resources. For the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the E-agriculture Strategy development is a multi-stakeholder exercise and is led by the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) together with the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT). FAO and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) provide the technical assistance based on the FAO-ITU E-agriculture Strategy Guide.

Agriculture is increasingly becoming knowledge-intensive. In Afghanistan, the sector faces many challenges posed by climate change, loss of biodiversity, drought, desertification, increase in food prices and inefficient supply chains. There is a continuing need to provide the right information to the right people in order to make informed decisions that make the difference to livelihoods and sustainability.

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In November 2017, FAO conducted dairy management training in Kabul, Parwan and Logar provinces assuring improved levels of production and quality for 60 women’s farmers in Kabul, Parwan and Logar provinces. Each woman received instruction and hands-on training in hygienic milking practices along with a proper milking methods kit. The intent of this training is to reduce cases of utter infections and milk bacteria in order to increase milk production and improve milk quality. “Women in Parwan province after training, shared stories explaining how critical dairy production is to their respective families, as a valuable source of income that impacts the health, nutrition, education, and happiness of their entire family” says director of Parwan DAIL.

The FAO dairy industry development project has trained over 60 women on cattle management, hygienic milk production, and improved feeding methods, quality control, milk processing, dairy value addition, animal vaccination, milk quality/density tests for grading, basic requirements for milk processing, storage and transportation and effectively identifying market opportunities. Participants were sensitized about the important role they could play in improving income and family wellbeing; the role that women play at the national and international level to manage livestock and other income generation enterprises; and the laws and characters introduced to promote gender actions at all levels. The women were encouraged to adopt the training in their own households and educate their neighbors.

On the supply side, forage and feed are critical factors for the long term sustainability of the project. As a result, training on feed mixes using locally grown ingredients to replace the currently imported concentrates and to improve the feed resource base was carried out. The participants also trained on silage making/urea treatment, and more. All these elements work together to bring the communities a lasting solution for improved nutrition and income.

The project aiming to build the capacity of women farmers in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL), has provided rural women with the skills, knowledge, and inputs to engage in profitable dairy cattle production.

Dairy management training for 60 women farmers in Kabul, Parwan and Logar Provinces

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