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RAMP UP – North Assists Municipalities to Facilitate Public Workshops on a New Municipal Law



Participants in Sar-e-Pul broke into groups to discuss the draft Municipal Law on April 10-11, 2012.

The current Municipal Law was developed and instituted during Taliban rule in 2000. For the past few years, Afghan leaders have been working on revising and updating the law. Most importantly, the new law would be vetted by citizens across Afghanistan before being institutionalized.

The new draft Municipal Law was finalized in late 2011 by the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG). Citizens were to be consulted on the draft in public workshops in all municipalities before sending it to the Parliament and the President. IDLG requested that the Regional Afghan Municipalities Program for Urban Populations Regional Command North (RAMP UP – North or RU-N) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) facilitate these public workshops, which lasted for two consecutive days, April 10-11, 2012.

In Faizabad, Pul-e-Khumri, Sar-e-Pul, and Taloqan, RU-N advisors facilitated the workshops, while in Aybak, Kunduz, Maymana, Mazar-e-Sharif, and Sheberghan, they supported UNDP’s facilitation. Over 550 participants attended the first day, over 620 participants attended the second day, and more than 60 of these participants were women. Participants included members of the elected provincial councils, municipal district representatives (*kalanTERS*), civil society (including women and youth) representatives, NGOs, and private sector representatives.

Governors and mayors gave opening remarks stating the importance of consulting with citizens on the draft law, since they would be most affected by the contents. Participants were then divided into smaller working groups and various provisions of the draft law were distributed to the groups. Several hours of discussions ensued, and citizens noted their concerns and suggestions. Before concluding the workshop on the second day, the groups presented their compiled concerns and suggestions to all participants.

Mohammad Yaqub, one of the participants in Sar-e-Pul, stated that “the draft law has set clear education criteria but not clear age requirements for candidates running for the office of mayor. The article that deals with age requirements states that the candidate should be 30 years old. I think that the article should set clear age boundaries. For example, it should say ‘at least 30’ or ‘between 30 and 65’. The law does not state how many times a person can run for the office of mayor either.”

Huma Gohari, Civil Society Manager for RU-N stated that several participants in Pul-e-Khumri challenged these criteria for mayors. “The challenges included ambiguity of age and the number of years the candidate should have lived in the constituency. Participants also expressed concern over the absence of provisions dealing with price control, which was one of the main responsibilities of municipalities in the past. “

Other common concerns centered on land distribution issues and unfair criteria for differentiation between a first grade and second grade municipality.

Turyalai Razaqyar , the former Director of Information and Culture for Balkh Province stated with a sense of humor “I did not know that the Taliban Law was being enforced on us until today”, referring to the current Municipal Law.

The Head of the General Directorate of Municipal Affairs (GDMA) stated that the main goal for these gatherings was to promote good governance by involving citizens, who could enrich the draft law by bringing new ideas to it.



“The new law should include provisions regulating fair distribution of land for housing.”

—a female participant from Mazar-e-Sharif

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