Agriculture growth important for the economic development of Afghanistan

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Afghanistan’s economic development and stability heavily rely on the growth of agriculture in this country. Moving Afghanistan from an economy that was built on the consumption of foreign aid to one that is built around rising productivity through agriculture is vital for a sustainable, stable and developed Afghanistan.

Agriculture is critical to Afghanistan’s food security and a key driver of economic growth. Most Afghans live in rural areas—relying on agriculture and husbandry for their livelihood and their family sustenance. Agriculture also creates employment opportunities and investments for people living in urban areas.

Prior to decades of conflict, Afghanistan’s agricultural products earned a global reputation for excellence, particularly almonds, pomegranates, pistachios, raisins, and apricots. Afghanistan agricultural products were branded to be the best quality products in the world. Decades of war and neglect destroyed Afghanistan’s farmland, displaced millions of people, and largely destroyed the country’s existing infrastructure.

A key pillar of Afghan Government economic strategy is to raise national productivity by rationalizing and focusing our investments in agriculture. The growth and promotion of agriculture forms one of the main priorities of the National Unity Government. According to President of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, Afghanistan’s economic, social and political stability relies on agriculture.

Addressing a gathering focused on agriculture in Kabul, President Ghani expressed concerns regarding the balance of imports and exports in the country, saying Afghanistan was once an exporter of wheat but currently imports millions of tons of wheat on an annual basis.

In the same gathering, President Ghani highlighted the importance of agriculture in Afghanistan, and the key role Afghan farmers play in fighting poverty and hunger. He mentioned that Afghan farmers, private sector and the Ministry of Agriculture are the three main partners who should
work together to improve agriculture. He added that agriculture is the pride of Afghanistan and the National Unity Government will pay key attention and value the agriculture sector in Afghanistan.

Experts believe that proper water management, quality seeds, fertilizer, tools and technology are the key elements that can restore Afghanistan agriculture and make this country self reliable in terms of food. Currently, a large number of food products are imported.

Afghans urge the government to invest in agriculture sector and provide machineries, tools, technology, seeds and required water to farmers so that the country becomes dependent on its own agricultural products and more employments will be created in rural areas. To prevent environmental degradation and enhance land productivity, the government has to support tree planting, improved water management, reduced soil erosion, and increased water retention. Investment in rehabilitating irrigation infrastructure will increase water availability for farmers. Farmers should be supported and encouraged to grow more than one crop, increasing the total land farmed and the volume and value of crops produced. More investments and work in agriculture sector will increase the incomes of Afghan farmers which will be a major success for the Afghan Government and overall for all Afghans.