

**Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation & Development**

PRESS RELEASE

MRRD Officially Inaugurated its New Office Facilities

July 14, 2007 (Kabul) – First voice – president of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Mr. Ahmad Zia Masoud officially inaugurated the new office facilities of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD).

The inauguration ceremony which begun with the recitation of verses from the Holy Quran, was attended by government high ranking officials, cabinet ministers, donors, Kabul based foreign diplomats and some of the MRRD facilitating partners.

The construction work of the ministry's new office facilities started in 1383 which include a three story main building and 6 two story buildings with the capacity of 152 rooms and a conference hall.

MRRD Minister Mohammad Ehsan Zia welcomed the guests and talked about the achievements of his ministry "Our top priority is to improve and enhance the working capacities of our staff. Today, 90% of our workforce is computer literate, they know how to use and exploit the internet for their research, administration, designs and financial issues. You would hardly find a hand-written letter in the ministry. All our work is done by computers".

In all 34 provinces, MRRD provincial offices have been rehabilitated and communication between the provincial offices and Kabul has been established. Through its five principal development programmes, the ministry has so far constructed 10,996 km roads, 3047 meter bridges, dug 44,180 wells, constructed 3,327 water reservoirs, built 281 km of clean drinking water networks, created 72,897 kilowatt electricity, constructed/rehabilitated 3,236 km of canals, loaned 90 million USD to 3, 25,000.00 individuals, built 371 primary and high schools and has built 333 public buildings.

The rural people of Afghanistan are moving in to the cities in search of work and the ultimate aim of MRRD is to create job opportunities for the rural people in their areas. "When rural people have the opportunity to have a job in their districts, then they will stop coming in to the cities in search of work", said the Minister. "In collaboration with the ministry for the development of cities, MRRD will work to find shelter and facilitate job opportunities for our rural people".

First voice – president of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (IRA) praised the development activities of the ministry and said that MRRD has been reducing the distance between the rural areas and the cities and it is trying to reduce poverty in the countryside. He called on the leadership of MRRD to use the experiences of other development countries.