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Our goal is to achieve food security for all and make sure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives. With over 194 member states, FAO works in over 130 countries worldwide. We believe that everyone can play a part in ending hunger.

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H.E. President Ashraf Ghani awarded Ghazi Mirbacha Khan Medal to FAO staff



Kabul, 15 February 2018 - A Special ceremony was hosted at the Presidential Palace in the presence of H.E. the President, the Cabinet, members of parliament and a number of international partners. This ceremony was intended to honor individuals and institutions who had made contributions to the development of the Institutional Development Program for Land Administration System (IDPL) in Afghanistan.

At the ceremony, Mr. Aziz Arya, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific Policy and Programme Officer, and Regional South-South Cooperation Officer, was given the prestigious Ghazi Mirbacha Khan Medal by H.E. President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani. Mr. Arya is a citizen of both Great Britain and Afghanistan and a long-time employee of FAO; he currently focuses much of his attention on improving agricultural practices in his native country Afghanistan and was the leader of the IDPL formulation process.

The IDPL Programme is the result of close collaboration among international partners such as the World Bank, FAO and the Government of Turkey. The Programme aims to understand and address the needs and priorities for land administration in Afghanistan. The Afghanistan Independent Land

Authority (ARAZI) guided the process under the technical leadership of FAO.

The objective of the IDPL program was to develop a five-year strategic development plan for ARAZI. This strategic plan is expected to include specific plans to adapt the Turkish ARAZI model, an intensive capacity and institutional development plan, a framework for the appropriate adaptation of technology, a technical training institution for ARAZI and a detailed investment plan.

ARAZI was established to increase the amount, quality and security of government-owned land available for licit economic use and investment; its role includes land titling, zoning, planning and property rights. ARAZI's mandate and mission have led it to be one of the country's most important institutions, with far-reaching consequences for social and economic life.

The honor awarded to the Mr. Arya and the FAO team is testimony to the innovative and collaborative approach of the IDPL under the overall guidance of ARAZI. FAO is honored to have led the process and will continue to be part of a transformational change in land administration, as well as food and agriculture, in the country.

FAO conducts capacity development needs assessment on sustainable forest management and sustainable land management in Afghanistan

The Capacity Development Needs Assessment (CDNA) on Sustainable Forest Management and Sustainable Land Management (SFM/SLM) is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) Directorate General Natural Resource Management, FAO Afghanistan and the Global Environmental Facility project. The CDNA identified the strengths and weaknesses within key organizations involved in SFM/SLM in Afghanistan, and formulated recommendations and priority actions for improving the capacity and effectiveness of these organizations.

The CDNA made use of surveys, key informant interviews and focus group discussions. The stated assessment was planned to be carried out in 11 provinces (Nangrahar, Kunar, Parwan, Balkh, Paktia, Badghis, Bamiyan, Herat, Kandahar, Ghazni and Kabul) of Afghanistan. So far the CDNA is completed in Kabul, Nangrahar, Kunar, Parwan, Balkh, Badghis, Bamiyan and Paktia provinces with the participation of 181 (170 male and 11 female) participants, from organizations associated in work with land and forests.

The CDNA will be completed in the remaining provinces by the end of April and the final report is expected to be published in May/June 2018. The report of the CDNA will help the government of Afghanistan to develop a strategy for capacity development on SLM/SFM.

FAO Afghanistan is investing in forest inventorying: collecting quantitative and qualitative information about the size and shape of the forest, as well as information about the growing for-

est stock. The sample plots within the forest inventory produce baseline estimates, which will be used as baseline data to compare with future measurements of forest growth rate and changes in forest condition. FAO, through the "Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emission through Community Forestry and Sustainable Biomass Energy Systems" project, has started a pilot forest inventory of Dara-e-Noor and Salang Districts for the first time ever. While this forest inventory is still ongoing, FAO expects that government counterparts will extend the practice to other districts in the near future.



Participants at CDNA workshop held in Kabul

FAO Supports Households in Local Production- Thanks to SARD



©FAO/Sayed Maqsood Hsanimi

Women at vegetable processing center packing products in Herat.

The Support to Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD) project was awarded on April 2015, and is being led by MAIL with technical support from FAO. The aim of the project is to improve food security through improvements in agricultural production and market development in Karokh and Zindajan districts in Herat province. The SARD project focuses on the provision of agriculture advice and inputs through demonstration plots, farmer field schools and community based discussions. It does this by using and improving the existing agriculture extension services provided by PAIL. The SARD project is also designed to build the capacity of decentralized government institutions in the target districts through a bottom-up extension approach which has been adopted and praised by MAIL.

The SARD project is set to run for three years, and is financially supported with 2,500,000 EUR from the Italian government. Thus far, this has been a model project for extension delivery services; it is introducing a participa-

tory, bottom-up, demand-driven agricultural extension system, which identifies farmer's priorities and then finds ways to link farmers with market actors.

"The most significant change that occurred in my life in the three years is that our one-gerib land produced 1200 kg wheat in just one season! This is three times more than what we produced last year, and it was all thanks to the support of the SARD project. Their wheat seeds, technical trainings on wheat production, help on cultivation and harvesting, and support for getting products out to the market were life changing." said Mr. Abdul Ghani, residence of Sharbat village of Herat province. "However, we still lack UREA and DAP fertilizer, our crops suffer from pests and diseases, so we hope the SARD project can continue to help use" he added.

So far, the SARD project has already distributed 120 metric tons of wheat seed to farmers in the target districts. In just over two years, the project has helped 2,400 farm families (14,400 people) increase their wheat yields against previous years three times compare to the past years.

Another example of the great work SARD is accomplishing comes from Herat, and a leading woman in agriculture. Ms. Akbari is a 31-year old farmer from Dane Gar village of Karokh District, Herat province. She has two geribs of land on which she cultivates wheat, tomato, garlic, other vegetables. Her family members support her during cultivation and harvesting, otherwise the land and its' products are under her sole care.

The SARD project helped women in Herat, like Ms. Akbari, make a processing center for vegetables and trained local women on how to process local farm products into healthy packaged food. SARD also provided these centers with a 33 different pieces of processing equipment. Female farmers and food processors noted that in the past, they lost too many of their berries and other fruits due to spoilage.

SARD has taught them how to develop excess products into juice, jam, tomato paste and vinegar that they can then sell on the local market.

At the centers, 30 women work collectively to do regular processing of fruits and vegetables, which are then sold on local markets; the income is distributed equally among the women, who then often buy chickens for their home. These chickens are used for meat and eggs which they cook at home for their families, or sell on the local market.

The women are expecting both the local government and the SARD project team to build a local market building where they can easily and openly showcase their products.

Ms. Akbari says:

“I thank the SARD project team and Karokh District Office for bringing women together into these collective work groups. Two years ago, I was jobless, I just worked at home, and I had no income for myself and my family. Now that I am trained on how to process local products using local recipes, as well as sell the products in the local markets, I can make quality food for my family and have extra income on top of it! This experience has been life-changing.”

The Irrigation Rehabilitation and Development Project makes new advances in dam safety

The Irrigation Rehabilitation & Development Program (IRDP) is a program that FAO has been running in Afghanistan since 2011. The aim of this program is to improve irrigation and water management by rehabilitating irrigation systems, developing small dams, establishing hydro-meteorological facilities and services, and improving project management and capacity building. One of the key components for irrigation systems in Afghanistan are dams, which regulate the release of water. For irrigation systems to be sustainable, they need to receive the water stored by these large dams in a timely, predictable, and controlled manner.

Worldwide, dam safety management programs work with dam owners to make sure that there are measures in place to ensure the integrity of their dams and prevent dam failure. These measures include making sure dam management complies with worldwide best practices, ensuring dams can mitigate the effects of flooding, and undertaking routine dam safety reviews. When the IRDP program began, no such safety programs existed for any of the dams in Afghanistan.

Starting in 2016, a series of workshops were held to introduce the concept of dam safety to dam owners and operators in Afghanistan. Following the initial workshops, IRDP was expanded to include the development of dam safety guidelines for Afghanistan. To do this, a number of international experts are delivering workshops on dam safety as well as developing guidelines, which will be completed towards the end of 2018. These guidelines will be the basis for the management of existing dams, as well as specify how to safely design, construct and operate large new dams in Afghanistan.

As of March 2018, the dam safety guidelines subproject of IRDP, has already had notable positive impacts, including:

- Numerous large dams in Afghanistan have been investigated. Reports on each of these dams have been prepared; the reports include recommendations for further investigation and types of physical works that are needed to address safety issues.
- Dam owners and dam operators have been made aware of their dam safety obligations and the need to implement dam safety management programs for their dams;
- Identification of a need to develop a specialist group for Afghanistan dam safety and begin to train them in all aspects of dam safety, as well as provide them with guidelines for maintaining a trained cadre of dam safety professionals.

By the end of the dam safety guidelines subproject, FAO expects that Afghanistan will become recognised as a country that follows worldwide best practices in sustainable dam management. If this happens, this will have far reaching positive implications not just for large dam owners and managers, but farmers, livestock owners, and urban dwellers dependent on reliable clean water supplies.



Sediment Trap for Feeder Canal of Qargha Dam



Regulator of Qargha Dam Feeder Canal

FAO is building policy synergies across projects and government ministries

Kabul, 26 February 2018: To enhance cooperation and coordination among relevant Ministries, Donor Organizations, Projects and FAO and to provide guidance to the implementation of “Support to Agriculture and Rural Development” project and the “Household Food and Livelihood Security” project FAO organized a Joint Steering Committee (JSC) meeting at the Italian Agency for Development and Cooperation (IADC) Office in Kabul.

The JSC meeting was chaired by the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), and attended by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the

IADC, and FAO. The JSC meets every six months to assess developments and challenges in the project, as well as make executing decisions for the Project. The JSC is comprised of high level representatives from MAIL, the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, the Ministry of Finance, and the aforementioned donors, and is all guided by technical assistance and advice from FAO Afghanistan.

A day at the 2018 AgFair in Kabul

Kabul, 22 March 2018: FAO, as usual, was in attendance at the 2018 AgFair held at the Badambagh agriculture exhibition grounds in Kabul. This year, in addition to the primary FAO information booth, several other FAO-supported booths were present at the AgFair, including a dairy booth featuring products like yogurt, milk and butter from the Khatiz Dairy Union.

The Khatiz Dairy Union, based in the province of Nangarhar, was established via the long-running FAO Dairy Sector Development projects. The Union has been in operation since 2015; it uses modern machinery and techniques to test and store milk, and then process it into a variety of high-quality products for the Afghan market. Since the inception of the Dairy Sector Development Projects, over 120 stores in Nangarhar are now selling Afghan-made dairy products from the Khatiz Dairy Union. Other booths at the AgFair featured

an array of interesting products and services developed and sold by local Afghan farmers and processors. These included jams, pickles, breads, honey, dried fruits, nuts, clothing, woven home decor, and solar powered greenhouses and cookstoves.

The event kicked off with a speech from the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Nasir Ahmad Durani, who discussed how critical continued agricultural development was to the nations’ economy. He also praised FAO for their work in the dairy sector, which has resulted in the opening of five dairy processing centers nationwide, and increased income for male and female farmers. Later in the day Mr. Durani toured the booths, including the Dairy Union booth, where he sampled some of the products from several dairy unions around Afghanistan.



The Minister of MAIL, Mr. Nasir Ahmad Durani, and the Minister of Water and Energy, Mr. Ali Ahmad Osmani, during their visits to FAO supported dairy booths at the Agfair 2018.

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