

REPORT ON ABDULHADI ACHAKZAI'S PRESENTATION AT THE NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURE CLUSTER (FSAC) MONTHLY MEETING

20 July, 2023

Report Details

On July 19, 2023, the National Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC) held its Monthly Meeting virtually. The meeting was attended by approximately 120 FSAC cluster members, including Mr. Daniel Mlenga, the Technical Advisor and Food Security and Agriculture Cluster Coordinator for UN-FAO, and Mr. Sadiquallah Rahmati, the Chair and Co-Chair of the FSAC Cluster.

The main topic of the meeting was “Impacts of Climate Change on Humanitarian Interventions in Afghanistan.” Mr. Abdulhadi Achakzai, the founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Environmental Protection Trainings and Development Organization (EPTDO), delivered a presentation on the topic.

During the presentation, Mr. Achakzai discussed the significant impacts of climate change on livelihoods, particularly in vulnerable communities that rely on natural resources for their survival. He highlighted several ways in which climate change can affect livelihoods, including:

1. Changes in temperature and precipitation patterns leading to reduced agricultural productivity and crop yields, resulting in food insecurity and loss of income for farmers.
2. Extreme weather events such as floods, droughts, and storms that damage infrastructure and destroy crops, leading to loss of livelihoods and income.
3. Climate variability that affects water availability, impacting agricultural productivity, water supply for households, and access to water for livestock.

Mr. Achakzai also discussed the devastating impact of climate change on health, which includes the scarcity of drinking water leading to people drinking unclean water, eating unsafe food, and being affected by air pollution. He also highlighted that due to air pollution, people in Afghanistan, especially in Kabul, are at risk of heart diseases, skin diseases, cancer, and lung diseases.

Another significant impact of climate change that Mr. Achakzai discussed is migration. Drought has led to increased migration, both within Afghanistan and to neighboring countries, as people who have lost their livelihoods due to drought often have no other option but to migrate in search of work or food. He reported that more than 5.1 million Afghans are displaced, with the majority being due to climate change effects.

Mr. Achakzai also discussed the impact of climate change on hunger and famine. Due to droughts, farmers' productivity is greatly reduced, their livestock have insufficient facilities, and reduced income has made it difficult for people to meet their basic needs. Eighty percent 80% of the Afghan

population have direct or indirect access to agriculture, and droughts have resulted in thousands of acres of land dried up, greatly affecting agricultural productivity.

Mr. Achakzai also discussed the severe impact of air pollution on the lives of local people in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is one of the lowest emitters of greenhouse gases but is among the top six countries most vulnerable to climate change. He explained that illegal housing, increased population, and limited access to electricity lead to people burning plastics, car old tires, and low-quality coal, which produce immense carbon and threaten the lives of citizens. Industrial companies, baths, restaurants, and brick factories also use plastics, old tires, poor-quality fuel, and raw coal to produce energy, which increases air pollution.

To mitigate the impacts of climate change on humanitarian interventions, Mr. Achakzai discussed several activities that the EPTDO is conducting, including public awareness programs to educate local communities about the impacts of climate change, academic dialogues to exchange ideas and share technical insights, bicycle riding campaigns to motivate people to use basic and local transportation, and planting thousands of trees in public places. The EPTDO is also implementing multiple development and livelihood-related projects on behalf of donors, strengthening technical capacities of local communities to improve their family food security, and building their resilience with the impacts of economic and climate change shocks.

Mr. Achakzai shared that EPTDO is the only organization from Afghanistan accredited with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and was granted observer status at the United Nations Environmental Assembly (UNEA) of the UNEP. As an accredited NGO with the UNFCCC, EPTDO is eligible to attend all UN-Climate Change conferences worldwide. Mr. Achakzai stated that I was officially invited to the United Nations 27th Conference of the Parties (COP27), held in Egypt in 2022 and the Bonn Climate Change International Conference held in Bonn, Germany, from June 5 to June 15, 2023.

Finally, Mr. Achakzai shared the importance of the upcoming COP28 conference, which will take place in Dubai, UAE, in December 2023. He stated the EPTDO as the only accredited national-level organization with the UNFCCC, will attend the COP28 conference to advocate for climate change issues in Afghanistan, including finding partners to support climate change mitigation and adaptation projects in the country.

At the end, Mr. Abdulhadi Achakzai's presentation at the National Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC) Monthly Meeting provided valuable insights into the impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities in Afghanistan and the efforts being made to mitigate these impacts. His presentation highlighted the important information about EPTDO participation in the upcoming COP28 conference. He called for cooperation from all members of the FSAC.

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