

Main Office  
Paikob-e-Naswar, Wazirabad  
PO Box 208, Kabul  
Afghanistan  
Phone: +93 (0) 20 22 01 750  
Mobile: +93 (0) 70 28 82 32  
E-mail: [dacaar@dacaar.org](mailto:dacaar@dacaar.org)  
[www.dacaar.org](http://www.dacaar.org)

دفتر مرکزی  
پایکوب نسوار، وزیرآباد  
پست بکس کابل ۲۰۸  
افغانستان  
نمبر تېلېفون: +۹۳ (۰) ۲۰ ۲۲۰۱ ۷۵۰  
نمبر موبایل: +۹۳ (۰) ۷۰ ۲۸ ۸۲ ۳۲۰  
ایمیل: [dacaar@dacaar.org](mailto:dacaar@dacaar.org)  
[www.dacaar.org](http://www.dacaar.org)

## PRESS RELEASE

Kabul, 28<sup>th</sup> November 2006

### **Saffron a good alternative to opium cultivation, Afghan farmers told**

A new national saffron co-ordination team led by Afghanistan's Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation is to help Afghan farmers grow the high-value 'red-gold' cash crop, providing them an alternative to opium cultivation, participants at Afghanistan's first national conference on saffron recently heard.

Training for saffron growers, provided by DACAAR and funded by International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) through the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), has been taking place for some years – and now, the new co-ordination team will step up measures to promote a higher quality of saffron that will be able to fetch high prices internationally.

The establishment of a saffron co-ordination team was one of 14 recommendations for a national strategy on saffron agreed on by saffron producers, agricultural advisors and ministry representatives, who travelled to Herat for the conference. More than 100 stakeholders participated.

At the conference ICARDA'S Programme Manager Najib Malik said:

- Saffron's clear potential as a high-value cash crop means many Afghan farmers have already begun cultivating it as an alternative to opium. To penetrate the international market, we now have to pay serious attention to quality control, certification and packaging.

Jahangir Khan, DACAAR's Natural Resource programme manager said:

- This spice crop can provide employment for entire households. An enhanced training programme will help boost saffron production throughout Afghanistan.

Najia Latif, a woman from Pashtun Zarghun in Herat province said:

- With the income from selling saffron, I have bought much-needed carpets and new clothes for my children. I have also bought medicine to treat a serious health problem – I couldn't afford it before.

The Herat conference, held 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> November was a joint initiative between DACAAR, ICARDA and the Afghan Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, as part of a three-year programme supported by DFID's Research in Alternative Livelihoods Fund (RALF).

For further information please contact:

NRM Coordinator Jahangir Khan  
Kabul, Afghanistan  
Tel.: +93 (0) 70 29 51 94  
E-mail: [j.khan@dacaar.org](mailto:j.khan@dacaar.org)

Public Information Officer Christian Jepsen  
Kabul, Afghanistan  
Tel.: +93 (0) 797 16 46 38  
E-mail: [christian@dacaar.org](mailto:christian@dacaar.org)

RALF Programme Manager Najib Malik  
ICARDA, Aleppo, Syria  
Tel.: +93 (0) 70 17 26 96 (Afg)  
E-mail: [n.malik@cgiar.org](mailto:n.malik@cgiar.org)

RDP Section Head Mohammad Shah Rauf  
Herat, Afghanistan  
Tel.: +93 (0) 70 40 46 84  
E-mail: [m.shah.rauf@dacaar.org](mailto:m.shah.rauf@dacaar.org)

Director of Alternative Livelihoods Programme M. Saboor Shairzad  
Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation  
Kabul, Afghanistan  
Tel.: +93 (0) 70 65 30 48