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*Check dam repair in Gulmera Batora watershed*

### **Women from rural Balochistan explore market opportunities for agriculture and livestock produce**

The three-day market visit organised by USAID-supported FAO project, Balochistan Agriculture Livelihoods not only oriented the rural women to sustainable value chain options for agriculture and livestock produce but also enhanced the skills of Community Development Market Facilitators (CDMF). A total of 28 women comprising of Women Community Organization members, CDMF and women staff of the Department of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Balochistan participated in the visit.

At the floriculture production in Rani Bagh, the participants learnt the techniques of farming and marketing commercial flowers like roses, lilies and chrysanthemums. Training on how to create value-added products from fruits and vegetables such as drying and preservation of excess fruits followed. These activities provided options to the women for earning extra income for their families.

A workshop organized highlighted that women are the mainstay of small-scale agriculture, farm labour force and day-to-day family subsistence, they face more difficulties than men in gaining access to resources such as land, credit and markets in addition to productivity enhancing inputs and services. Given women's crucial role in food production and provision, any set of strategies for sustainable food security must address their limited access to productive resources.



*Women farmers being briefed on the marketing potentials of flowers, livestock and agriculture products*

The participants also had an enlightened visit to cold storage warehouse stacking milk and juice cartons, public sector poultry farm and dairy farm where the market potential of agriculture and livestock product was explained. Taj Bibi from Loralai said, "This is the first time I have left my village. It has changed my outlook on the world beyond completely."

Balochistan Agriculture Livelihoods project encourages rural women like Rashida to find new ways to make an income. “With knowledge gained here, I will improve my dairy business so that I can afford to buy food and clothes and pay for medicine and school fees for my children”, said Rashid, one of the exposure visit participants.

Listening to women participants provided a solid foundation from which to contribute to and help lead broader partnerships for rural poverty reduction. Market exposure visit is one of the many project activities that enables farmers especially women to mobilize resources and find new venues for marketing their products in culturally conservative areas where physical and social mobility of women is limited.

### Strengthening capacity of small holder farmers for a competitive and sustainable agriculture

Increasing production in sustainable ways is a major aspect in addressing food security. With the onset of the Rabi planting season, European Union Food Facility project – jointly implemented by FAO-WFP - not only distributed wheat seeds, fertilizer, lentils and vegetable seed packages but also enhanced the capacities of a 100,000 small holder farmers to address post harvest losses and processing of agriculture produce.

The project conducted technical trainings in the on-farm and off-farm agriculture techniques expecting to improve the crop productivity. The implementation of these activities will increase poor farmers’ food purchasing power, thus increasing the availability of food for daily household needs.

Participatory extension approach such as the Farmer Field Schools (FFS) was the methodology used for transferring agriculture technology knowledge. It is a shift from the status quo that helps farmers in experimenting with new technologies or new farming systems; gain access to relevant information from variety of information sources; evaluate and interpret this information for their own situation; and to learn from their experiences. FAO has used this approach elsewhere in other rural development projects thereby empowering the local farmers.

As a start up, the FFS will train 3,000 men and women farmers in 118 training sessions at the village and union council level throughout the country. Separate training sessions have been planned for the women farmers. The trained farmers will be better positioned to share the knowledge with their communities. In this manner, the Two Step Flow of Communication Model will become operational.



Women farmers at a training session in FFS



EU Development Advisor contributes to the training at FFS



FAO facilitator teaches local farmers

### Wheat seeds distributed in Zhob district

With the onset of rabi planting season, the USAID supported Balochistan Agriculture Livelihoods project distributed certified wheat seeds to 2,752 farmers belonging to the Zhob district. Zhob is situated in the extreme northeast of the Balochistan province. The activity was organized by the FAO office in Zhob after carrying out a participatory needs assessment that identified the access to high quality seeds as a major constraint in increasing yields. It is expected that these certified wheat seeds, Bakhar, will improve yields by 100% and also enable the farmers to produce quality seeds for the future.

Since the certified wheat seeds were bought on a cost sharing basis, therefore, this gave a sense of ownership to the farmers and they have enthusiastically started sowing seeds expecting to increase crop production considerably. Harvesting of the wheat crop will occur in May next year.

Sampling a range of improved wheat varieties for the farmers, the project has collaborated with the Department of Agriculture Balochistan and the Federal and Provincial Research Institutions to sow 12 demonstration plots on a half hectare area in the Zhob district. The demonstration plots will not only showcase the yield of the wheat seeds but will also train local farmers in quality seed saving techniques and better seed multiplication practices. The project aims to increase crop productivity and diversification with the ultimate goal of reducing poverty and increasing food security for the people of the area.



District Nazim Zhob Maulana Muhammed Sarwar is distributing wheat seeds to farmers in Zhob EDO Agriculture Zhob Mr. Muhammed Anwer distributes wheat seeds Abdul Najfy, CDMF Zhob is distributes wheat seeds

### Pakistan Marine Fish Survey - 2009

Marine Fish Survey – 2009 is the first of a series of marine fish resource surveys planned and carried out jointly by the Marine Fish Department and FAO project “Support to Fisheries Resources Appraisal in Pakistan”. The surveys will provide fisheries data and stock assessment analysis for renewed appraisal of the status of Pakistan’s marine resources. It has been nineteen years since the last survey was undertaken, therefore, the critical need for updated information.

The survey was conducted on board the Iranian research vessel Ferdows-1 between October end and the first November week. The survey continued 24/7 for a period of nine days. Personnel involved in the survey included not only regular ship’s crew but also nine others working in their scientific capacity such as the FAO Chief Technical Advisor, six staff members of the Marine Fisheries Department and two oceanographers from the National Institute of Oceanography. In addition to the assigned watches of 12 hours a day, the staff on both watches willingly worked additional hours to ensure that the sampling was completed as thoroughly as possible.

A total of fifty-nine pre-selected sites were sampled in the area of the Pakistan shelf starting from the Indus River mouth on the east to all of the Sonmiani Bay area on the west. Oceanographic profiles were collected at ten sites. At forty-two sites bottom trawls for fish samples together with surface and bottom oceanographic samples were successfully completed. Several more trawl samples, particularly in areas near the continental shelf edge, were invalid when the bottom proved too difficult to trawl. In two instances significant damage to the trawl occurred while in several other cases the trawl was set but the tow was aborted to avoid bottom obstacles, such as cliffs or ridges, detected on the bottom sounder.



Ferdows -1, Iranian research vessel



Marine staff that carried out the survey



Species mix sampling

Over 130 species or species groups were identified from the demersal trawl samples. Length frequency samples and length-weight data were collected from virtually all species in every catch, a much more intensive sampling programme than followed in this historical survey of Pakistan. Data entry into the NANSIS database was unable to keep up with the rate of station sampling while at sea. However, as much as possible was completed at sea to ensure data quality by quickly identifying and addressing any problems with data recording. This survey also provided detailed training to younger staff members in fish taxonomy, survey procedures and data recording and management.

### Skills training revitalises livelihoods and income generation of agro-based women

October 2005 earthquake further added to the vulnerability of the farming community of Shingle Bala village, Gibori union council located south of Battagram city, North West Frontier Province. Apart from a number of disabled men and women headed households, the community of Shingle Bala faced problems such as lack of health and education facilities, area accessibility issues, lack of technical skills, overcrowding, poverty and malnutrition, insufficient agricultural land, insufficient drinking and irrigation water. In addition women and child labour was rampant in the area. The poverty stricken families with no proper source of income engaged their children in labour instead of sending them to schools.



Women learn food preservation techniques

Although women carried out majority of the life sustaining work such as growing food, raising children, caring for the sick and hauling water but they were at a disadvantage due to the cultural mores, social values, beliefs and failed to realise their true potential.



Food preparation for preservation

The ERRA-FAO livelihoods project provided an opportunity to women for developing their vocational and occupation skills in food preservation. The women were able to establish their own means of earning income by starting up small enterprises or accessing informal employment opportunities. Investing in women's capabilities and empowering them through skills training is not only valuable in itself but is also the surest way to contribute to economic growth and overall development. It was decided to start with a small group of 20 women only whose experience could serve as a basis of knowledge and as a demonstration for their peers.

Rural Uplift Programme (RUP), a partner agency of ERRA and Deshan Falahi Tanzeem, a community-based organization (CBO) worked with local women teachers as resource persons to organise a three-day training in fruits and vegetables preservation. The training practically demonstrated food preparation and preservation techniques resulting in the preparation of 50 bottles of vegetable pickles, 25 of guava squash, 25 of apple jam and 20 of tomato juices for home consumption and possible commercial marketing. Locally available vegetables, fruits and equipments were used during the training sessions. The trainees were oriented towards using their newly acquired skills as income generating source and linkages between the trainees and the village retail stores and local markets were also created.



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