



ROOTS of PEACE

The Senate of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Bestows the Inaugural Afghan Peace Award upon Roots of Peace Founder on the Occasion of International Women's Day

March 8, 2021—Kabul, Afghanistan—On the occasion of International Women's Day, the Senate of the Islamic Government of Afghanistan has announced the *Inaugural Afghan Peace Award* presented to Ms. Heidi Kuhn, Founder/CEO, Roots of Peace honoring their humanitarian non-profit work in Afghanistan.

This year marks the 20th Anniversary of the 9/11 attacks on the United States. For the past two decades, Roots of Peace has remained dedicated towards their goal to transform *MINES TO VINES*—replacing the scourge of landmines with sustainable agricultural crops and providing exports to new markets resulting in economic food security to millions of Afghan farmers and families.

Roots of Peace has worked to raise awareness and funds to remove hundreds of thousands of landmines in Afghanistan— one of the most heavily mined countries in the world. Over five million fruit trees have been planted with funding from USAID, INL, USDA, DOD, EU, DOD, UNDP and The World Bank. Furthermore, the Roots of Peace 'business model for peace' has provided access to new markets with their unique strategy—Demine, Replant and Rebuild.

“Since 2001, Roots of Peace has closely partnered with the Afghan government and international community to empower farmers in remote villages of Afghanistan and link them with local and national markets, restoring the legacy of Afghanistan as the garden of Central Asia,” said H.E. Mohammad Alam Ezediyar, First Deputy of the Afghan Senate. “It is our great honor to bestow this distinguished award upon Roots of Peace Founder Heidi Kühn as an acknowledgement of their efforts restoring agriculture as the primary driver of the economics of peace and impacting the lives of millions of Afghan farmers and families.”

Roots of Peace has worked in all 34 provinces of Afghanistan and has helped to increase agricultural exports from \$250 million in 2014 to over \$1.4 billion in 2020 with support from USAID's Commercial Horticulture Agriculture Marketing Program.

“I am humbled and honored to receive this distinguished award on behalf of the brave Afghan men and women who toil in the soil to remove landmines, plant sustainable agricultural crops, and work as traders to bring fresh Afghan fruit, nuts and spices to new markets,” stated Heidi Kuhn. “Together as Afghan and American women, we are pioneering the ‘economics of peace’ in a country which is 80% dependent upon agriculture. We plant ‘*Peace Through Agriculture!*’”

This week, Roots of Peace has expanded their programs with an additional \$30 million program working in remote provinces funded by the Department of State in partnership with the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and UN Development Program in Afghanistan.

“INL greatly appreciates Roots of Peace's support to improving the lives of Afghan men and women, through crop substitution programs and increased entrepreneurship opportunities for women,” stated Ms. Sally Schlegel, Lead, Afghan Counternarcotics Team, U.S. Department of State. “INL, through Roots of Peace, helps Afghan farmers move away from opium poppy cultivation towards high value crops and access to international markets to increase household income.”

“USAID is proud to expand sales of Afghan products to regional and global export markets, which means more and better jobs for Afghans, especially women, and higher incomes for farm families,” said USAID/Afghanistan Mission Director Dr. Tina Dooley-Jones. “The U.S. government, through USAID, remains committed to supporting Afghans in their quest for peace and prosperity.”

Since September 1997, Roots of Peace has worked in Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Croatia, Iraq, Israel, and West Bank.

The story of Roots of Peace MINES TO VINES initiative is told in BREAKING GROUND, a new ‘Best Seller’ book by author Heidi Kuhn.

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