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National Conference on “Creating Sustainable Jobs in Afghanistan” 7-8 May 2013, Kabul, Afghanistan

Co-organized by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled and the Ministry of
Economy

Supported by the World Bank and the International Labour Organization





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Conference Agenda

o Day one

- Morning Plenary Session:
 - o 9.30 - Conference launch by the Vice President of the Islamic Government of Afghanistan (to be defined)
 - o 10.00 - Introductory remarks by the Minister of Labour and Minister of Economy
 - o 10.30 - Introductory remarks by the Regional Director of the ILO – Mr Yoshi Uramoto
 - o 10.45 - Coffee break
 - o 11.00 - "Afghanistan labour market challenges and lessons from international experience" – World Bank (Name?)
 - o 11.45 - "UN policy for post-conflict employment creation" – Mr Herve Berger – Senior coordinator ILO Kabul
 - o 12.30 - Lunch
- Afternoon Parallel Thematic Sessions – 14.00 to 16.30
 1. Session 1: Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth for Sustainable Jobs
 2. Session 2: Developing Demand Driven Skills
 3. Session 3: Managing and Stimulating Labour Migration

o Day Two

- o 14.00 - Short movie depicting the situation of employment in Afghanistan
- o 14.30 - Presentation of the rapporteurs conclusions on the parallel sessions and panel discussion on recommendations
- o 16.30 - Concluding remarks by the MoLSAMD and the MoEc



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The National Conference on Creating Sustainable Jobs in Afghanistan took place in Kabul, Afghanistan, on 7 and 8 May 2013. It was co-chaired by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD) and the Ministry of the Economy (MoE) and financially and technically supported by the World Bank (WB) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), as part of a capacity building effort. More than 200 participants attended the event.



International Labour Organization and World Bank – Conference report final



The Conference's main objectives were:

1. To identify and take stock of the main challenges for job-rich economic growth and the generation of decent work in Afghanistan.
2. To support dialogue on key responses and strategies, aimed at stimulating job-rich economic growth and creating a functioning labour market for decent work;
3. To agree on a way forward, and in particular in relation to the need for strategic recommendations for a national job creation strategy, to be led by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA) and technically supported by ILO. After this, the next steps in ILO's capacity building with MoLSAMD will be the revision of the National Labour Policy and the elaboration of a National Employment Strategy.

The Conference launch panel was composed of:

- **Mr Niamatullah Shahrani:** Senior Adviser of the President of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
- **Ms Amina Afzali:** Minister of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled
- **Mr Abdul Hadi Arghandiwal:** Minister of Economy
- **Mr Yoshiteru Uramoto:** Regional Director, ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
- **Mr Illango Patchamuthu:** Manager Operations, World Bank Kabul Office

The representatives of the World Bank and the ILO made the following presentations:

- **Mr Martin Rama**, World Bank Chief Economist for South Asia Region, presented “Afghanistan labour market: Challenges and Lessons from International Experiences”.
- **Mr Herve Berger**, Senior Coordinator of ILO-Kabul/ILO Representative for Afghanistan, presented key messages from the “UN Policy for Post-Conflict Employment Creation, Income Generation and Reintegration”.





On the afternoon of the first day **three parallel thematic sessions** were organized to discuss key challenges for the Afghan labour market and reach agreement on recommendations, to be discussed on the second day. The three parallel thematic sessions were:

1. Thematic Session 1: “Competitiveness and job-rich growth”

The need for clearly prioritizing development and economic strategies to unleash inclusive growth and create drivers that will provide quality jobs for the Afghan people were discussed in this session. Background discussion materials on agriculture, mining and competitiveness were presented. The international thematic experts for this session were Vincent Palmade, Lead Economist, Finance & Private Sector Development Unit of the World Bank, David Cheong, Chief Technical Adviser, Assessing and Addressing the Effects of Trade on Employment (ETE) Project of the ILO, and Hideki Kagohashi, Enterprise Development Specialist, ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team for South Asia (DWT/CO-New Delhi).

Recommendations from thematic session 1:

- Improving productivity in the agricultural sector was identified as key to job creation (both on- and off-farm) and poverty reduction. Priorities include:
 - Improvement of the land available for cultivation through enhancing investment in irrigation.
 - Strengthen extension services and research in agriculture.
 - Improving the business and institutional environment for investment in the agricultural sector.
 - Support for cooperatives and loans to business in the agriculture sector.
 - Improved access to markets through enhancement of downstream processing facilities, improvement of product quality and quality standards.
- Support for the development of the mining sector will strengthen Afghanistan growth prospects (key for sustained poverty reduction and job creation) and enable greater modernization of the economy. Priorities include:
 - Facilitate the business environment and overall transparency relating to mining contracts.
 - Strengthen transparency and oversight on exploration activities.
 - Support in-country development of downstream value chains related to the mining sector.
 - Increase the supply of skills in the mining sector.
- Focusing on subsectors and products where Afghanistan’s competitiveness is retained by paying closer attention to the dynamically shifting competitiveness of Afghanistan vis-à-vis its regional trade partners, and monitoring critical indicators of competitiveness and labour markets across borders.
- Promoting social policies and social protection programmes, both as contributors to creating an enabling environment for investment and growth, and as demand stabilizers in a context of high macroeconomic volatility.



- Facilitating public-private collaboration to strengthen the productive capacity of national firms, harness global value chains for international competitiveness and promote corporate social responsibility and social development.

2. Thematic Session 2: “Developing demand driven skills”

The need for the elaboration of a fully-fledged skills development system that responds to labour market needs was identified in a background paper and presented to pre-identified participants and experts in the field. The international thematic experts for this session were Paul Comyn, Specialist on Vocational Training and Skills Development, ILO DWT/CO-New Delhi and Celine Lafoucriere, Technical Specialist on Employment and Skills Development of ILO Kabul Office.

Recommendations from thematic session 2:

- Strengthen planning and coordination: Increase real political commitment, inter-government dialogue and coordination on TVET and skills development.
 - Enforce joint planning between ministries on the planning and delivery of TVET and skills.
 - Develop a national plan based on Labour Market Information (LMI) that identifies occupational and skill targets and allocates responsibilities between Ministries.
 - Finalise establishment of the TVET Board to plan and coordinate TVET and skill development activities across MoE, MoLSAMD, Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) and other key agencies.
 - Take steps to align the TVET and skills components of different National Priority Programs (NPPs) as part of a coordinated national plan.
 - Remove political and financial barriers between NPPs.
- Improve quality and relevance: Increases the focus on skills for self-employment and entrepreneurship.
 - Increase industry (employers and workers) representation on the Human Resource Development Board (HRDB) steering committee.
 - Develop a national regulatory framework for the TVET and skills sector that introduces quality standards for training providers.
 - Establish and agree on the roles and responsibilities for major agencies to implement the regulatory framework.
- Strengthen labour market information and analysis: continuing with the time series labour collections in the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) and the establishment surveys to improve data collection on sectoral trends and skills.
 - Rehabilitate the MoLSAMD Labour Market Information Auditing Unit (LMIAU) unit.



- Establish a inter-agency TVET and skills data reference group for the LMIAU (including employers) to improve data flows and institutional coordination.
- Use this reference group to reach agreement between ministries on the flow of data and analysis.
- Compel donors to contribute information to the HRDB donor mapping database.
- Allocate responsibility to the LMIAU in collaboration with Central Statistics Organization (CSO) and other relevant agencies to provide regular labour market reports and other information to different user groups.

3. Thematic Session 3: “Managing and stimulating labour migration”

The need to both manage and stimulate labour migration in a country where the current labour market cannot absorb the huge youth bulge or the general supply of labour supply was identified in a background paper and discussed with pre-identified participants and experts in the field. The international thematic experts for this session were Nilim Baruah, Regional Labour Migration Specialist of ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and Tauhid Pasha, Senior Specialist, Labour Migration and Human Development Division, International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Geneva.

Recommendations from Thematic Session 3:

- Need for an institutional and legislative framework.
- The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Afghanistan and Qatar did not succeed due to lack of an implementation mechanism.
- Need to regulate private sector recruiting agencies.
- Labour migrants should be protected whilst in their country of destination by ILO Conventions.
- Labour migration has a close link to economic development, an agreed framework for remittances should be elaborated.
- Enhance the programme of labour migration as a means of job creation.
- Enhance the programme for the return of the Afghan diaspora (40 per cent of the US\$700 million invested in telecommunications came from returning diaspora).
- Enhance the training of future labour migrants to meet the expectations and standards of receiving countries.
- Some European countries have a Mobility Partnership Programme; Afghanistan should contemplate exchanging good practices with those countries.
- ILO/Korea Government-to-Government programme also offers useful lessons; Afghanistan should enter discussions with the Republic of Korea on this programme.
- Organize missions of government officials to Saudi Arabia to establish an MoU on labour migration
- Technical cooperation with other Asian countries, supported by ILO.
- Establish an Afghanistan Migration Board under the chairmanship of one of the Vice Presidents (VPs) and Ministers of all sectoral ministries. ILO, IOM and UNHCR and other international agencies and donors can be part of the technical committee.



- Migration should be included in all economic development programmes.
- Capacity building should be further strengthened.

All three thematic sessions included a **panel of expert discussants** composed of a trade union representative, an employers' representative, academic experts, MoLSAMD and MoE representatives as well as other line ministries, (such as the Ministry of Finance (MoF) in session 1, Ministry of Education in session 2 and Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations (MoRR) in Session 3).

The panel of expert discussants supported the debate with the room.



The **recommendations**, drawn from all three sessions, were presented by the rapporteurs on the second day and discussed in a plenary panel composed of the Deputy Ministers of Labour and Economy and the social partners. The Minister of Labour and the Minister of Economy closed the Conference. They expressed their interest in receiving further support from the international community – the ILO and the World Bank in particular. They were also interested in developing a fully-fledged National Labour Policy, a National Employment Strategy, a skills development system of international standard (involving all the key actors) and implementing the National Emigration Policy. Ministers, the ILO and the World Bank reiterated their determination to move forward with these objectives at the final press conference.

200 participants attended the Conference and the social partners actively participated in all the sessions.



The ILO representatives for Afghanistan, Regional Director and regional colleagues were thanked by the Minister and the Deputy Minister of Labour for supporting the Conference.



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Press coverage and screen captures:

16 (leading TV channels) covered the National Conference and Press Conference:

1. RTA – National Television of Afghanistan (public)
2. Shamshad TV (private)
3. Tolo TV (private)
4. Tolo News TV (private)
5. Lemar TV (private)
6. Ariana TV (private)
7. Tamadon TV (private)
8. Noor TV (private)
9. Khurshid TV (private)
10. Aina TV (private)
11. Nega TV (private)
12. MBN TV (private)
13. Rah Farda TV (private)
14. One TV (private)
15. Kabul News TV (private)
16. Afghan News TV (private)

** Duration of the broadcast reports was 1 to 2 minutes, at peak times.*

7 popular Radios covered the National Conference and Press Conference

1. Radio Killid
2. Radio Watandar
3. Radio Bayan
4. Radio Ariana
5. Radio Arman
6. Radio Azadi
7. Radio BBC

13 popular online news agencies covered the National Conference and Press Conference

1. Bakhtar News Agency
2. Ava News Agency
3. Pajhwok News
4. Tolo News
5. Afghan Paper News
6. Bokhdi News
7. Sadai Afghan (Afghan Voice)



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8. Hasht-e-Subh (8 am)
9. Tamadon
10. Afghan News
11. Shafaqna
12. Roushd
13. Ariana News

Main Newspapers headlines

Anis Daily - 8 May 2013

Conference on Sustainable Jobs began in Afghanistan

A message from the presidential palace includes the facilitation of sustainable and decent working conditions through skill development and better regulation of the labour market in their strategic priorities and for the implementation of the program Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled was tasked to implement the programs for creating job opportunities.

Hasht - Subh – 8 May 2013

48 per cent of the country's workforce is unemployed

Afghan Minister of Economy in a conference under "Sustainable Jobs" announced that 48 percent of the country's workforce is unemployed and this increases day-by-day.

H.E. Abdul Hadi Arghandiwal, the Afghan Minister of Economy says that "500,000 youths enter the labour market each year, but there is no employment opportunity for them."

Unemployment is the key challenge for Afghanistan and in the last presidential election almost all of the presidential candidates pledged support in creating employment opportunity and eliminating unemployment; today, it is eleven years since the fall of Taliban regime and appointment of the new Afghan government, but the unemployment issue has increased.

Hewad Daily – 8 May 2013

President Hamid Karzai's message on Sustainable Job conference

The message notes that the government of Afghanistan at this particular moment is focusing the economic, social development in the country in order to reduce the extent of joblessness and poverty that is the by-product of several years of the civil wars.



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The Kabul Times – 8 May 2013

Conference on Creating Sustainable Jobs Opened

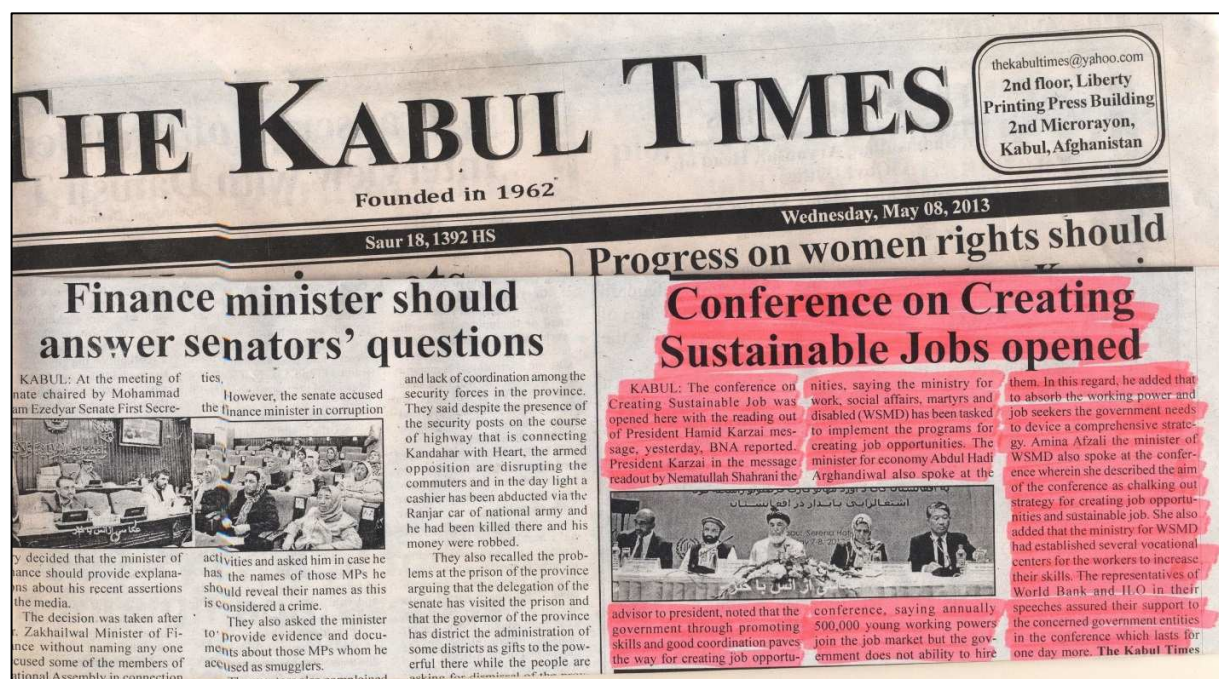
The conference on creating sustainable jobs was opened with the reading out of President Hamid Karzai message, “the message indicated that the government through promoting skills and good coordination paves the way for creating job opportunities, saying the ministry of work, social affairs, martyrs and disabled has been tasked to imp the programs for creating job opportunities.

Weesa Daily – 8 May 2013

Abdul Hadi Arghandiwal: “Foreigners did not invest as per the national interest of Afghans”

Afghan Minister of Labour and Social Affairs called unemployment a great problem and said that, to solve the problem of unemployment the ministry has been working on establishing some rules and regulations.

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Today's Weather
Forecast

Kabul: 26°C 16°C Rainy

Kandahar: 25°C 13°C Sunny

Herat: 26°C 15°C Sunny

THE KABUL TIMES

Founded in 1962

Saur 18, 1392 HS

Wednesday, May 08

No:34Vol:L

President Karzai's message on Creating Sustainable Jobs conference

KABUL: The message notes that the government of Afghanistan at this particular moment is focusing the economic, social development in the country in order to reduce the extent of joblessness and poverty that is the by-product of several years of war. By preparing of big economic policies, the government is decisive to create large infrastructures and move the country towards progress and prosperity.

We are sure that reaching this lofty aim can be materialized when we have active employment market in which not only the need of the different economic sectors in terms of availability of skilled labor is met but with creation of work opportunities we can get access to sustainable employment and that the labor have access to moral and material privileges.

It is therefore our duty to recognize the market labor force with scientific practices, and specify the present challenges and seek their solution.

The government of Afghanistan is not refraining from any efforts in attraction of investments to improve economic pillars in the country and shall continue efforts so that the ground is paved for investments through creating of facilities.

Certainly with upgrading the level of production in the country, our economy will be freed from import dependency and moves towards self-sufficiency and even we can increase exports.

To the extent that the industry develops in the country, similarly more jobs will be created and parallel with this better atmosphere of work relations with investment will be regulated.

So we need to devise policies for creating jobs in the country.

The government of Afghanistan has the priority for better and sustainable work conditions through development of talents and regulating of better labor markets and the ministry of labor and social affairs, martyrs and the disabled has the duty to prepare better and advanced programs for such schemes. At the end I appreciate the efforts of the ministry of economy and labor and social affairs which prepared the ground for holding this conference and also thank the International Labor Organization that assisted this conference. **The Kabul Times**

Terrorism, human rights

KABUL: President Hamid Karzai in a telephone conversation with Jamiat-ul Ulama of Pakistan condemned the recent incident took place Kurm Agency during which six people were killed and called terrorism the enemy of human, the presidential palace said yesterday.

At this telephonic contact, President Karzai strongly condemned the bomb attack on the life of electoral candidate of Jamiat-ul Ulama of Pakistan and former parliament member Muncer Urukzai at the election campaign gathering taking place at the Agency in which at least six people were killed and around 30 others were wounded.

In his conversation, President Karzai called terrorism as his enemy, and added that in the years Afghanistan and Pakistan have sustained much damage any other people especially people of both sides of the border and considering threats facing the people of both countries at the moment, violence against women in the provinces. They also asked the president to facilitate membership entering into a new phase of life, and the achieved progress should be preserved and the country should be developed.

afghannews.com

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News - Afghanistan

Afghanistan Faces Growing Unemployment

Wednesday, 08 May 2013 11:29
Last Updated on Wednesday, 08 May 2013 12:18
Written by Shahla Murtazaie

Nightly News Bulletin

TOLONews 6pm New...

TOLONews Poll

Do you think opening a Taliban political office in Qatar will help the Afghan government reach a peace agreement with the group?

☐ Yes

☐ No

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News Afghanistan

[Afghanistan Faces Growing Unemployment](#)

Wednesday, 08 May 2013 11:29 Last Updated on Wednesday, 08 May 2013 12:18 Written by Shahla Murtazaie



The Afghan Ministry of Economy on Tuesday said that half of a million of labour force enters Afghanistan's markets annually without finding employment.

The ministry of economy said that short term projects have been invested during the last 11 years in Afghanistan, and the country now faces growing unemployment.

The comments come as the Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs with cooperation of International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Bank in Constant Employment in Afghanistan studied the possible employment opportunities in the country.

According to the investigations, Afghan Economy Minister Abdul Hadi Arghandiwal said that Afghanistan's 48% labour force is completely unemployed or they have seasonal jobs. The number is growing daily. "We welcome international community's aid in the last 11 years. We wish that the aid were invested based on our national needs. Most of the projects were short term to be soon finished or to satisfy donor countries about the projects. The projects were not implemented effectively which caused us to face unemployment." Abdul Hadi Arghandiwal said.

Meanwhile, the World Bank officials stressed the importance of creating lasting job opportunities in Afghanistan.

"These are vitally important if the private sector can be an active partner in creating the jobs that are needed over the next several decades to come. The World Bank through the international finance cooperation is working with government ministries to deal with both construction and trade license so that it can help the

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private sector to be more active in the areas of construction and trading,” said Illango Patchamuthu, World Bank Acting Country Director for Afghanistan.

The ministry said that fears from 2010 made main problems in Afghanistan and caused volatility of investments in the country.

Tolo TV headlines

Some half a million youth labour power enters the market annually, however they face with lack of opportunities for employment, said officials during a gathering, titled Creating Sustainable Jobs in Afghanistan, held by the Labour and Social Affair and Economy ministries in coordination with the International Labour Organization [ILO] and the World Bank in Kabul on Tuesday. The Minister of Economy said that during the past one decade investments have done on short-term projects, therefore Afghanistan faces with increasing unemployment issues. He called on the international community to invest on projects that could create sustainable employment opportunities. The executive coordinator for ILO in Afghanistan said that Afghans can't wait till full security is restored to have improvements in their lives, urgent things should be done. The World Bank's acting head in Afghanistan urged the private sector to play their role for job opportunities creations and pledge support for them.

