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UNAMA tells international community to buy local

Source: [United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan \(UNAMA\)](#)

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Kabul, 19 July 2009 - The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the Peace Dividend Trust today met with procurement officials from the international community and, again, urged them to buy locally-produced products to boost Afghanistan's growing private sector economy.

Today's session, which was attended by representatives from ISAF, embassies, and aid agencies, introduced them to the flagship Afghanistan Building Markets website (www.buildingmarkets.org), through which procurements officials can identify their needs, gather more information on sellers, and then place orders.

The meeting was a follow up to the Local Procurement Conference and Trade Fair, which was organised in Kabul last month, to bring together the international community and more than 100 Afghan firms and business leaders from a wide range of industries, including media, construction, and logistics, among others.

Speaking at the session, Mark Ward, Special Advisor to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, emphasised the importance of encouraging local business. "One of the best antidotes to the insurgency is job creation," he said. "Promoting Afghan industry will help increase tax revenues and build the private sector's capacity to employ youth."

"The reason we have launched this initiative is that we're not doing enough to support the private sector. Today's focus is to talk to the people who have the authority to buy," he added.

Wahidullah Shahrani, Minister of Commerce and Industry, also attended the session. According to him, such an initiative will encourage international organisations and embassies "to use Afghan products. It will help us to have access to more revenue, build capacity of Afghan companies, and it is important for the sustainable economic development of the country."

On 10 June 2009, the UN Special Envoy to Afghanistan, Kai Eide, challenged the international community, including the United Nations, to increase the value of local procurement by 10 per cent within a year. The Afghanistan Building Markets website will record and monitor the international community's progress toward meeting this goal.

The website also has details of over 4,000 local businesses that specialise in a wide range of goods and services.

By Aditya Mehta, UNAMA



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