

## Mobilising the Media for a Green Afghanistan

Mr Mohamad Rafi Qazizada, the general director of National Resource Management (NRM) at the Afghan Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) opened the series of speeches, saying, 'The Ministry has restored over 11,000 hectares of forests and brought 90,000 hectares of existing green areas under protection. We have activated almost 650 local associations in the provinces to regularly connect with the people.' He then added, 'The legal aspect is also very important, that's why we have been working on several related laws. However, the challenges are so big for only one entity but together we can handle them.'

The Afghan-German Cooperation's new Forest and Landscape Restoration (FLR) programme launched this year and aims at restoring forest landscapes in the provinces of Khost, Paktiya, Samangan, Takhar and Badakhshan. Dr Karin Janz, the director of the FLR project explained, 'When I travel to provinces, I hardly see trees, but Afghanistan is not a desert land and the mountains here should be green. The situation is serious but there is always hope. MAIL's strategy provides a very good basis for our joint work and people in the remote places do care about their environmental resources.' When it comes to the media's role, she said, 'I'd like the Afghan media not to forget the local champions in provinces and to cover their success stories. Together, we can make Afghanistan green again.'

Many years of environmental stress have dramatically altered Afghanistan's landscape. Forests are being cut down illegally, and timber smuggled to other countries. To overcome these challenges, the media can play a vital role in raising awareness and mobilising the people for environmental protection.

Mr Mohammad Tawab Stanikzai, the coordinator of The Liaison Office (TLO), an Afghan NGO working for forest restoration, emphasised, 'Awareness is key to our success. When we explained to people about the long-term damages of cutting trees, they seemed to be quite surprised. They started to contribute to the forest protection as soon as they learned their future is reliant on this greenery.'

During the second part of the media meeting, the panellists entered a lively discussion and answered questions from the national and local TVs, radios and newspapers.

*'Media Meetings 2019 – Afghan media for Social Responsibility' are a series of regular events held by the Afghan-German Cooperation. The meetings bring together experts from the public sector, civil society, development organisations and the media to discuss important development issues. So far, 19 meetings have taken place.*

Teaser text:

On Tuesday in Kabul, more than 60 journalists – including 20 women – as well as forest restoration and media experts gathered to discuss Afghanistan's natural resources and to report on joint efforts for sustainable environmental development. The Afghan-German Cooperation officials explained their measures, initiatives and plans for a green Afghanistan. The event was supported by the Afghan-German Cooperation.

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Good Governance

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Kabul

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