



Embassy of Japan in Afghanistan

Press Release

(Unofficial translation of Dari and Pashto is attached herewith/ترجمه غیر رسمی دری و پشتو ضمیمه است)

Japan Supports Natural Disaster Risk Management Activities in Afghanistan

KABUL, AFGHANISTAN (10 March 2015) – In partnership with the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA), IOM and the Government of Japan have signed an agreement to implement a project aimed at reducing risks in natural disaster-prone communities in Afghanistan and strengthening the capacity of ANDMA to respond when natural disasters strike.

The 36-month, USD 9.9 million project will build upon IOM's ongoing efforts to reduce the risks posed by natural disasters in Afghanistan, focusing on selected communities in Herat, Faryab, Balkh, Jawzjan, Sari Pul, Baghlan, Takhar, Bamyán, Helmand and Kabul provinces.

Afghanistan is one of the most hazard-prone countries in south Asia, facing earthquakes, floods, droughts, landslides, sandstorms and avalanches. The UN estimates that approximately 250,000 Afghans are affected by natural disasters every year. The destruction of homes and shelters in natural disaster incidents has displaced over 23,000 people per year on average since 2008.

It is expected that 50 communities across ten Afghan provinces will benefit from disaster risk management activities under the project. IOM will work with the communities to minimize disaster risks by developing community disaster management plans, mapping local hazards and establishing early warning systems. The selected communities will be equipped with basic search and rescue equipment and will be trained on disaster risk management.

"The implementation of this project will provide valuable services in terms of disaster risk reduction, response to disasters, raising awareness and protecting vulnerable communities," said ANDMA Director General Dr. Mohammad Daim Kakar.

IOM has gained extensive experience in recent years constructing 'gabion' flood protection walls in communities across Afghanistan, and will continue these efforts under this project. Gabion walls have proven to be highly successful in preventing flood damage, and their construction has the added benefit of providing employment for thousands of local laborers.

The project will also build the capacity of ANDMA at the national, provincial and community levels. IOM and ANDMA have worked in close partnership on natural disaster prevention and response since 2008. As the main disaster management body in Afghanistan, ANDMA is leading the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 (HFA) in the country. The new project's components are directly linked to HFA priorities.

"The government of Japan is supporting the Afghan Government and the people in various sectors including natural disaster management. We hope this project will build the natural disaster risk management capacity at central and provincial levels and also that it will protect the Afghan people from natural disaster." said Charge d'Affaires ad interim of the Embassy of Japan, Mr. Kenichi Masamoto.

IOM will develop and provide the necessary equipment for a Natural Disaster Management Information System (NDMIS), and provide direct training for ANDMA personnel on its operation. The NDMIS will be an integral component of an ANDMA Emergency Operations Centre. By further strengthening ANDMA's information management capacities, the Afghan government will gain a better understanding of needs and response capabilities when a natural disaster occurs.

"Through the generous support of Japan, IOM will be able to significantly expand its efforts to help Afghan communities prepare for and recover from devastating natural disasters, while at the same time minimizing the risk of these disasters," said IOM Afghanistan Chief of Mission Richard Danziger. "We hope that this project will provide a model that can be replicated in other provinces in the future,"

IOM has provided relief for over one million natural disaster-affected and displaced populations in Afghanistan since 2008.

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