
KAZAKHSTAN HELPS DEVELOP CAPACITIES OF WOMEN PUBLIC HEALTH PROFESSIONALS FROM AFGHANISTAN

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A two-week workshop in maternal and child healthcare for public health professionals from Afghanistan commenced at Nazarbayev University in Astana on March 31. The workshop marks an important milestone in the cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on capacitating Kazakhstans Official Development Assistance (ODA) system within the framework of joint project Promoting Kazakhstans Official Development Assistance Cooperation with Afghanistan. The project is a multilateral partnership benefiting from close cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, UNDP, the Embassy of Japan to Kazakhstan and the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to Kazakhstan. The project is funded by the Government of Japan through the Japan-UNDP Partnership Fund.

The project serves the purpose of piloting Kazakhstans ODA initiative by developing capacity of Kazakhstan Government in designing and implementing development projects, whilst also expanding economic independence and building capacity of Afghan women. Kazakhstan shares experience and best practices with Afghan counterparts in the area of maternal and child healthcare. Over the course of the workshop the participants will learn from leading experts at Nazarbayev Universitys School of Medicine, National Laboratory Astana, and the National Research Center for Maternal and Child Health. The workshop will focus on the affordable and easy ways of maintaining equipment and practices to increase the relevance of knowledge acquired in the course of the workshop, whilst also taking Afghan context into consideration.

Over the past two decades Kazakhstan has accomplished tremendous developmental progress in numerous areas, including maternal and child healthcare. The maternal and child mortality figures saw dramatic improvement due to the dedicated effort of the government and the international community. For example, the country has achieved a two-thirds reduction in the deaths among children under age 5, whilst maternal mortality rate fell from 55 per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 12.6 in 2013. These achievements are evidence of hard work and strategic vision, and we commend Kazakhstans willingness to share its knowledge and experience through the official development assistance initiatives, said UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative Norimasa Shimomura.

Kazakhstan is working towards establishing national ODA operator agency (KazAID), which will further professionalize Kazakhstans ODA system by ensuring accountability, efficiency and sustainability of Kazakhstans development assistance effort.

Kazakhstan is an active and important member of the international community. Earlier this year under Kazakhstans Presidency of the UN Security Council, a cornerstone of the agenda was bringing peace and prosperity to Afghanistan. An effective way to do this is by offering development cooperation now that Kazakhstan has joined the ranks of donor countries. Over the past two decades, Kazakhstan has provided significant amount of foreign assistance, said Norimasa Shimomura.

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