

Minutes

of the Steering Committee meeting of the

“Promotion of social and economic opportunities for women and youth in Zerafshan valley of Tajikistan” and “Strengthening communities in Khatlon Region and Rasht Valley of Tajikistan” projects

Date: January 31, 2020

Venue: Conference Hall of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of RT
Bokhtar str. 37, Dushanbe

List of participants:

Steering Committee members:

1. Mr. Tojiddin Jurazoda, Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Tajikistan
2. Mr. Igor Lyakin-Frolov, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Tajikistan
3. Ms. Pratibha Mehta, UNDP Tajikistan Resident Representative

Invited participants:

4. Ms. Natalia Strigunova, Deputy Director of the Department of Multilateral Economic Cooperation and Special Projects, Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation
5. Mr. Vladimir Vaganov, Advisor, Department of Multilateral Economic Cooperation and Special Projects, Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation
6. Mr. Konstantin Kulikov, Advisor, Department of International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation
7. Mr. Alexander Averchenkov, Manager of the Russia-UNDP Trust Fund for Development, Head of UNDP Partnership support office in the Russian Federation
8. Mr. Kirill Khandogin, Second Secretary, Embassy of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Tajikistan
9. Mr. Dzhovid Khuseinov, Chief specialist of the Department of administration of free economic zones, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Tajikistan
10. Mr. Karina Burykh, Executive Director of Business School
11. Mr. Jahongir Rajabov, Business School
12. Mr. Muzaffar Imomnazarov, Technological University of Tajikistan
13. Mr. Mubin Rustamov, ARR/Head of Programme, UNDP
14. Mr. Firuz Saidkhadzhaev, Senior Economic Development Officer, UNDP SED Cluster
15. Ms. Zarina Juraeva, M&E Specialist, UNDP SED Cluster
16. Ms. Tahmina Rozikova, Communication and Partnership Specialist, UNDP SED Cluster
17. Mr. Daler Nazarov, Area Manager of Ayni Field Project Office, UNDP
18. Ms. Tahmina Salomova, Individual Consultant (minutes taker)

Agenda:

10:30-10:45	Opening speeches Mr. Tojiddin Jurazoda, Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Tajikistan Mr. Igor Lyakin-Frolov, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Tajikistan Ms. Pratibha Mehta, Resident Representative, UNDP Tajikistan
10:45–11:00	Presentation of results of the “Promotion of social and economic opportunities for women and youth of Zerafshan Valley of Tajikistan” project Mr. Firuz Saidkhadzhaev, Senior Economic Development Officer, UNDP
11:00–11:10	Q&A session
11:10–11:20	Presentation of work plan of the “Strengthening communities in Khatlon Region and Rasht Valley of Tajikistan” project for 2020 Mr. Firuz Saidkhadzhaev, Senior Economic Development Officer, UNDP
11:20–11:30	Q&A session, discussion.
11:30	Conclusions, closing remarks.

The course of the meeting:

Mr. **Tojiddin Jurazoda** welcomed guests and expressed gratitude to the Government of the Russian Federation and UNDP Tajikistan for the support and productive collaboration. He outlined the importance of this partnership aimed at implementation of National Development Strategy (NDS) and Mid-term development (MTD) program to nationalize and localize SDGs. He noted that this year MTD program is coming to the end and MEDT is in the process of analyzing NDS first phase results and identification of country priorities for the coming years.

Mr. Jurazoda outlined the importance of jointly implemented initiatives that forwarded at solving socio-economic problems and making a notable contribution in achieving the strategic goals of the country. He mentioned key results of the project implemented in Zerafshan Valley that put strong emphasis on promoting employable skills and developing capacities for better local employment, with a particular focus on women and youth. As well he introduced everyone with the new project to be implemented in Khatlon Region and Rasht Valley where jobs and skills development embedded as key part.

Deputy Minister handed the floor to Mr. Igor Lyakin-Frolov, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Tajikistan.

Mr. **Igor Lyakin-Frolov** the welcomed participants of the meeting. He emphasized special relations of Tajikistan and the Russian Federation, partnership of the two countries that established robust cooperation within the framework of bilateral relations forwarded on economic development.

Mr. Lyakin-Frolov mentioned about monitoring visit of Russian delegation to projects sites implemented in Khatlon region, results of the meeting with project beneficiaries on project effectiveness.

He highlighted that for the last year Russian Federation funded five projects with a total budget of more than \$ 5 million. H.E. Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Tajikistan informed about the launch of new initiative on strengthening communities in Khatlon and Rasht regions on \$ 1.85 million.

He outlined that currently, the Russian Federation pays attention to supporting business and innovation for young people where application of the Russian experience in Tajikistan may be useful, climate change in the agricultural, water and tourism sectors development.

The floor was handed to Ms. **Pratibha Mehta**, UNDP Resident Representative in Tajikistan.

Ms. **Pratibha Mehta** welcomed the participants and thanked the Government of the Russian Federation for their cooperation and financial support in the implementation of projects aimed at developing entrepreneurship, innovative ideas, and facilitation in the creation of new employment opportunities for vulnerable people.

She recalled UNDP and Russian Trust Fund collaboration that started since 2014 for addressing poverty in remote areas, empowering women and youth, strengthening disaster risk preparedness, and climate change adaptation.

UNDP Resident Representative indicated the press-conference results dedicated to the joint project; several success factors outlined by stakeholders; importance of ensuring continuity of business skill development and mentoring support for the entrepreneurs in rural areas.

Ms. Pratibha Mehta outlined about the new project which will continue the partnership approach to support vulnerable rural communities in Rasht and Khatlon regions and improve employability and agribusiness through innovative solutions.

Project Presentation

Presentation of Mr. Firuz Saidkhadzhaev on the results of the project "Promotion of social and economic opportunities for women and youth of Zerafshan valley of Tajikistan" (attached)

Questions and Answers, Comments

Comment, Mr. Igor Lyakin-Frolov: The results are impressive, huge work has been done. Ensure broad media coverage of the results and project's implementing process.

Comment, Mr. Alexander Averchenkov: Ensure that project financial performance has disaggregated data of every stakeholder input.

Ms. Karina Burykh shared experience of Business School in Khuhistoni Mastchoh where they faced with challenges of attracting women in capacity building activities which was a new experience. She highlighted importance of continuation of these joint initiatives in the rural areas, suggested organizing more events such as study tours and platforms for networking between young people and experienced entrepreneurs in future projects.

Presentation of project final evaluation results by Jovidsho Juraev National Consultant (attached)

Presentation of work plan of the "Strengthening communities in Khatlon Region and Rasht Valley of Tajikistan" project for 2020 (attached)

Mr. Tojiddin Jurazoda expressed MEDT's deep appreciation to the Government of Russian Federation, and the Trust Fund for Development and UNDP for their collaboration and commitment to improve lives of people of Tajikistan, especially in rural areas helping achieve the SDGs. He thanked all partners for the suggestions and noted that all recommendations will be considered in the implementation process of newly launched project for 2020.

Steering Committee decisions:

1. Approved annual report of the "Promotion of social and economic opportunities for women and youth in Zerafshan valley of Tajikistan" project. Project was officially closed.
2. Approved the Work Plan of the "Strengthening communities in Khatlon Region and Rasht Valley of Tajikistan" project for 2020
3. Russia-UNDP Trust Fund for Development's request to ensure disaggregated data in financial performance table of the projects was supported by the project Steering Committee
4. Establishment of communication platform for better media coverage of implementing process of initiatives.