



PRESS RELEASE

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Agriculture to dominate development agenda

DONORS PLEDGE FUNDS FOR AGRICULTURE ‘SURGE’

Kabul – Agriculture, farm productivity and off-farm agribusiness are “the new surge strategy for development, with donor pledges for that sector rise set to rise well above the already promised US\$ 100 million,” said the Hon. Asif Rahimi, the Afghan Minister for Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) .

At a press conference in the Foreign Ministry on Sunday, joined by the Hon. Dr. Omar Zakhilwal, Minister of Finance, Mr. Rahimi said “Agriculture will determine whether Afghanistan will succeed. Our nation’s allies, the international donor community, understand this and will back agriculture to the utmost.”

The conference was held after the two ministers and more than 110 high-level participants from government, donor agencies and embassies held their final round of talks to formally approve and fund priority projects developed by different ministry teams.

MAIL’s four programs, under the National Agricultural Development Framework (the national sector plan) were amongst the approved and saluted programs. Donors responded positively to Minister Rahimi’s call for the support of his mutually-dependent “Iron Triangle of agriculture – natural resource management, agricultural production and productivity, and economic regeneration.”

Amongst the approved programs was the Comprehensive Agriculture Rural Development facility (CARD) which will field teams of experts at the district level, “to identify the missing pieces in the development puzzle” boosting productivity and job growth. Starting in three provinces, CARD is a joint effort of MAIL and the Ministry for Rural Reconstruction and Development (MRRD).

During meeting, Minister Rahimi described MAIL’s ten top priorities for donor support, including wheat seed to be bought now and distributed to farmers in September, the efficient leasing of government farmland, and accessible credit for farmers, and support for further management improvements at MAIL.

“We are not soliciting funds for MAIL alone,” Minister Rahimi explained, “but instead for any institution or ministry working under the national plan for agriculture.”



Police reforms and developing commerce were other important topics discussed through the JCMB's Sunday meeting, where donors enthusiastically praised the Afghan ministries coordinating agricultural development so effectively.

Dr. Omar Zakhilwal, Minister of Finance hailed the meeting "We are happy that our recent efforts at improving aid effectiveness are paying off," and praised the Afghan led coordination that resulted in the projects discussed through this meeting.

"Increasing the opportunities for donors and Afghans to work together at technical level results in projects that meet the needs of all stakeholders resulting in more projects being funded more quickly," He said.

Insisting on the need for adopting a participatory and integrated approach he said "We will strongly encourage other ministries and donors to adopt this more collaborative approach and are confident that we will continue to see improvements in coordination."

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