

Press Release
Rome – July 28, 2008

NEW IDLO PROGRAM ON FAMILY LAW BEGINS IN KABUL

The International Development Law Organization (IDLO) today begins the latest in a series of courses on family law in Afghanistan; the first specialist training to be made available on the daily work of family court judges in the country.

In collaboration with the Supreme Court, IDLO is working closely with over 180 Afghan judges in an effort to increase legal awareness of human rights and address common misconceptions in Afghanistan, particularly with regard to the rights of married women and children according to the law and Islam.

The workshops will examine the practical problems faced by family court judges and provide information on customary law in relation to the family, principles of jurisprudence, family law in the Afghan Civil Code, Civil Procedure, and legal research. The International Bar Association is providing instruction on the newly adopted Advocates Law, which is paving the way for the development of a more regulated and accountable legal sector.

Among those being trained are both male and female judges from the primary and appeal courts, including the family court. IDLO provides participating judges with set of five books on family law, and the Organization has also developed an audio drama detailing a family law case, copies of which are available from the IDLO library in Kabul (mismail@idlo.int).

Other recent IDLO initiatives in Afghanistan include:

Legal Training for Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan

In March 2008, IDLO began training Counter Narcotics Police in Afghanistan on their rights and duties under the domestic and international law. The courses cover relevant aspects of the Constitution, substantive narcotics law, criminal procedure, police law and the role of law enforcers in narcotics cases, international conventions and international cooperation and enforcement mechanism.

Juvenile Justice

Program on juvenile justice principles, including a review of the current juvenile justice law and proposed new regulations, for lawyers from the Juvenile Justice Department in the Ministry of Justice in Kabul. IDLO's Afghan legal instructors were joined by experts from UNICEF and the UNODC, who provided guidance on the application of the Juvenile Justice 2005 Code.

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Development of Legal Textbooks

IDLO is assisting and coordinating the work of a committee of prominent professors and legal experts from Afghanistan, Egypt and Tunisia in revising and developing crucial legal texts for use in the seven faculties of Law and Political Sciences of Afghanistan Universities. IDLO is presently working on five text books covering general criminal law, criminology, penology, international public law, and commercial procedure.

Basic Legal Training reaches the Provinces

IDLO has so far provided 12 basic legal skills programs for a total of 420 professionals working in the Ministry of Justice. In May 2008, the latest five-week program was run in Mazar-e-Sharif, the first time it has been possible to provide basic legal skills support outside Kabul. Afghan legal staff from the Hoqooq and State Cases Departments were able to lead the course, following intensive IDLO instruction.

Criminal Code constitutional law and legal drafting

In Spring 2008, IDLO began a new series of training workshops for legal staff at the National Assembly of Afghanistan, which is one of the key institutions responsible for Afghanistan's rapidly changing legal environment. Key topics to be covered include: Afghanistan's Criminal Code, intellectual property, constitutional law and legal drafting.

Legal Research

IDLO has been providing specialized training on legal research skills for 132 professionals, university professors and judges from the Afghan National Assembly, Supreme Court, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Sharia Faculty at Kabul University.

Library Skills

IDLO is currently working with the Kabul University Central Library on a training program for 60 librarians from Ministry of Justice and Kabul University (Faculty of Law and Political Science and the Faculty of Sharia) as part of a program to rebuild and modernize existing libraries and research institutions and to train Afghan professionals to manage these facilities.

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For further information, please contact:

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IDLO (International Development Law Organization) is an international, inter-governmental organization with a mandate to promote the Rule of Law and good governance in developing countries, countries in economic transition and countries emerging from post-conflict situations. Since its establishment in 1983, IDLO has worked with more than 17,000 lawyers, magistrates and officials from approximately 176 countries.

IDLO has its Headquarters in Rome, Italy and two Regional Offices; in Cairo, Egypt, covering Arabic-speaking countries and in Sydney, Australia, covering the Asia Pacific area. IDLO currently operates Project Offices in Afghanistan, Indonesia and Kyrgyzstan.

IDLO is funded by contributions from its 18 Member States and other donors.

For detailed information on IDLO and its activities, please refer to our website at www.idlo.int