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Minutes of Project Steering Committee Meeting

Fostering Participatory Development in Bordering Settlements of Gegharkunik and Vayots Dzor Regions (GVD)

Building Back Better through Strengthening Resilience of Rural Communities in Ararat, Aragatsotn, Armavir and Kotayk regions (AAAK)

Date, time: 03 February 2021; 11:00 -12:10;

VENUE: Zoom online meeting

Agenda

11:00-11.10	Welcome
	Welcome remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Dmitry Mariyasin, UNDP DRR • Mr. Vache Terteryan, Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure of RA • Mr. Dmitry Ryakhovski, First Secretary, Embassy of Russian Federation
11:10-11.25	Presentation of 2020 Annual report of GVD project
11:25-11.35	Q&A
11:35-11.50	Presentation of workplans for 2021 of GVD and AAAK projects
11:50-12.00	Q&A
12.00-12.10	Approval of 2021 workplans and closing remarks

List of Participants

Name	Position, Agency	Status
Vache Terteryan	Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure	Committee full member, Meeting co-chair
Dmitry Mariyasin	UNDP Resident Representative	Committee full member, Meeting co-chair
Dmitry Ryakhovski	First Secretary, Embassy of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Armenia	Committee full member

Natalia Viktorova	Third Secretary, Embassy of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Armenia	
Garik Khachikyan	Policy Advisor, UNDP	
Anna Gyurjyan	Socio-Economic Governance Portfolio Manager, UNDP Armenia	
Arman Valesyan	Programme Manager of GVD and AAAK projects, UNDP Armenia	
Tatevik Hovsepyan	Programme associate of GVD and AAAK projects, UNDP Armenia	

Opening and welcome remarks were delivered by: Mr. Dmitry Mariyasin, UNDP Resident Representative; Mr. Vache Terteryan, Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and infrastructure of the RA; Mr. Dmitry Ryakhovski, First Secretary, Embassy of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Armenia:

Mr. Mariyasin opened his speech by highlighting the successful cooperation between UNDP and the Government of the Russian Federation lasting for over 7 years, noting that the birth of the two projects (GVD in 2020 and AAAK in 2021), along with the successful completion of Tavush project, is a vivid example of this fruitful collaboration. He stressed out the importance of focusing on lessons learnt to maximum support the socio-economic development of bordering settlements when opting to the implementation of both projects this year. Based on the observations and findings, as a result of which the concept AAAK was designed, he also emphasized the importance of focusing on complex territorial development. Mr. Maryasin outlined the significance of working towards the smooth exit from the socio-economic crisis that Covid-19 and NK war had created in the country. He also added that while acting within the scope of the project requirements, AAAK will direct some of the actions towards restoring and rebuilding the socio-economic state of the regions. He concluded his word by stressing out the importance of constant cooperation with both Russian partners as well as local authorities given their strategic and advanced approach to overcoming the crisis in the country.

Mr. Terteryan welcomed the initiative of the new AAAK project. He talked about the history of the ongoing cooperation between the Ministry and UNDP which reported and continues to report fruitful results. He also welcomed the fact that with the start of AAAK not only more regions will be involved but also more tailored solutions and approaches will be provided to those regions based on the previously gained experience. Mr. Terteryan concluded his word by once again highlighting the collaboration with UNDP, which has become a common goal-based teamwork rather than an official cooperation.

Mr. Ryakhovski also welcomed the initiative of AAAK project by highlighting the strategic importance of both projects as they aim in bringing socio-economic development for regions and overcoming the crisis that Armenia is facing as a result of Covid-19 and NK war.

Presentation was made by: Mr. Arman Valesyan, Manager of GVD and AAAK Projects

Mr. Valesyan presented the results of year 2020 of GVD project and the workplans of GVD and AAAK for 2021 focusing on the following main objectives:

- Participatory planning
- Food Security (Seed Reserve Logistic Center; Start Me UP)
- SME Support (Bakeries, Together, School Canteens, Schools' infrastructure rehabilitation; Solar 24, Machinery renovation)

- Infrastructure (Support in leasing; Production and processing equipment; Basic infrastructure; Seeding; Healthcare infrastructure rehabilitation)
- Innovation (E-commerce, Future is today equipment)

Based on the presentation, the members made the following remarks:

1. **Ms. Gyurjyan** highlighted the issues regarding the implementation of GVD caused by the outbreak of Covid-19 and the escalation of NK conflict, including the imposed limitations on trips to the targeted settlements that were most affected. She also mentioned the implementation of several pilot activities throughout GVD project, which helped better identify the needs of the bordering communities and provide tailored solutions to those needs in both projects. Ms Gyurjyan noted that despite all the challenges thrown to the way, the project successfully achieved the realization of the first phase by reaching the target it had set initially.
2. **Mr. Mariyasin** thanked for the great work done throughout the difficult year despite all the challenges and limitations imposed by the pandemic as well as the NK war. He mentioned the importance of field visits for this project particularly, which had all been frozen for several months, making it harder to keep track on the ongoing activities in the settlements, and nevertheless the project managed to give highly satisfying results. He noted particularly the satisfying results registered in Gegharkunik region, which was perhaps due to the active collaboration and involvement of the Regional Head as well as the community representatives and hoped that AAKK will be more balanced in terms of regional coverage. Mr. Maryasin suggested to have an aggregated information about the Seed Reserve Center and Smart Barns, that could be presented to different parties for further collaboration. Fixing the positive results in terms of employment, he also highlighted that more employment opportunities can be created this year. He suggested providing a more detailed financial report on Innovation component and the cooperation with Impact Aim. In addition to that he noted the lack of visibility in the project due to the limitations imposed by Covid as well as the war and pointed the importance of putting a stronger emphasis on this aspect in 2021 (more pictures, video materials, news articles, success stories etc.). He welcomed the initiative of the installation of energy efficient street luminaries and offered having an aggregated information/one pager on the advantages and the positive impact of the initiative and concluded his word by stressing out the significance of constant collaboration with community representatives as well as local authorities in the regions.

Mr. Terteryan noted that it is more difficult to work in Gegharkunik marz than in Vayots Dzor as the latter has received more support and investment from the international community and is quite experienced in working with donors. In addition, Gegharkunik marz was directly hit by the conflict and more activities implemented there in 2020 were justified. However, in 2021 more balanced approach would be preferable. He also agreed to increase visibility of the activities, and suggested to work closer with the Ministry on disseminating of the information. Mr. Terteryan highlighted the importance of gradually going “back to normal” mode through implementing activities and initiatives targeting sustainable development overall. He concluded with the acknowledgement of the work done by UNDP so far and wished further success in piloting new and innovative initiatives.

Ms. Viktorova thanked the team for the great work and impressive results and wished to keep the pace and produce even better results in the coming years.

Mr. Mariyasin thanked all committee members for the support and cooperation.

3. Summing up, **Mr. Mariyasin** highlighted the following main points:
 - The Committee approves the Annul workplan for 2021 for both projects;

- The Project should consider ensuring a balanced regional coverage in both projects as well as increased visibility;
- The Project should emphasize all components, including the aspect of innovation and the collaboration with Impact Aim;
- The Project should focus on creating more employment opportunities.

The Committee approved all the expressed suggestions with no objection to further implementation of the project in accord to the workplan for 2021.

Agreed on behalf of the RA Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure


Signature: 

Mr. Vache Terteryan,

Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure

Date: 18-фев-2021

Agreed on behalf of the Embassy of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Armenia


Signature: 

Mr. Dmitry Ryakhovskiy

First Secretary, Embassy of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Armenia

Date: 19-фев-2021

Agreed on behalf of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP)

Signature: 

Mr. Dmitry Mariyasin

UNDP Resident Representative

Date: 21-Feb-2021

CC:

A. Gyurjyan	Socio-Economic Governance Portfolio Manager, UNDP Armenia
A. Valesyan	Programme Manager of GVD and AAK projects, UNDP Armenia