



PRESS RELEASE

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USAID and WHO Strengthen Health Sector on Gender-Based Violence

Kabul, Afghanistan – To commemorate the global 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence campaign and International Human Rights Day, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the World Health Organization (WHO) announced a partnership to strengthen the health sector's ability to identify and treat survivors of gender-based violence in Afghanistan.

The Gender-based Violence Treatment Protocol Project will train more than 6,000 healthcare providers in all 34 provinces, including doctors, nurses and midwives, on a newly-developed protocol for helping survivors of gender-based violence.

“Gender-based violence often seriously jeopardizes both the mental and physical health of women and girls, including, in many instances, their sexual and reproductive health,” said USAID Afghanistan Mission Director Herbert Smith. “We must involve and educate men and boys. Gender-based violence is not only a women’s issue, it is a human rights issue.”

“Healthcare providers are often the first point of contact for these survivors, which are why it is absolutely essential for them to be able to recognize signs of gender-based violence and respond appropriately. This project will not only enhance the capacity of healthcare providers to provide better quality care for survivors, but also strengthen the overall health system to respond effectively to gender-based violence,” said Dr. Richard Peepkorn, WHO Country Representative in Afghanistan.

The WHO and the Ministry of Public Health will jointly implement the Gender-based Violence Treatment Protocol Project. USAID will contribute \$4.9 million in funding for the program. The Italian Government, through its Embassy’s Development Cooperation Office, will also support the project with one million Euros over two years.

Gender-based violence is an urgent public health priority and a serious human rights violation. Estimates show that a significant number of women in Afghanistan experience at least one form of domestic violence.

For more information about USAID’s programs and interview requests, please contact: telephone +93 700113553, KabulAIDdoc@usaid.gov, or www.usaid.gov/Afghanistan

For more information about the role of the WHO, contact: Sini Ramos, ramos@who.int +93 782 200 354

The American people, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, have provided economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide for more than 50 years.”