PRESS RELEASE

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USAID and Ministry of Higher Education Ensure Accountability through New e-Attendance System

KABUL, AFGHANISTAN–The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) announced the installment ofan e-Attendance System at the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) to enhance transparency of employee attendance and payroll.

The system,consisting of six e-Attendance biometric timekeeping devices, a computer server, uninterrupted power supply equipment, networking devices, and monitoring cameras, willimprove management, productivity, and accountabilityand solve other human resources challenges.

Previously, the ministry's employeesregistered their attendance manually and stood in queues to sign in and out using attendance books. Better accuracy in keeping staffattendance recordsdecreases the chances of proceduralerrors, including unauthorized leave and unplanned overtime, said Minister of Higher Education Farida Momand during an event to announce the new technology.

"We have taken yet another step toward good governance, with an e-Attendance system that will make the attendance process transparent and avoid the long queue and the trouble of signing and stamping," Momand said.

Speaking from the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, USAID Mission Director Herbie Smith said the new system wouldhelp the Ministry of Higher Education increase data accuracy and improve accountability."Today, the new biometric attendance system represents a remarkable step towards public sector accountability and good governance in Afghanistan," Smith said.

In the near future, this system will be connected to the Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS), which will expand moreelectronic governance systemsto further productivity and accountability at the ministry. To ensure the sustainability of this system, USAID trained Ministry staff to operate the machines and database.

The President's Special Representative on Reform and Good GovernanceAhmad Zia Masood, the Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation, and LivestockAssadullah Zamir and the Head of the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service CommissionDr. Ahmad Mushahid also attended the event and spoke about the benefits of e-Attendance and administrative reforms in Afghan government organizations.

Since 2002, USAID has invested over a billion dollars to improve education in Afghanistan. Last year, USAID worked with the Ministry to improve the efficiency and integrity of the Kankor exam through the introduction of an electronic test scoring system.

The American people, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, have provided economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide for more than 50 years."