



AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION TRUST FUND (ARTF)

Gender Working Group Meeting

Tuesday, June 5, 2018

Summary of Discussions

An ARTF Gender Working Group (GWG) Meeting was held on June 5, 2018, and was attended by 7 donor country representatives¹, the Ministry of Finance (MOF), the MoLSAMD, Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), and the ARTF Administrator (the World Bank). The meeting was co-chaired by the World Bank and Canada.

Discussion

1. Update on the Women's Economic Empowerment NPP.

The WEE NPP Project Coordination Office (PCO) from the MoLSAMD provided an update on implementation of the WEE NPP activities.

Program Coordination Activities

- On the Program Coordination side, the WEE NPP has a fully functional coordination office with key staff in place including a Deputy Program Director, Senior Financial Management Specialist, Senior Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Specialist. The selection process for a new Director for the PCO is in the final stages.
- The PCO have recently prepared their first semi-annual progress report in Dari, with the English version to follow soon.
- The next Steering Committee for the WEE NPP chaired by the Minister of MoLSAMD is planned for June 10th. Deputy Ministers of twelve key government agencies are part of the Steering Committee. Most manuals, mechanisms for coordinating on WEE activities between MoLSAMD and other line ministries have been developed and approved by the Steering Committee.
- The PCO conducts its activities in coordination with the Chief Executive's Office, the First Lady's Office, Office of the President, the NAP 1325 Working Group, the Human Resources Development Board, and the Afghan Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

WEE-NPP Pillar Implementation Progress

- Pillar 1: Improving gender statistics- the PCO is working with the Central Statistics Office on: (a) a plan to improve analysis of survey statistics specific to WEE, and the use of this data by government agencies; (b) stocktaking of indicators currently collected in existing surveys. Discussions will be held with the CSO and line ministries on whether additional indicators should be collected in the surveys

¹ Australia, Canada, Denmark, EU, Sweden, Switzerland, and US.



- Pillar 2: Removing legal barriers to WEE- a draft inheritance policy has been developed with the support of USAID, and is currently being reviewed by the Office of the President; a study on removal of legal barriers to access to finance by women is being undertaken, with several workshops already held with stakeholders on this issue; a communications firm is also being hired to help in raising public awareness on legal barriers that women face
- Pillar 3: Training and skills building- the process of recruiting additional female teachers is ongoing, 2500 female teachers were recruited in 2017- (slightly short of the original target of 3,000). The Ministry of Education plans to recruit 3,000 more contracted teachers in 2018. An issue that is pending discussion with the Civil Service Commission is the transition of these contracted teachers to Tashkeel positions. The Ministry of Public Health has also launched 51 community midwifery training classes and 44 community health nursing education classes covering a total of 2,280 students in 2017. A committee to establish the Afghanistan Midwifery and Nursing Council was established in 2017, and is expected to work on licensing and accreditation of midwifery and nursing personnel. The proposal for this is being reviewed by the Office of the President. The Ministry of Higher Education is also working on building of more dormitories for females in 5 provincial universities with the support of the Higher Education Development Program.
- Pillar 4: Improving Access to Finance- establishment of village savings groups has been supported through the AREDP, and is expected to continue through the next program phase of the WEE Rural Enterprise Development Program. The US\$100 million WEE-RDP is currently under preparation, and is expected to be ready for approval in the last quarter of 2018.
- Pillar 5: Improving Access to Agricultural Inputs and Extension Services- the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) have supported the establishment of 8,500 vegetable kitchen gardens for 8,500 women together with distribution of seeds and agricultural commodities; and construction of green houses.
- Pillar 6: Promoting Creative Economies- the logo “Made by Afghan Women” was developed and launched by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry; the business certification fees was reduced from 33,000 Afs for 3 years to 100 Afs at entry then 12,500 Afs for 5 years following a Presidential decree; efforts also underway to simplify product export processes for women.

Challenges faced in WEE-NPP Implementation

- Limited or no coordination among directorates and development projects that support the WEE agenda in the line ministries; low capacity in some line ministries; inadequate budget in 2017 to implement all WEE activities as planned in all line ministries.
- The PCO is working on improving the coordination mechanisms with the line ministries including signing of MoUs with them; capacity development programs for selected directorates in line ministries; working with the Ministry of Finance to ensure that adequate budget is allocated to line ministries to implement activities in 2018.

Discussion



- The MoWA noted that the Inheritance Policy has been reviewed by various stakeholders, and they are due to make a presentation to the Office of the Vice President on the policy.
- The PCO also clarified that they are working on the criteria for use of the MBAW logo, the registration process, as well as working with the Ministry of Commerce and Industries and the Patent Office.
- The process of recruitment and training of the female teachers was discussed, including the training that is provided to the teachers by the Ministry of Education once they are hired as contract teachers in those areas where there is a severe shortage of female teachers.
- It was also clarified that the PCO is currently making use of data collected by line ministry, and they are still trying to consider whether to have a consolidated and centralized national database that will pull together data from all line ministries and projects. Also, the current management information systems that are in place in line ministries are being assessed for any existing gaps and shortcoming. All the findings from these assessments will then be used to improve/build an M&E mechanism for the WEE NPP.

2. **Points to be raised at the June ARTF Strategy Group Meeting.** The GWG had no points to raise at the June ARTF Strategy Group meeting.

3. **AOB**

- Status of the ARTF Partnership Framework and Financing Program (PFFP) 2018-2020: The World Bank informed the GWG that the revised draft of the PFFP was shared with the ARTF Strategy Group a few days ago, and comments from ARTF partners are expected to be received by June 6th. The draft includes the Bank's approach to gender in the Afghanistan country program including the ARTF. A series of discussions was held at the Strategy Group over the past month during which consensus was reached on key elements of the new PFFP. The agreements from these discussions are reflected in the revised version of the PFFP. The Bank will share the current draft of the PFFP with the GWG following today's meeting.
- The ARTF Steering Committee (SC) Meeting is planned for June 25, 2018. The SC is expected to endorse the 2018-2020 ARTF PFFP.
- The next GWG meeting will be held on Tuesday July 3, 2018.