PRESS RELEASE

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The United States Government Provides $50 million for Immediate Job Creation

KABUL, AFGHANISTAN – The U.S. government is investing an additional $50 million in two on-going projects to stimulate immediate job creation for the Afghan people.

"We recognize that the past year has been a difficult time for the people of Afghanistan," said the United States Ambassador to Afghanistan P. Michael McKinley. "We support the National Unity Government's effort to provide resources for jobs now, to serve as a 'bridge' until the Afghan people feel the improved economic conditions and employment that will eventually result from the Government's reform efforts."

As part of this bridge, the U.S government has contributed an additional $35 million to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund for the National Solidarity Program. This funding will enable Community Development Councils to hire local citizens to implement priority development projects in their villages. It is estimated that Community Development Councils could use the new funding to create approximately 4.5 million days of short-term work in the coming six to nine months.

The other $15 million will fund the creation of thousands of paid, professional apprentice/trainee positions for women at small and medium-sized businesses in the next six to eighteen months. The funding will incentivize the immediate creation of new private sector jobs by lowering the cost to firms for hiring and training new employees. Currently, Afghan women make up only 15 percent of the workforce.

The U.S. government's investment complements the commitment the National Unity Government has made to clear blockages and speed disbursement of on-budget programs already underway, targeting those that have significant job creation effects.

For more information about USAID's programs and interview requests please contact USAID/Afghanistan at (+93 (0) 700-114060) KabulAIDdoc@usaid.gov, http://www.usaid.gov/Afghanistan

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