



From the Desk of the FAO Country Representative

Welcome to this first issue of FAO News Afghanistan, which we intend to use as a platform for sharing ideas and experiences in Afghanistan.

Since joining FAO in 1949, Afghanistan has made remarkable progress in the field of agriculture, Irrigation, livestock, and food security; despite her tumultuous history. Agriculture remains the bulwark of the country's economy as many Afghans directly or indirectly depend on it for their livelihoods.



Mr. Tomio Shichiri, FAO Representative in Afghanistan

It is encouraging to know that the new Unity Government of Afghanistan places high importance in agriculture as recently emphasized by new Minister of MAIL, H.E Assadullah Zamir during his visit to FAO Representation in Afghanistan on 14 May 2015.

The ongoing reform process in FAO's global operations presents us with a unique opportunity to collaborate with the Government and people of Afghanistan in responding to the country's food insecurity, which continue to deteriorate despite global trends as highlighted later in the newsletter.

We are grateful to our financial partners who continue to support our activities such as Belgium, EU, Germany, IFAD, Japan, Luxemburg, Norway, the World Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, UK, USA, FAO (Technical Cooperation Project) etc. Some of the activities under these projects are highlighted in the newsletter.

New MAIL Minister Visits FAO Headquarter in Rome, Italy

H.E. Minister Assadullah Zamir visited to Rome to meet FAO Director General, Dr Graziano da Silva on 6th June 2015 at the occasion of the 39th Session of FAO Conference in Rome. During this meeting, Dr Da Silva expressed FAO's commitment to further increase its programme of activities and technical assistance to Afghanistan. During the meeting, H.E. the Minister requested FAO DG to take significant steps for agriculture development in Afghanistan; align and implement the projects in close



FAO DG, Dr Graziano Da Silva with H.E Assadullah Zamir when they met during the FAO Conference at FAO HQ in Rome

collaboration with MAIL programmes. The new Minister has already hit the ground running and presented a 100 days' work plan to H.E. President Ashraf Ghani soon after his appointment in April 2015.

Also the H.E. Minister visited FAO Afghanistan Office located within MAIL compound on 14 May 2015. During his visit, he met staff led by FAO Representative in the country, Mr Tomio Shichiri. FAO also had an introduction meeting with the new Minister of MEW, Ali Ahmad Osmani, and FAO presented current irrigation-related programme to all senior management team of MEW on 31 May 2015.

Inside this issue

From the Desk of the FAO Representative

Japan Supports Afghan Animal Health Efforts

FAO Representative Visits Northern Afghanistan

Transferring Agricultural Technology to Women

FAO & Partners Conduct Pre-Harvest Assessments

FAO Supports MAIL Staff Training

World Hunger Falls; Though Not in Afghanistan



Japan Supports Afghanistan's Animal Health Efforts

The Government of Japan has provided a total of USD 16.7 million to help the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) in preventing the spread of highly contagious transboundary animal diseases; particularly foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) and Peste des Petit Ruminants (PPR).

The project "Building resilience and self-reliance of livestock keepers by improving control of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) and other Transboundary Animal Diseases (TADs) to be implemented by FAO in collaboration with MAIL, was launched at the inception workshop on 18 March 2015.

The project will help Afghanistan participate in the on-going Global Initiatives for the Progressive Control of FMD and the Global Eradication Programme for PPR. About 4 million doses of PPR and 750 000 of FMD vaccines will be distributed.

Among the milestones of the project is promotion of investment in education for students of the Provincial Agricultural Schools and efforts to improve the livestock health of the nomadic Kuchi communities.

The Government of Japan continues to be one of the main donors of FAO activities in Afghanistan.



Mr. Shichiri FAO Representative in Afghanistan and Mr. Morino, Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Japan in Afghanistan, during the signing ceremony at MAIL.

Transferring Agricultural Technology to Afghan Women



Greenhouse technology transfer to women in WTTTC Badakhshan.

Strengthening the Role of Women in Agriculture Development for Improved Household Food Security and Nutrition project of the Food and Agriculture (FAO) of the United Nations has established Women Technology Transfer and Training Centers (WTTTC) in Kabul, Herat and Badakhshan provinces.

The project has enabled the rural women to use new technologies on: drip irrigation, making compost bin, greenhouse and solar food dryers. In addition to that demonstration plots and micro gardening and mushroom cultivation demonstration are also provided to the women farmers.

Two trainings were conducted on mushroom cultivation at WTTTC in Kabul (Badam Bagh) for Afghan Women Resource Center (AWRC) and in Badakhshan where a total of 300 women from different entities were trained.. Furthermore, WTTTC held Mycelium production trainings in Balkh, Kabul and Badakhshan provinces. Through this project cross learning opportunities is provided for the beneficiaries to share their views, exchange ideas and experiences on new technologies in order to improve their farming skills and household food security and nutrition.

FAO Country Representative Visits Northern Afghanistan

FAO Representative (FAOR) in Afghanistan, Mr. Tomio Shichiri visited Badakhshan, Takhar, Kunduz and Balk in northern Afghanistan from 21-25 April 2015.

In Badakhshan, he visited the women training center (which is one of the most successful models in the country) for agriculture in DAIL, Farmer Field Schools (FFS), farmers' representatives, and World Bank-funded irrigation sites as well as observed pre-harvest wheat crop prospect (irrigated and rain-fed) in those provinces.

Badakhshan is one of the most food insecure areas of Afghanistan and FAO works closely with WFP in the region.

In Kunduz, the FAOR visited irrigation sites and the Kunduz Dairy Union supported by FAO. Due to current security operation in the area, consultations on possible relocation of local FAO staff were made.

In Mazar and Shoulgara district, the FAOR monitored crop situation in irrigated areas and held discussions with local private seeds enterprises. In Mazar, Mr Tomio also met and held talks with the Governor of Balkh, H.E Ustaad A.M Noor.



FAO Representative in Afghanistan in a meeting with Balkh Governor

FAO and FSAC Partners Conduct Two Pre-Harvest Assessments

Two pre-harvest assessments are being conducted using different tools in Afghanistan.

Pre-harvest Qualitative Assessment: For the past six years, the pre-harvest assessment has become a tool which feeds into the decision-making processes for food insecurity response in Afghanistan. Pre-harvest Assessment is mainly qualitative, applying a combination of various techniques for convergence of evidence including remote sensing analysis, desk review of secondary documents, and ground data collection. The pre-harvest assessment was conducted by FAO, WFP and FEWS NET in close collaboration with MAIL during April/May.

Objectives of this qualitative assessment include: 1) to pre-determine key areas of concern that may likely affect food security situation; 2) to identify “types of shock” that may impact acute food insecurity; and 3) to perceive status of upcoming wheat harvest. The final report of this assessment will be disseminated widely by 30 June, 2015 while preliminary findings have been communicated to MAIL, donors and FSAC in separate occasions in June.

Seasonal Food Security Assessment (SFSA): The SFSA gives a comprehensive analysis of the food security situation country-wide, providing valuable current information. The SFSA is being conducted under the Food Security & Agriculture Cluster (FSAC), co-led by FAO and WFP in partnership with international and national NGOs in Afghanistan. FSAC partners have full ownership of this exercise, with provision of both financial support and human resources (around two thirds of the assessment is self-financed).

The SFSA covers almost 200 districts of all 34 provinces of Afghanistan and targets 8,500 households, 850 community focus groups and 177 market traders. The assessment (i) determines the level of food insecurity at the provincial level; (ii) identifies vulnerable groups; (iii) informs about shocks causing food insecurity; and (iv) allows a better understanding of food utilization (intra-households) along with food accessibility. The result of the SFSA feeds mapping process of the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC).

FAO Training Support to MAIL Staff

Irrigated agriculture, covers for about 70 percent of total crop production, remains the cornerstone of food security and livelihoods for majority of Afghan rural population.

Of the roughly 3.9 million ha of cultivated land in Afghanistan, 1.3 million ha is rainfed, while the remaining 2.6 million ha is irrigated. Hence to harness the benefits of irrigated agriculture, robust capacity of institutions managing the sector remains paramount. In Afghanistan, the case is opposite.

For the capacity development of MAIL Irrigation Directorate, FAO’s project capacity development of irrigation department of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and livestock, funded by JICA conducted an “On-Job-Training (OJT)” on survey and design of irrigation projects for 25 staff of the Irrigation Directorate in Kabul in mid-February. The training was inaugurated by the Acting Minister Hon. Kunduzi. The training helped to develop the capacity of MAIL’s Engineers through “seeing is believing approach”.

Another training facilitated and financially supported by FAO’s project Strengthening Policy Development and Coordination for Food and Nutrition Security in Afghanistan – Implementation Support for the “Food for Life” National Programme Priorities (NPP) 2 funded by German Government for 3 senior officials of MAIL’s Policy, Planning and Programme Coordination Directorate. The subject of the training was “the Strategic Food Security Planning” that was held on 27th April - 1st May 2015 at the International Centre for Parliamentary Studies of London, UK.



Demonstration of irrigation techniques to the training participants in Kabul



Officials Of PPD of MAIL during Strategic Food Security Training in UK

National Conference on Groundwater Held in Kabul

The first National Groundwater Conference was held from 7 to 8 June of 2015 at the Marmareen Palace in Kabul. This national level conference was organized by the Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW), Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), Ministry of Urban Development Affairs (MUDA) and National Environment Protection Agency (NEPA) with the support from Afghanistan Engineers’ Association (AEA), Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), Norwegian Consulting Firm (NORPLAN) and FAO. The objective of the conference, was to develop a high level national consensus for groundwater resources mapping, efficient use, protection and effective management in order to meet the needs of all people of Afghanistan. About 200 people from Gov. Departments, National and International Organizations, and Civil Society participated in the conference.

It was inaugurated and addressed by HE Ahmad Zia Masood, Special Representative of President of Afghanistan. Other dignitaries who addressed the conference were Minister for MEW HE Mr. Ali Ahmad Osmani, Deputy Ministers from MRRD, Ministry of Higher Education, MUDA, NEPA, MAIL Advisor and WB, ADB, KfW, GiZ representatives and FAO Country Representative Mr. Tomio Shichiri.

Papers presented at the Conference focused on groundwater mapping, status of and gaps in groundwater development and management. FAO provided technical inputs through the National Coordinator/Chief Engineer Mr. Sayed Sharif Shobair and FAO groundwater expert Mr. Suresh Raj Uprety. At the end of the Conference, a declaration on the implementation of groundwater mapping in Afghanistan was made; as well as to seek support from the donors and establish monitoring system of this resource with an effective coordinated approach by involving all stakeholders for the purpose of integrated water resource management.



The first National Groundwater Conference was held from 7 to 8 June of 2015 at the Marmareen Palace in Kabul

World Hunger Falls; Though Not in Afghanistan

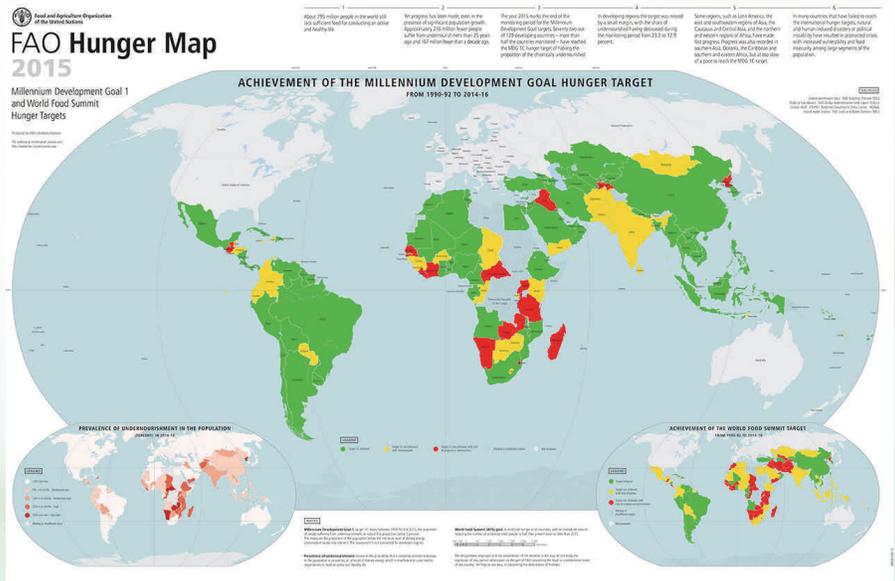
The number of hungry people in the world has dropped to 795 million (216 million fewer than in 1990-92), according to *The State of Food Insecurity in the World* (SOFI) 2015.

The annual UN hunger report was released in Rome on 27 May 2015 by the FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

A majority (72 out of 129) of the countries monitored by FAO have achieved the MDG target of halving the prevalence of undernourishment by 2015, with developing regions as a whole missing the target by a small margin. In addition, 29 countries have met the more ambitious goal laid out at the World Food Summit in 1996, when governments committed to halving the absolute number of undernourished people by 2015.

"The near-achievement of the MDG hunger targets shows us that we can indeed eliminate the scourge of hunger in our lifetime. We must be the Zero Hunger generation...", said FAO Director General José Graziano da Silva.

However, in Afghanistan, the situation has actually worsened. Years of war, compounded by natural calamities have made it difficult for the country to achieve meaningful progress in food security



FAO Website

FAO was founded in 1945 as lead UN agency for food and agriculture. Currently it has 194 Member Nations including Afghanistan (member since 1949). Our motto is "Fiat Panis" (let there be bread). Our three main goals are: the eradication of hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition; the elimination of poverty and the driving forward of economic and social progress for all; and, the sustainable management and utilization of natural resources.

In order to tackle these menaces, FAO has recently refined its work and operations in 5 Strategic Objectives:

1. Help eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition
2. Make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable
3. Reduce rural poverty
4. Enable inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems
5. Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises.

The mandate of FAO in Afghanistan is to support agricultural and environmental rehabilitation and assist the country to become a food secure and self-reliant nation in accordance with the principles of the National Development Framework of the Afghan Government.

the development agenda belongs to the people of Afghanistan

the private sector is the principal instrument of economic growth

decision making is participatory and community-based

investment in human capital is essential

donor-funded activities must sit within the sector framework

The objective of the Organization is to improve livelihoods for all sections of the rural community based upon economically viable activities – food production, off-farm employment and trade - social cohesion and sustainable use of natural resources.

FAO works with counterpart ministries – the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), the Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW), the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH), the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) and the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD). The FAO Representation is located inside MAIL's compound in Kabul and regional offices in Herat, Mazar-i-Sharif, Jalalabad, Kandahar and project offices in Faizabad, Bamyan, Baghlan, Kapisa and Kunduz.



2015
International
Year of Soils



FAO News Afghanistan is published by the FAO Representation in Afghanistan (Mr. Tomio Shichiri FAO Representative in Afghanistan)

For more information, please contact:

FAO Representation in Afghanistan, c/o Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), Jamal Mina, Opposite Kabul University

Tel: +93 (0) 202510427 / 9 Ext. 124 Email: FAO-AF@fao.org

Web: <http://fao.org/world/Afghanistan>