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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Final Report of the Initiative for Hygiene, Sanitation and Nutrition (IHSAN) describes the primary accomplishments during the life of the project starting May 11, 2016 and ending September 11, 2020. Key achievements of each objective are highlighted below.

### **Objective 1 Enhance Capacity to Institutionalize Nutrition Programs**

IHSAN provided support and technical assistance to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) in establishing and revising policies to enhance the nutrition environment in the country. The IHSAN team conducted activities that directly contributed to political and policy processes to create and sustain momentum for the implementation of interventions to reduce malnutrition in Afghanistan. These activities included the provision of advocacy and capacity-building support to the Afghanistan Food Security and Nutrition Agenda (AFSeN-A) in becoming a member of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement. The formation of AFSeN-A committees in 13 provinces prompted opportunities for AFSeN-A to expand its coverage.

The project also supported two large-scale workshops that led to the production of the Afghanistan Food Security and Nutrition Public Awareness and Advocacy Framework and Plan (PROFILES) and the Public Awareness and Advocacy Framework (2018–2023), which serve as national documents to track malnutrition and mobilize resources for nutrition across multiple sectors. IHSAN supported the development process and sponsored the printing of these documents along with fact sheets targeting five major audience segments that the Framework identifies (religious leaders, media, government ministries and authorities, development partners and the private sector). Additionally, as part of the awareness and media engagement activities, IHSAN trained 562 journalists in Kabul and the 10 priority provinces, helping to increase coverage and reporting on nutrition-related topics and information by media men.

To facilitate proper counseling on nutrition for women and children, IHSAN trained the new cadre of female nutrition counselors (NCs) across the 34 provinces. The project team also ensured the integration of nutrition in the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector by supporting the inclusion of WASH into the infant and young child feeding (IYCF) 4-in-1 and Community-Based Nutrition Program (CBNP) training packages, as well as including nutrition into WASH training packages.

At the community level, IHSAN supported the development and implementation of CBNP to ensure the active engagement of community workers and volunteers in community-based nutrition activities.

IHSAN supported the Public Nutrition Directorate (PND) in developing the National Public Nutrition Strategy (NPNS) 2019–2023 and nutrition standard operating procedures (SOPs) to guide health care providers in Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS) facilities.

During the life of the project, IHSAN also supported PND in the following:

- Finalization of the maternal, infant and young child nutrition (MIYCN) strategy
- Revision of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) guidelines
- Development of a religious booklet covering nutrition and WASH
- Development of school curricula
- Development of the National Nutrition Promotion Strategic Operational Plan
- Distribution and implementation of micronutrient and deworming guidelines
- Distribution and implementation of Breast Milk Substitute guide
- Implementation of CBNP (Phase 1) in 13 provinces
- Implementation of IYCF training in 10 priority provinces

At the request of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), IHSAN finalized and translated the Afghan Context Community-Led Total Sanitation (AC-CLTS) protocol, which underlined the formation of the district-level teams for improving verification processes and reporting. The project recruited seven provincial coordinators for seven provinces, who established WASH committees in their respective provinces and facilitated periodic meetings and platforms for discussion of progress and challenges.

To support and strengthen the delivery of in-service nutrition and WASH services, the project team conducted various training sessions relating to nutrition, WASH, livelihood, social and behavior change communication (SBCC) and monitoring and evaluation (M&E). IHSAN trained a total of 143,251 individuals on nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive topics (91,860 on WASH, 40,989 on nutrition and 5,803 on livelihood and the Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA)/community-based savings groups (CBSG), as well as 4,599 religious leaders and journalists). These efforts contributed toward improved nutrition, WASH services and practices and income generation in various communities, especially for women.

The project revised and translated the existing Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) materials into a single package consisting of four modules: basic CLTS, verification, certification and hygiene and sanitation. The package will assist organizations and implementing partners (IPs) to follow unique indicators and a standard implementation approach. Revision of the CLTS packages is also a notable contribution from IHSAN in assisting the National Rural Water Supply, Sanitation and Irrigation Program (Ru-WatSIP) toward its goal of making Afghanistan open-defecation free (ODF) by 2025.

The establishment of the Kabul e-learning center provided a professional venue for a series of meetings and workshops to support nutrition initiatives and activities. IHSAN also trained Provincial Nutrition Officers (PNOs), Nutrition Extenders, community health workers (CHWs) and Family Health Action Groups (FHAGs) through the e-learning platform, reaching a total of 611 individuals since its launch. IHSAN transferred the platform to PND with two staff trained to run it after project closure.

IHSAN supported PND in the establishment of supportive supervision teams to improve accountability and encourage better services through the use of the M&E findings and making necessary follow-ups. The teams have conducted supportive supervision visits with government

counterparts, including national and provincial teams. IHSAN ensured regular visits to the health facilities (HFs) and health posts (HPs) using M&E findings and provided support and mentorship to the frontline service providers.

## **Objective 2 Increase Adoption of Optimal Nutrition and Hygiene Behaviors at the Community and Household Levels**

IHSAN implemented a multisectoral package — including CBNP, BFHI and the AC-CLTS package — to build synergies among different approaches that foster nutrition and WASH behavior change.

The project implemented AC-CLTS in 66 districts of the 10 priority provinces. With over 95 percent success, the project triggered 7,005 communities, verified 6,360 and certified 6,300. Through its subcontractors, IHSAN declared 40 districts as ODF. These efforts provided access to basic sanitation services for over 2 million people.

To ensure continuity of the CBNP program without interruption, IHSAN supported PND in the transition process of CBNP from IHSAN subcontractors to BPHS-implementing nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The process completed in June 2020 in all 10 priority provinces. During the life of the project, IHSAN supported the screening of 7,766,864 children under 5 years of age (1,135,399 aged 0–23 months) and the education of 4,998,038 women (including counseling of 1,584,496 pregnant women) on nutrition and WASH. The team expects CBNP activities to further bolster the health and nutrition status of women and children.

IHSAN translated into Pashto and Dari the SBCC strategy and operational plan and the SBCC guide before printing and transferring the package to the Health Promotion Department (HPD) at the end of July 2020.

As part of a public awareness campaign for educating people on optimal nutrition and WASH behavior, IHSAN used mobile phones to broadcast 2 million Outbound Dialers and 2 million SMS containing nutrition and WASH messages. Through prominent television channels, the project aired short clips for a period of two months containing messages on the importance of breastfeeding and handwashing. Through Mobile Cinema and the health video library (HVL), which aim to sensitize and educate women on optimal nutrition and WASH behaviors, the project reached a total of 286,650 women of reproductive age (WRA).

The project engaged both community and religious leaders in actively supporting the adaptation of nutrition and hygiene behaviors. The project team implemented the religious leaders' booklet (developed in conjunction with government counterparts) to train 3,961 religious leaders across the 10 priority provinces. These behavior-change efforts, along with nutrition interventions and ODF platforms, contributed to the adoption of optimal nutrition and hygiene behavior at the community and household (HH) levels in target provinces.

Distribution of fortified yogurt through a private sector engagement approach proved successful. The private entity MIDO Dairy received a substantial grant, enabling the IHSAN project to distribute 20,000 units of fortified yogurt for free to vulnerable groups, as well as sell an additional 180,000 units as part of commercial distribution.

### **Objective 3 Increase Availability of Nutrition, Hygiene and Sanitation Services and Products**

IHSAN continued to work with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), MRRD, the Afghanistan Food Security and Nutrition (AFSeN) Technical Secretariat and the Ministry of Religious Affairs to promote increased access to and consumption of nutritious foods among target populations.

IHSAN also trained and developed capacities of male and female farmers in its priority provinces. The project team trained a total of 2,695 women on kitchen gardening (KG), poultry rearing and VSLA, as well as 2,237 men on Farmers Field School (FFS) and poultry rearing. The project also distributed assets for cultivation and processing to 3,685 families. Availability of nutrition, hygiene and sanitation services and products at these communities, together with skill and resilience in the agricultural field, are among the most considerable successes of the project.

IHSAN ensured increased access to WASH products and services by training FHAG and CLTS committee members, who then provided education to families during home visits and general gatherings. The team equipped a total of 47,515 CLTS committee members (9,816 women and 37,699 men) and 43,471 FHAGs with the necessary knowledge and skills on hygiene promotion, including water safety and safe storage practices.

The project also helped repair a total of 1,044 existing water sources in communities that have attained ODF status through the implementation of the CLTS approach. Through this effort, a total of 140,641 people (70,320 women and 70,321 men) gained access to improved drinking water.

IHSAN established an organized set of coordination mechanisms and approaches with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), MoPH, MRRD, MAIL, AFSeN-A and other stakeholders, including the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP). Several IHSAN legacy platforms remaining at the national and provincial levels will continue to promote nutrition, WASH and livelihood initiatives and discussions.