



PRESS RELEASE

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USAID Holds Workshop on Land Reform in Afghanistan

KABUL, AFGHANISTAN | NOVEMBER 27, 2011 — Achieving secure land rights and improved municipal services are the major goals of USAID's land reform workshop, which began today in Kabul. Upgrading policies and procedures related to informal settlements is an important task for the Afghan Government, and the launch of the Informal Settlement Upgrading and Formalization Workshop brought all stakeholders together to work toward a solution.

Those attending the three-day workshop include some 120 national and provincial officials, as well as representatives from implementing agencies, non-governmental organizations, donors, and private sector companies involved in urban upgrading, land services, cadastral surveying, land laws, dispute resolution, property registration, and land rights.

Speaking at the launch of the event, USAID Deputy Director Jed Barton said, "This land harmonization workshop is striving to help Afghan citizens secure land tenure and fully participate in the political, social, and economic life of the wider society."

Participants are working together to help determine and streamline the settlement formalization process so that a municipality can record properties and streamline taxes, and in return, offer the basic services and infrastructure needed by communities.

The Deputy Director General of the Independent Directorate of Local Governance, Dr. Farid Mamundzai, emphasized the importance and value of upgrading and formalizing settlements in cities throughout Afghanistan.

Workshop participants are discussing current approaches and investments in physical upgrading, and identifying the best ways to replicate and enhance projects throughout the country. They are also working to improve peoples' understanding of the administrative and legal steps required to formalize informal settlements and integrate them in official city plans, as well as to endorse a plan to finalize a National Informal Settlements Urban Upgrading Policy.

Organized jointly by USAID and the Kabul Urban Reconstruction Project of the Ministry of Urban Development Affairs, the workshop is addressing the issues that affect the growth, security, and development of Afghanistan's urban centers, and seek solutions that will encourage economic stability for the government and its citizens.

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