

## Media Tour to RESP

June 2008



On June 20-21 Uzbekistan Country Office arranged a **media tour to Sherabad** district of Surkhandarya region to visit a **Rural Enterprise Support Project (RESP)** site. Five journalists from the capital city of Tashkent represented

different types of media: government newspaper Narodnoye Slovo, joint-stock paper and internet portal Business Vestnik Vostoka and UzReport.com, Uzbekistan national radio "Mash'al" covering not only this country, but also neighboring Central Asian countries, the largest agricultural paper in Uzbekistan "Qishloq Hayoti". In Surkhandarya local journalists representing province and district papers joined the team.

The Rural Enterprise Support Project has started in 2001 and is closing on 30 June 2008. The objective of the Project is to

increase the profitability and sustainability of agriculture through the privatization and restructuring of farming and associated agribusiness activities. The project includes four



components: Rural Business Advisory Services; Rehabilitation of Irrigation and Drainage Systems; Rural Finance; and Project Implementation Support. It amounts to 36 mln USD and is implemented in five pilot rayons

Akhangan (Tashkent province), Elikalin (Karakalpakstan), Marhamat (Andijan province), Nishan (Kashkadarya province) and Sherabad (Surkhandarya province).

Head of Project Implementation Unit in Sherabad district **Fahriddin Ibragimov** described how the project has been implemented in this district. In 2002 there were 14



shirkats (kind of cooperatives) in this district. They were broke up and 540 new private farms were established instead. The Project aimed to assist the newly independent farmers to increase



the productivity and financial and environmental sustainability of agriculture and the profitability of agribusiness. This was done through rural enterprise finance, performing irrigation and drainage works and providing rural training and advisory services.

The team members had a meeting with Project Implementation Unit staff, visited an aqueduct on P-13

canal, saw a bank protecting levee, and were hosted by a farmer. 186 new jobs have been created in Sherabad district as a result of the project. Agro servicing enterprises have obtained privileged loans totaling to 5346.4 thousand USD and



farmers bought 110 units of machinery.

The main benefit from the project is an improvement in agricultural performances in the five districts directly

benefiting from the project, including Sherabad district; specifically crop yields increased; as a result of reclamation of land which used not to receive enough irrigation water or to be excessively saline an actually cropped area moderately extended; the combination of both resulted in an increase in overall production.

