

ARTF Strategy Group Meeting

November 8, 2015

Summary of Discussions

An ARTF Strategy Group (SG) Meeting was held on November 8, 2015 with participation from 8 donors. Wezi Msisha (World Bank Senior Operations Officer & Acting Operations Manager) chaired the meeting. The main topic on the agenda was a presentation on the results and policy implications of the upcoming *Afghanistan Poverty Status Update Report*.

Poverty Status Update Presentation: Silvia Redaelli (Sr. Poverty Economist, World Bank) presented highlights from the report, prepared in collaboration with the Ministry of Economy, which takes advantage of the latest two rounds of household survey data, namely the 2007-08 and 2011-12 rounds of the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) to assess the inclusiveness and poverty reduction performance of Afghanistan's development process during its pre-transition phase. Building on the results of this analysis, the presentation focused on the current challenges in terms of "Growth, Poverty reduction and Job Creation". The 2013/14 NRVA data would be available at the end of the year, and data collection for the new NRVA would begin in early 2016.

The presentation started off with information on the Provincial Poverty Briefs that were released earlier in the year, as well as on accessing the online data tool on: <http://bit.do/AFGPB>. The online data tool has a total of 37 indicators organized in 9 thematic areas ranging from population data, food security, labour market, gender and health.

Some key messages from the presentation were on the geographical variations in poverty status and the vulnerabilities associated with poverty; poverty stagnation in the last few years; factors behind poor people not benefitting from economic growth; and the main policy implications.

The discussion following the presentation covered a range of issues from how to best measure access to basic education; whether future donor investments should target poverty reduction or try to address job creation and security issues; safety net implications for the poor, and how the existing budget and donor aid can support this; fertility rate and the need to use administrative data where possible to inform targeting of interventions at the provincial level.