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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **MOWA Coordinates Scientific Knowledge on Women's Issues in Afghanistan**

*The Minister of Women's Affairs hosts a consultation bringing together data-generating bodies to compile and coordinate research on women*

**Kabul, March 29 2005** –The Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) hosted a Consultation on Gender, Research and Statistics today in order to coordinate gender-relevant data compilation and exchange among data-generating bodies in Afghanistan. More than 45 representatives from the government, civil society organizations, and the international community participated in the gathering, which was conducted with the technical support of UNIFEM.

In her introductory address, MOWA Minister Masouda Jalal highlighted the invisibility of women in many spheres of national life. She emphasized the importance of research and statistics as tools of planners and decision makers, explaining that lack of data on women will marginalize their concerns in policy making, budgeting, programming and in project and service delivery. "If women are not counted, they will not be counted in the development process. They will forever be marginalized, neglected and missed," she stated.

The consultation resulted in the following recommendations and action points for the Ministry:

- a) Establishment of a Gender, Research and Statistics Network;
- b) Quarterly meetings of the Network;
- c) Development of a publicly available database of statistics on women;
- d) Sex-disaggregation of all available data; and
- e) Strengthening the participation of UN agencies in the work of the network.

The Research and Statistics Office of MOWA has collected the statistics and studies presented by the participants of the gathering. UNIFEM is requesting the support of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific for expert help in categorizing and processing the data for easy dissemination and use.

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