Swat farmers put on path to progress thru fruit uplift project

ISLAMABAD: After the destruction and damages inflicted by the miliary and the recent devastating floods, the wheat and farming community of Swat Valley, Pakistan has managed to come back on the path of progress and development with the help of a project of Italian government.

Italian government funded project ‘Technical assistance and support to fruit and vegetable growers in the Swat Valley, Pakistan for the improvement of production and marketing in the horticultural value chain’ has trained farmers in techniques to help them enhance their produce, decrease post-harvest losses, do proper grading and packing to enhance their exports and earn foreign exchange.

“The Italian project was launched at a proper time when the whole valley was affected by militancy and floods,” Agriculture, Livestock and Cooperations Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Secretary Dr Hussain Zada Khan said while addressing the closing ceremony of the project.

He appreciated the Italian government for the project and said that the project provided encouragement to the people in the right way and said through this initiative a horticulture hub will be established in the area. The project has successfully accomplished its activities, by providing continuous technical support to the rural population of the Swat District of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Speaking on the occasion, Italian Embassy in Pakistan Deputy Head of Mission Dr Sara Rezagli said that providing employment to youth would save them from indulging in anti-social activities so the project not only helped the farmers of the valley but would result in employment opportunities to the youth.

Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC) Chairman Dr Ifthikhar Ahmad assured his support for the development of agriculture sector in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province particularly for the promotion of olive and horticultural crops to improve livelihood of the farming community.

Farm Service Centre, Swat District Representative Shabuddin Khan appreciated the role of Italian Experts in providing the various facilities in the area for the fruit and vegetable growers.

Agriculture University, Peshawar P&D Director Dr Irfan Ahmad said that they have conducted agro environmental survey in the area and training need assessment (TNA) and training of trainers (TOT) for extension staff and farmers.

Agriculture, Livestock and Cooperation Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Project Director Dr Fazal Masula said that under the capacity building program of this project, they established farmers field school, conducted 16 trainings and 50-55 farmers registered in each session.

ALCO, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Planning Officer Dr Ahmad Said gave a detailed description of the promotion of local fruit and vegetable species while Haji Bakhsh Biland, Beneficiary FSC Kabul highlighted the benefits of facilities established under the project.

Overseas Technical Unit for Development Cooperation, Italian Embassy in Islamabad Director Dr Domenico Bruzzone appreciated the project activities and acknowledged the cooperation from all partners associated with the project.

He also thanked the Olive Team of PARC for promotion of olive cultivation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, ICO Project Coordinator Dr Salvatore Faraglia and other experts also addressed the participants.
Swat farmers put on path of progress

ISLAMABAD—After the destruction and damages inflicted by the militancy and the recent devastating floods, the wretched farming community of Swat Valley has managed to come back on the path of progress and development with the help of a project of Italian government. Italian government funded project “Technical assistance and support to fruit and vegetable growers in the Swat Valley for the improvement of production and marketing in the horticultural value chain” has trained farmers in techniques to help them enhance their produce, decrease post-harvest losses, do proper grading and packing to enhance their exports and earn foreign exchange.

“The Italian project was launched at a proper time when the whole valley was affected by militancy and floods,” Secretary, Agriculture, Livestock and Cooperation Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Dr. Hussain Zada Khan said while addressing the closing ceremony of the project here. He appreciated the Italian government for the project and said that the project provided encouragement to the people in the right way and said through this initiative a horticulture hub will be established in the area.—INP
Italian grant helps resurrect Swat valley farmers

By Israr Khan

ISLAMABAD: Farmers of the vegetable and fruit-rich Swat valley, who have witnessed the destruction of their horticulture sector at the hands of floods and militancy, have managed to come back on the path of development with the help of technical support by the Italian government, said the provincial agriculture secretary here on Thursday.

“The Italian project provided encouragement to the people in the right way and a horticulture hub will be established in the area through this initiative,” said KP’s Agriculture, Livestock and Cooperatives Department Secretary, Dr Hussain Zada Khan while addressing the closing ceremony of the project.

Deputy Chief of Mission of the Embassy of Italy in Islamabad Dr Sara Rezaoglu said providing employment to the youth also helped them to steer clear from anti-social activities. “The project not only helped the farmers of the valley but will also result in employment opportunities for the youth,” she added.

The Italian government, which provided a grant of 1.3 million euros to Pakistan for horticultural development in Swat, aimed at providing technical assistance and support to fruit and vegetable growers in the Swat Valley for the improvement of production and marketing in the horticultural value chain.

The project was funded, as a grant, by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and implemented by the Istituto Agromanico per l’Oltremare, a technical assistance body of the said Italian ministry based in Florence, and active in the field of agricultural sciences and technology transfer.

The project trained farmers in techniques to help boost produce, decrease post-harvest losses, proper grading and packing to enhance their exports and earn foreign exchange. During its operational phase, since late 2010, the project has reached more than 5,000 beneficiaries directly with its facilities being a reference for a growing farming community of thousands of individuals with a significant trickle-down effect on their poverty affected households.

Chairman, Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC) Dr Ifikhar Ahmad assured his support for the development of the agriculture sector in KP, particularly for the promotion of olive and horticultural crops to improve livelihood of the farming community.

Dr Fazal Moulia, KP Project Director (Agriculture, Livestock and Cooperation Department), said that under the capacity-building program of this project, they established a field school, conducted 16 trainings and registered 50-60 farmers in each session.

Dr Domenico Bruzzone, Director Overseas Technical Unit for Development Cooperation, Italian Embassy in Islamabad appreciated the project’s activities and acknowledged the cooperation from all partners associated with the project. He also thanked the Olive Team of PARC for promotion of olive cultivation in KP.

The main purpose of the project was to promote income-generating mechanisms for small farmer households by supporting them along the productive value-chain, from farm to fork: handling, grading, storing, processing, packaging and marketing, and to promote gender-oriented social and economic inclusion in the area.

The project was planned and proposed to assist the recovery of the agricultural sector, severely affected with huge post-harvest losses (above 40 percent of the total district production) due to both militancy and the catastrophic 2010 floods.