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Press Release ‘Afghanistan-Central Asia Trade and Migration’ workshop

The EU UNDP Border Management in Northern Afghanistan planned project activities require that coordination meetings and events involving Afghan, Tajik and other Central Asian border officials are organized, implemented and hosted by the Project. Therefore, UNDP’s EU-BOMNAF Project hosted a Workshop in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, during 25-26 September 2014 to discuss Heart of Asia activities associated with regional security, trade and migration, between Afghanistan and their Central Asian neighbour nations, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

The meeting was attended by over one hundred and twenty representatives from border and customs agencies of Afghanistan and Tajikistan, ministerial representation from both sides of the border, as well as EU donors from the EU Delegations in Kabul and Dushanbe, experts and representatives from the international community working in the areas of trade and migration, customs issues, border management and associated areas.

The overall aim of the event was to encourage and assist collective engagement towards development of capacity and strengthening of coordination and communication between the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and its northern neighbours, the Republics of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, in the field of international border management. Principal areas of focus emphasized cooperation, coordination, collaboration and communication, between Afghanistan and Central Asia.

The event was co-chaired by Mr Nizomiddin Zohidi, deputy minister of the Ministry Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan, Ms. Cecilia Costa, Aid Coordination Task Manager of the EU Delegation in Afghanistan, Mr. Alexander Zuev UN Resident Representative in the Republic of Tajikistan, Mr. Istvan Nyitrai, Charge d'affaires of the European Union in Tajikistan.

In connection with the event Mr. Zohidi expressed that, given the increasing importance of trade and migration worldwide, there should be no obstacles to commerce between neighbouring nations. He also said that organization of similar events have a special role and it is hoped that exchange of ideas for better ways of cooperation between Central Asian countries and Afghanistan are identified during the workshop.

Cross border cooperation and consultation between law enforcement officials is a vital component in the fight against illegal trafficking of narcotics. Such contacts are fostered through EU assistance and law enforcement agencies in both Tajikistan and Afghanistan plan in future to meet regularly to discuss matters of mutual interest and to quickly resolve any challenges which may arise.

The overall objective of the European Union's assistance to Afghanistan is to foster regional cooperation and enable Afghanistan to facilitate secure trade links within its neighbourhood, especially Central Asia. The BOMNAF project is a component of a larger Regional Cooperation Programme of assistance agreed between the European Union and the Government of Afghanistan, and complements other programmes in Afghanistan, in Tajikistan and in Central Asia.

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