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Exhibit Promotes Textile Business in Nangarhar

JALALABAD, SUNDAY, JANUARY 15, 2012— Textile factories from Nangarhar showcased their homemade products, including scarves, men's and women's shawls, and cotton at a one-day textile exhibition in Jalalabad today. Nangarhar Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NCCI) officials, members of Nangarhar Industrial Association, traders, businessmen, Provincial Council members and other Afghan and U.S. Government representatives attended the opening ceremony.

The eastern region of Afghanistan, particularly Nangarhar, has a long history of textile production. Kama, Rodat, Batkot, and Bihsud districts are well known for weaving cotton cloth, scarves, turbans, towels, traditional woolen hats, blankets, and shawls for the local market.

"The exhibit attracted buyers and helped interlink textile businesses with other markets in Afghanistan. These kinds of gatherings play a vital role in sharing experiences on imported textile varieties available in the market so local production could be improved," said Mohammad Qasim Yousufi, NCCI Executive Manager.

Demand is high in Afghanistan for traditional textile products produced in small-scale factories and home-based businesses. The products are so popular that it was deemed necessary to move from manual to power looms to keep up with demand.

USAID-funded Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North, East, West (IDEA-NEW) project offered support to local factories operating with manual looms, to install automatic power looms -- expanding their production capacity several fold. USAID has assisted 16 small and medium sized textile facilities in Nangarhar, including a textile processing facility that provides washing, dying, and pressing services to other local textile factories. In addition to producing textile products locally, these businesses have generated 91 permanent jobs for locals in the region.

USAID's IDEA-NEW Project focuses on increasing jobs and sales in rural and marginalized communities across the North, East, and West of Afghanistan. It is committed to supporting rural enterprises in terms of building their capacity, providing them with sustainable sources of power and electricity, improving the quality of their products, and linking them to provincial and national markets.

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