

## 250 Attend Annual Legal Awareness Conference on Women's Rights

The conference presented on women's rights laws that have recently been added or revised, such as anti-harassment, human trafficking, administrative procedures and the protection of corruption whistle-blowers. In the past, there was no legal basis for the protection of whistle-blowers. According to the new laws, organisations are now required to provide this basis to make it easier for women to come forward. Mr Aminullah Aminy, Head of the DoJ in Balkh stated, 'Currently, we have enough legal protective measures for the whistle-blowers. You – as the multipliers and the public – are expected to support your government and the society with these whistle-blowing measures.'

Furthermore, participants were cleared up on harassment laws. The attendees now better understand what is considered harassment under the law, examples of which can occur in normal day-to-day communications. Awareness of these topics will help fight corruption and tackle social norms.

The presentations, led by the DoJ, were given in order to raise awareness on the new laws and policies, and so build a more stable and secure society. Participants were given a leaflet of relevant legal information by the Legal Aid Department of the DoJ, which they could take home with them. The conference ended with a question and answer session clarifying partner roles and responsibilities.

Ms Freba Akbary, one of the presenters, explained, 'Creating awareness about these legal issues can help decrease female harassment in society and help to prosecute the perpetrators.'

The Afghan-German Cooperation through its Rule of Law programme is supporting the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) in implementing its women's rights strategy. The strategy is embedded in different parts of the new National Strategy of the MoJ, and is actively helping women achieve access to justice and opportunities. It has been revised to include interventions at provincial and district level, thus decentralising its measures. It now expands beyond central provinces, like Kabul, with the respective partners.

*The programme Promotion of the Rule of Law in Afghanistan (RoL) is implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The programme aims at ensuring the rule of law, a well-functioning judicial system and legal security in Afghanistan. To ensure legal security for all citizens, RoL has been supporting so-called Huquq bureaus which handled more than 77,000 civil cases since 2013. In the same time, to support higher legal education, RoL provided more than 30,000 books to law and sharia faculties, organised more than 150 courses on legal topics for students and lecturers and awarded more than 60 students with scholarships. RoL further trained almost 13,000 police staff to carry out duties according to law. The programme also emphasises promoting women's rights and strengthening their access to justice as well as the job market.*

Teaser text:

On Thursday, an annual legal awareness conference on women's rights was held in Mazar-e Sharif to raise public awareness of new laws. These laws will help address social problems, strengthen the rule of law, decrease corruption, and help build trust between the government and public. A total of 250 participants, among them 100 women, from different stakeholder groups attended, including representatives of the Department of Justice (DoJ), the Department of Women Affairs (DoWA), provincial courts, the prosecution office, Shuras, District Governor offices, the police, as well as Mullahs, teachers, community members, Madrasa students, and civil society actors. The Afghan-German Cooperation supported the event.

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20.10.2019

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