
MEDIA RELEASE

MOWA and the Ministry of Youth partner to promote young women's role in Afghanistan's development

Young Afghan women prepare to have their concerns taken to the global stage

Kabul, April 12 2005 – The Department of Planning and Public Relations of the Ministry of Women's Affairs has hosted a joint conference with the newly established Ministry of Youth on the role of young women in Afghanistan's reconstruction. Around 70 girls and young women from youth associations, high schools, and Kabul University attended the April 10th conference, which was organized with the technical support of UNIFEM.

The conference was a forum for consultation with young Afghan women as a preparation for raising their concerns at an international level. Five major areas of concern were identified by the young Afghan women during the conference:

1. **Lack of security** (harassment, kidnapping of young girls), which often leads to limited access for young women to education, vocational training, and sports, as well as restrict their mobility;
2. **Economic problems**, with poverty and lack of provision of basic necessities having a strong impact on the lives of young women;
3. **Limited educational facilities**, with poor curricula and insufficient educational opportunities impacting women's potential as social actors;
4. **Traditional practices**, with forced marriage contracts and other imposed decision-making practices undermining young women's rights; and
5. **Limited employment opportunities.**

On April 19th, 2005, the Government of Indonesia will host an Asian-African Workshop in Jakarta on strengthening strategic cooperation in promoting the status and role of women and youth both as actors and beneficiaries of human-centered sustainable development. The Afghan Ministers of Women's Affairs and Youth have been invited to participate in this one-day workshop, and will use the outcomes of this week's conference to develop partnerships and regional awareness for the benefit of young women in Afghanistan.

For additional information, contact:

Homa Sabri
National Policy and Programme Advisor
UNIFEM
070 282 506

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