

Four District Development Plans Formulated and another Three Underway in Kunar Province

Since late January 2008, MRRD's National Area-Based Development Program has established four District Development Assemblies (DDAs) in Watapur, Chapa Dara, Asad Abad and Manogai districts of Kunar Province, while the DDA members also formulated District Development Plans (DDPs) for their respective districts. The establishment of another three DDAs, along with the formulation of DDPs for the districts of Ghazi Abad, Asmar and Dangam, is currently underway and should be completed by the end of February. Each DDA has around 30 members, half of whom are female. As establishing community institutions



such as DDAs and incorporating women into these institutions remains a difficult job in Kunar province, the facilitating team meets the elders of the district prior to DDA/DDP establishment and formulation, persuading them to allow the process to take place and to let women be mainstreamed into DDAs. The DDA establishment process for each of the 15 districts of Kunar province, which began in late January, will be completed by the end of April. The DDA/DDP facilitators help the members of a DDA to identify 10 priority projects for their district in each of the eight development sectors - Economy and Private Sector Development, Social Protection, Agriculture and Rural Development, Health and Nutrition, Education, Infrastructure and Natural Resources, Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights, and Security. These projects are then covered in a development plan for the district, the DDP. The DDP will potentially serve as a reference and a trusted document for the respective ministries and donors to implement the projects identified and selected by the community.



The people of Kunar have felt the need for development plans in their province and welcome this MRRD initiative. One of the DDA members of Watapur District, Dr. Khairullah, is hopeful that the process will bring prosperity to their district. "We're very hopeful that this planning process will have key outcomes. This plan will attract the attention of donors to build water wells, intakes, water reservoir and roads for us, as a result of which insecurity and unemployment will end in our district", Dr. Khairullah explained.

People in Kunar province believe that they have been overlooked by the government and complain about the lack of development projects in their province, which they argue contributes to insecurity. Haji Noorullah, a member of Manogai District Development Assembly pointed out the lack of rehabilitation work in his district. He said, "Other than NSP, no one has worked for our district. Our people ask for schools, clinics and other facilities which in the long run will help in bringing better security."

Elders of Kunar province do not accept that insecurity is a major obstacle before development work in their province, but on the contrary encourage the government and other organizations to bring rehabilitation projects to their province, even to its most remote districts. Salem Khan, a resident of a remote district in Kunar who heads the DDA of Manogai district, guarantees the security of any organization intending to work for their district, saying, "There is no obstacle before implementing development projects in our area. Anyone who wants to work in Manogai, we will strongly support them and guarantee their security."

Kunar is the 34th province of Afghanistan in which DDAs have been established. To date, DDPs for 297 out of 408 districts of the country have been formulated, and the remaining districts will have been formulated by the end of 2008.