



Joint Press Release

For immediate release



UNITAR and Japan launch the UNITAR Women's Leadership Programme for Afghanistan: Governance and the SDGs

17 October 2018, Kabul, Afghanistan - The United Nations Institute of Training and Research (UNITAR) Hiroshima Office, with the support of the Government and People of Japan, launched this week the *UNITAR Women's Leadership Programme for Afghanistan: Governance and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* in Kabul, Afghanistan. The programme builds upon the experiences and lessons learned from UNITAR Hiroshima's engagement with Afghanistan over the past 15 years. Focusing on empowering women and fostering inclusive and effective governance in Afghanistan, the training programme offers scholarship to twenty young professional women from twenty public, private and civil society organisations in Afghanistan.

As the first of two workshops in the programme, the Orientation Workshop was held in Kabul on October 15 and 16. In collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UN Women in Kabul, this Orientation Workshop explored the key areas of Good Governance, Social Accountability, Gender, and the SDGs. Through both lecture and practical exercises, participants were able to extend their understanding of governance and the SDGs, specifically SDG5 – Gender Equality, within the context of Afghanistan.

The First Lady of Afghanistan, H.E. Rula (Bibi Gul) Ghani, shared an inspiring video message at the start of the UNITAR programme. She encouraged the participants to take full advantage of the learning and networking opportunities over the next several months with UNITAR in Afghanistan and Japan, and to take the lessons learned, from the essential topics including governance and the SDGs, back to their organizations and communities to help strengthen women's empowerment in Afghanistan.

H.E. Mitsuji Suzuka, Ambassador of Japan to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, welcomed the launch of this epoch-making Women's Leadership Programme for Afghan women. He stated, Japan has strongly committed to promote the dynamic engagement of women in society, therefore building a better community by empowering women leaders is an important step to strengthen Afghanistan. He believed that the participants would obtain broader experience through this programme held in Kabul, Tokyo and Hiroshima.

Mihoko Kumamoto, Director of the UNITAR Hiroshima Office, stated, "The Women's Leadership Programme for Afghanistan gathers twenty talented young professional women to develop their knowledge on and skills of implementing good governance and gender equality in Afghanistan. Empowering all sectors of society is important for sustainable long-term development, and this programme continues the long-standing work of the UNITAR Hiroshima Office in Afghanistan."

The workshop was full of dynamic discussions. One of the participants, Ms. Setara Hassan, CEO of ZAN TV, said that the programme, besides increasing their knowledge about governance and the SDGs, is strengthening their bond as professional women and empowering them, as individuals and as a group, to address challenges across their different fields of work. Ms. Sheela Samimy, a participant who is a Senior Specialist at the Ministry of Finance, noted that she was "so glad to go back to work having a deeper knowledge on Good Governance, SDGs, Social Accountability and Gender".

While considering their organisations' possible contributions to the SDGs using knowledge learned in the Orientation Workshop, the participants will now undertake an assignment to identify a pertinent issue in their organisation or community, by undertaking an Environmental Analysis and Organisational Needs Assessment, in preparation for Workshop II in Japan.

Based on the foundation of the Orientation Workshop, as well as the results of participants' assignments, Workshop II, which will be held in Japan in late November, will see participants attending sessions and study tours in both Tokyo and Hiroshima. Leading to the final presentation of their projects at the end of Workshop II, the sessions in Japan will equip participants with the understanding and tools step by step to develop a detailed, implementable action plan considering Gender, Governance, Social Accountability, and the SDGs.

About UNITAR

The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) is a principal training arm of the United Nations, working in every region of the world. We empower individuals, governments and organizations through knowledge and learning to effectively overcome contemporary global challenges.

The UNITAR Hiroshima Office, mandated to promote post-conflict reconstruction and international peace, has long engaged in designing and conducting training for people from post-conflict countries, such as Afghanistan, Iraq and South Sudan, and commands a unique understanding of the needs of such trainees as they work toward peace. The UNITAR Hiroshima Office has been delivering capacity building training programmes in Afghanistan since 2003 and has trained more than 700 Afghan professionals.

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