



German Cooperation with Afghanistan

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Promoting Renewable Energy: Conference in Kabul Attracts Young Entrepreneurs and Draws Attention to Women's Role in the Energy Sector

Kabul, 11th April 2018 – Today, the Afghanistan Renewable Energy Union (AREU) initiated a conference in Kabul to promote renewable energy and energy efficiency among entrepreneurs in Afghanistan. Around 120 representatives from line ministries, power utilities, the private sector, academia, the Women Initiative for Sustainable Energy (WISE) and the Youth Entrepreneur Ship Support (YES) initiative participated. The event addressed women and men equally. The Afghan-German Cooperation supported the activity.

The Deputy Minister of the Afghan Ministry of Energy and Water's energy division, Mr Mohammad Gul Khulmi, opened the conference and stated, 'I would like to thank our partners for this event. It is a great opportunity to promote investment and women's participation in the energy sector'.

Private companies presented their business plans to the attending 60 entrepreneurs, pointed out opportunities in the sector and explained policies in use such as feed-in compensation and licencing policies. They further emphasised Afghanistan's vast potential for renewable energy production.

The attendees also discussed challenges in this sector, including difficulties accessing finance, a problematic security situation, a lack of female participation, and others. An attending female entrepreneur commented, 'Today is a great opportunity to learn about opportunities and problems in this sector. I look forward to support my country in utilising renewable energy sources as a businesswoman.'

The attending entrepreneurs, 30 men and 30 women, are currently participating in the initiatives WISE and YES. Both offer training programmes for young Afghans to improve their leadership and entrepreneurial skills, preparing them to start businesses in the Afghan energy sector. One participant emphasised, 'I have acquired new skills and learned a lot about leadership and management. I am confident that I will be an employer one day, creating jobs for other Afghans.'

Especially for women, entrepreneurship is a unique opportunity to improve their economic and social situation while contributing to Afghanistan's sustainable development. Recently, the Afghan government has launched a power development plan to increase access to renewable energy by 80 per cent in rural and urban areas by 2021. Women are among the country's biggest energy consumers and their participation is essential to promote renewable energy and energy efficiency.

On behalf of the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the programme Institutional Development for Energy in Afghanistan (IDEA) is implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. IDEA aims at enabling Afghan society to access energy from renewable sources to boost economic growth, reduce poverty and protect the environment. IDEA cooperates with the Afghan Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW) to implement various activities, creating general conditions for a reliable electricity supply. For example, IDEA has organised 21 conferences and workshops for private and public stakeholders on renewable energy, energy awareness and energy efficiency since 2015. At the same time, it has organised related job-specific training courses for almost 430 Afghans from the public and private energy sector.