

Afghanistan Human Development Report 2007 Launched in the U.S.

Weak rule of law hinders human development in Afghanistan

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United Nations, New York, 26 September

2007—In Afghanistan, “the justice system must be rebuilt in a way that bridges modern and traditional justice institutions, protects citizens’ rights and strengthens rule of law, a pivotal step in Afghanistan’s march to successful political transition and development”. This is a key recommendation of the Afghanistan National Human Development Report 2007, unveiled in New York on 26 September during the 62nd UN General Assembly.

‘Bridging Modernity and Tradition: Rule of Law and the Search for Justice’ is the second National Human Development Report (NHDR) for Afghanistan. Prepared by an independent team of authors with support of UNDP, the Report explores the importance of rule of law to human development in the country. It identifies severe shortfalls in human and

material resources in the formal justice system and calls for it to be strengthened for more effective dispute settlement. It makes a strong case for a “hybrid model of Afghan justice” with traditional systems of dispute settlement - *jirgas* and *shuras* -

and traditional justice bodies working together can help make justice and the rule of law more readily available to Afghans.” Afghanistan has adapted the globally agreed Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which in-



The UNDP Administrator, Kemal Dervis and Professor Eshaq Nadiri Economic Advisor to the President of Afghanistan at the Launch Ceremony in New York © Peter Foley/UNDP

complementing the formal justice system.

“In analyzing the challenges of human development and the rule of law, this Report advocates a bold and creative approach to strengthening the justice institutions in Afghanistan,” said Hamid Karzai, President of Afghanistan, in a statement read during the launch. “While remaining committed to universal principles of human rights and Afghan laws, we believe that the state

include halving the number of people living in extreme poverty and hunger, to nine Afghan MDGs. Since 2002, the country has maintained a steady growth rate and is likely to achieve its poverty goal by 2020. The picture, however, is disappointing for most of the other goals. Some 6.6 million—or one third of Afghans—do not have enough food to eat. Close to half the population sees itself as food insecure.

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The country does better on women's political representation than many of its South Asian neighbours with about a quarter of seats reserved for women in the lower house of the National Assembly. However, income disparities between men and women are huge with men earning four times more than women on average.

Only 12 percent of women are literate, compared to 32.4 percent of men and just 23.5 percent of the population age 15 years and above can read and write. Injustices to women and children, both in the denial of basic services like healthcare and education and lack of livelihood opportunities, as well as high levels of domestic violence and discrimination, are among the major challenges to attaining the country's development goals.

Despite notable progress, the mortality rate for children under five years and the proportion of mothers dying in childbirth are among the highest in the world.

Also, less than one in three households has access to safe drinking water and forest cover

has been reduced by almost half since 1978.

In 2004, the Afghan Government estimated that the amount of aid required over the next seven years would be USD 27.5 billion or USD 168 per capita per year. But disbursements between 2002 and 2005



A cross-section of participants at the panel discussion in Washington DC © Kumar Tiku/UNDP

fell far short of this target at an estimated USD 83 per capita per year. Since 2006, donors have so far contributed or pledged USD 10 billion, only half of what the Government believes is needed to implement its development strategy. The Report, therefore, urges donors to meet their commitments to support the country's efforts to achieve the MDGs.

"The findings of the 2007 Afghanistan Human Development Report reveal that despite decades of war, Afghanistan has made

measurable progress with regard to some key dimensions of human development as well as towards achieving Afghanistan's development goals," said UNDP Administrator Kemal Derviş.

"With the spectre of violence and uncer-

tainty lifting ever so gradually from Afghanistan the need to expand prospects of life and human development across the length and breadth of the country assume ever-greater urgency," he continued.

The Report notes that personal security is among the major impediments to achieving the goals in Afghanistan.

In 2006 alone, more than 4,400 Afghans—including 1,000 civilians—died in anti-government violence, twice as many as in 2005. As the Report

says, "Security is a prerequisite for the rule of law that, in turn creates an atmosphere conducive to human development. Strengthening the rule of law can nonetheless, serve as an important means to advance the freedom of people to exercise choices and enhance their capacity to live meaningful and healthy lives."

The Report highlights the need for reconciliation to come to terms with past human rights violations. It finds that two out of three Afghan respondents in a survey said that either they themselves or a family member had been a direct victim of injustice and human rights violations over the past two decades.

The primary victims of human rights violations and war crimes were women, children, and ethnic and religious minorities.

The ever-expanding narcotics trade has serious political and national security implications for the region. Poppy cultivation spiked in 2006 by 61 percent and Afghanistan produced 90 percent of the world's opium.

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"The opium economy is a source of corruption and undercuts public institutions, particularly those in the security and justice sectors," says the Report. Pervasive corruption in Afghanistan, if unchecked, can also erode the gains made so far, as well as the legitimacy of both the Government and international assistance, the Report says.

The courts are perceived as the most corrupt institution followed by the Administrative branches of the Government. The Report observes that pervasive corruption in Afghanistan severely undermines the rule of law.

Land entitlement and secure property rights are other roadblocks to the rule of law according to the Report. Judicial staff are poorly paid and many lack professional qualifications. Moreover, key components of the formal justice system do not operate as a whole. All these problems hamper the efficiency and effectiveness of the Afghan justice system.

In the traditional system the emphasis is on speed and reconciliation with the aim of reintegrating the offender back into the community.

Qualitative data from perception surveys conducted earlier this year and included in the Report shows that Afghans see *jirgas* and *shuras* as more accessible, more effective in the delivery of justice, less corrupt and more trustworthy than formal courts.

Women, on the other hand, are the losers in both formal and informal systems.

The Report highlights the need for reconciliation to come to terms with past human rights violations. It finds that two out of three Afghan respondents in a survey said that either they themselves or a family member had been a direct victim of injustice and human rights violations over the past two decades. The primary victims of human rights violations and war crimes were women, children, and ethnic and religious minorities

They are often denied equal and fair access to justice as they are not allowed to register cases themselves. Traditional mechanisms are even less equal with outcomes like *baad*, a practice that clearly violates human rights principles through

forced marriages.

While alternate dispute resolution mechanisms are needed to buttress the fledgling formal justice system, the Report also makes a strong argument in favour of an effective supervisory human rights oversight in order to ensure that decisions made by *jirgas* and *shuras* are in line with human rights principles and the Constitu-

tion of Afghanistan.

collaborated in organizing a Panel Discussion on the Report in Washington D.C.

The panel included Dr. Ali Wardak, one of the authors of the report and Dr. Barnett Rubin from the New York University, one of the acknowledges authorities on Afghan studies.

The panel discussion was attended by over 80 highly interested Afghan watchers from the US Administration, human rights groups, think-tanks and the media.

Dr. Barnett Rubin, in a cogent talk called attention to the fact that the global and national HDRs were a unique UNDP contribution that serve as tools of debate and discussion on the human development challenges facing the world.

He said while the 2004 Afghanistan HDR was essentially a baseline report, an attempt to collect basic data on human development indicators, the 2007 report is innovative in linking human development with the rule of law, an attempt that has been made for the first time. This is very consistent with the current concerns of the people of Afghanistan.

September 21 Peace Day

Peace Day Exclusive



The UN SRSO, Tom Koenigs seen with children and Heads of UN Agencies in Afghanistan at a special function to express commitment of the UN System to observance of Peace Day activities in the country. © Fardin Waezi \UNAMA

Arms Surrender Marks Peace Day Observance in Saighan

Today Saighan is different than it was during the civil war. To mark the United Nations observance of the International Peace Day on 21 September, former commanders who used to hold weapons and are now involved in the peace and development process walked happily on the dusty roads of Saighan to join the large crowds that were waiting anxiously for the declaration of Saighan as Peace District by the Governor of Bamyan, Mrs Habiba Sorabi. The sun was smoothly and warmly shining

over the blue and white flags of peace in the hands of joyful children of Saighan as if even the sun felt the need of peace for Saighan and Afghanistan.

You could easily find Peace on the faces of school girls and boys and the residents gathered on both sides of the road leading to the venue at the Saighan Police Headquarters, the only modern building in Saighan Center dressed up with peace posters and messages.

Armed Commanders surrendered their weapons for the sake of their people and peace

to authorities representing the Disbandment of Illegal Arms Groups (DIAG) as residents congratulated each other on Peace Day.

Mr. Baqawuddin, a former commander along with tens of other armed commanders surrendered his weapons to DIAG. He is currently teaching at a school in Saighan Center. He is busy among his school students. When asked how he felt about the Peace Day observance in Saighan and his own contribution to the peace and development process in Saighan, He said, "I

am proud that today the country talks of Saighan and I am happy to have done something for my people. Peace instead of Weapons! When I was waging war, I was proud to have a weapon, but today I feel even prouder to nominate Saighan as Peace District and surrender my weapons. I am comfortable teaching children who are willing to be the heroes of 'Peace One Day' in Saighan, the rest of Afghanistan and the world."

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September 21 Peace Day

Peace Day Exclusive

All the other former commanders were seen among their people at the other side of the street, offering traditional greetings and congratulating each other on the great achievement of their district in Bamyan.

(DIAG is a project implemented by the Ministry of Interior with the support of UNDP to facilitate the disbandment of illegal armed groups. DIAG is supported by Japan, UK, CIDA, Denmark, Netherlands, Switzerland, Norway and Italy.)



Peace Day celebration in Bamyan

Weapons Handed Over in Nangarhar

On 1st October, the Nangarhar Chief of Police handed over 1273 weapons to the Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG). The weapons included 1234 shot hunting guns and 39 AK-47 rifles.

The hand-over ceremony was attended by the Nangarhar Deputy Governor, the Chief of Police, government authorities and officials from the Afghanistan New Beginnings Programme (ANBP). Participants emphasized the need for implementation of the programme in other parts of the country and encouraged the Illegal Armed Groups (IAGs) to contribute to the peace and stability of the country by surrendering their weapons.

On 30 September, ANBP and HALO Trust achieved significant success by recovering 1055 pieces of YM-2AT mines from Samar Ghyam village in the Rustaq district of Takhar province. The mines will be destroyed at a secure demolition site. This recovery and destruction of AT mines is a positive step being taken by the local population to make their village, the grazing area and fields safe for their community.

The DIAG process was launched on 11 June 2005. As of 30 September 2007, close to 35,000 weapons, 28,624 pieces of boxed and 307,894 pieces of unboxed ammunition have been handed over to and verified by ANBP collection teams in Afghanistan.

September 21 Peace Day

Peace Day Exclusive

It is Time for Peace, They Chorus,

as Girls Paint Their School White on Peace Day

She is wearing blue jeans, a red shirt and ball cap with her long ponytail hanging down her back. Her friend in blue jeans and striped top is also wearing a base ball cap. Both have their caps on backwards. They dip the paint brushes into the buckets of newly mixed paint and with a slap slap slapping apply it to the walls surrounding their school. Others wear the traditional black shalwar kamez covering their heads with a white scarf. There are over 50 young girls with 20 at a time slap slap slapping the paint to the graying walls of their school. There are different ways of approaching this exercise of getting gray to become white but the similarity amongst all is that there is paint all over. It is on the clothes, on the hair, on the faces, on the noses, and on the ball caps that are turned backwards.

Welcome to the international Peace Day observance at the Kabul Girls High School. The girls are having fun changing the color gray to

white. The white walls are a symbol of peace. The media arrive with their cameras and start interviewing these young girls and women who could be anywhere in the world of youth culture. Some girls are shy and move away



Girls busy painting the walls of their school in white to mark Peace Day © Fezeh Hosseini/UNDP

while others have a definite message.

The eyes of one ten year old provide thoughts that have been growing with her for years. She looked in the camera, with her microscopic eyes, peering into your heart. She said it was time for peace and countries nearby and not nearby should only be involved to bring a good life to the people of Afghanistan. The people are not deserving of this war and she also in her all of ten years is tired of it. She wants to be a

doctor and help her people and will she be able to?

The 16 year old with paint on her hair, nose and clothes requests those fighting to “put down their weapons and pick up pens”. The young boy wants to be

part of a bigger world and not a place where there is such sadness. Others see it as what it is, the dust in the air will soon cover the white which covers the gray and so it goes on.

Some of the posters and bill boards around town show white doves flying over Kabul, others show the white doves dropping the weapons into a fire. Some of the white doves are graying already.

What is it that helps a country's youth continue to think life will get bet-

ter? How can a country's spirit after over 30 years of war see beyond? Who carries the memories of the past when white was white? How will the memories of peace be shared with the young people so the youth will really know what peace is? Will the peace be different from what it was 30 years ago?

The country's youth hope it will get better but the mines continue to blow off their limbs, their little fingers continue to make rugs and their futures continue to be woven with the past. Some survive and they know the meaning of white, the meaning of peace and the meaning of something that is not happening right now. It is a life that is different from today.

When you see these young girls with the ball caps on backwards slap slap slapping the white paint on the gray walls you think that peace has finally come. We from the different parts of the world and not this part are welcome to this internal peace.

-By Paulette Schatz

UNDP and Ministry of Finance partner to fight corruption in Afghanistan

The Accountability and Transparency (AcT) Project, which will be implemented jointly by the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was formally inaugurated in Kabul on 28 September by Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Ahady and Anita Nirody, UNDP Country Director.

Realizing that fight against corruption is one of the top priorities for the Government of Afghanistan, UNDP developed the AcT project after extensive consultations with government counterparts, civil society and donors, in line with the Afghanistan Compact and Afghanistan National Development Strategy (I-ANDS). The first phase of the project will last until June 2008.

The AcT project – with a total budget of around USD 2.4 million – will be based in the Ministry of Finance. Given its political leadership, strong relationships with other public entities and a keen interest in promoting a broad-based approach to developing anti-corruption policies and programmes, close partnership is ensured with key government institutions involved in the fight against corrup-

The project will coordinate closely with all relevant development partners in the fight against corruption.

The main goal of the AcT project is to support the Government of Afghanistan in achieving the Afghanistan Compact benchmarks and developing a broader anti-corruption strategy within the ANDS, in preparing the groundwork for strategic anti-corruption policies and programmes by testing pilots in key public institutions, providing an integrity monitoring system including the necessary diagnostics and surveys, and by raising awareness and educating the public at large, as well as the civil service.

This project will improve institutional, legal and policy environment to support the implementation of anti-corruption policies and programmes in line with the Afghanistan Compact and the ANDS, enhance integrity and accountability in pilot ministries and in aid management and increase awareness raising and understanding of corruption in Afghanistan.



Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Ahady and Anita Nirody, UNDP Country Director inaugurating the AcT project in Kabul © Sadeq Afghanistan Times

To achieve these goals, the project will support the Ministry of Finance in developing Vulnerability to Corruption Assessments (VCA) which will look into the business processes in the Budget Department and the Administration Department and propose recommendations on how to mitigate possible areas of corruption.

In addition the project will support the Audit Department in further development of the Audit Manual. The project will provide support in reviewing UN-CAC legislation and also develop Vulnerability to Corruption Assessments in the Ministry of Justice.

Thanking UNDP and other donors including the Governments of Italy and Norway for the project support, Minister Ahady added:

“Corruption is like a deadly disease that is sickening our society. It is the professional and moral duty of every Afghan, be they service deliverers or service recipients, to fight corruption. And we in the Ministry of Finance are committed to doing so. The AcT project will be particularly helpful for us, as it complements our other efforts to curb corruption.”

Thanking UNDP and other donors including the Governments of Italy and Norway for the project support, Minister Ahady added: “Corruption is like a deadly disease that is sickening our society. It is the professional and moral duty of every Afghan, be they service deliverers or service recipients, to fight corruption.”

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Welcoming the recent steps taken to address corruption in Afghanistan, such as the ratification of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption and the preparation of the Government's Anti-Corruption Roadmap, the UNDP Country Director, Ms. Anita Nirody said Afghanistan faces a daunting challenge in its fight against corruption. "This will require sustained leadership, commitment and institutional clarity on the part of the government, as well as the active support of the international community", Ms. Nirody added.

The opening of this project marks a major step forward by the Ministry of Finance in its drive against corruption. In a workshop last week, Dr. Ahady publicly introduced the anti-corruption educational programme that is raising the awareness of MoF employees all over Afghanistan about corruption, its causes, its scope of damage to society, and about the new anti-corruption programme the Ministry of Finance is launching.

LOTFA EPS Training

Major Gains in Police Performance Seen with the Unveiling of Electronic Payroll System in Provinces

As part of the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) initiative, a 20-day training in Electronic Payroll System (EPS) was organized for the finance and budget personnel of the Border Police and Regional Command Police of Afghanistan. The EPS ensures greater transparency and accountability in the performance of the police personnel by linking improved tracking of performance with stronger financial oversight. The new system will also lead to massive time savings in the preparation of the payroll. This system is envisaged to be operational in all provinces soon. Speaking at the certification-distribution ceremony to mark the conclusion of the 20-day training, on 2 September 2007, Elhamuddin Wardak, General Director of budget and finance sec-

tion in Border Police Office, said that the new EPS system will be useful in establishing a transparent financial system in the police force. "Which means the system will keep an eye on police performance and pay those who are fully accomplishing their duties. We then will plan how better we can use this system", he said.

Mir Agha Dust, Deputy Head of LOTFA project, explained that the EPS training component is a part of LOTFA project, implemented by UNDP and with financial support from Switzerland. The new system will save time in preparing the salary payroll. "The work of two weeks will be done in half an hour now", he said.

Sayed Aman Sadat, Head of Border Police Administration, added that the Electronic Payroll System

was a means of moving towards having a better administration.

Zahir Hashemi, finance officer of the General Directorate of the Border Police and one of the course participants promised on behalf of all participants that they will try their best to use what they have learned here to improve the payroll system of police in the future. "We can save time and human resource with the new system which is more effective and transparent and avoid mistakes that were made in the manual system".

For Payanda Mohammad from Takhar province and Ali Jan from Kandahar province, the new computerized system will minimize mistakes as everybody has an ID number. "It will be possible to process the salary for 1250 police that I am responsible for in a short time".



Afghan Police personnel at the EPS training in Kabul © Fezeh Hosseini/UNDP



Afghanistan

UNDP is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life.

Overview of UNDP in Afghanistan

UNDP has been present in Afghanistan since 1956, providing development assistance to the country and helping build the capacity of national institutions. During the Taliban regime, UNDP continued to provide assistance to communities throughout the country from its relocated offices in Islamabad. During that decade, UNDP delivered US\$200 million of assistance to Afghanistan. In early 2002, UNDP inaugurated its new office in Kabul.

The human development challenge for Afghanistan is enormous. According to Afghanistan's National Human Development Report (NHDR) 2004, the Human Development Index ranks Afghanistan at 173 out of 178 countries worldwide and its MDG indicators place it below the majority of Sub-Saharan African countries. The depth of poverty in Afghanistan is reflected consistently in all human development indicators, revealing a mosaic of a nation in need of sustained assistance. Not surprisingly, therefore, Afghanistan has been identified as a global priority for addressing the Millennium Development Goals.

UNDP operates within the framework of the integrated United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) and within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). In December 2005, UNDP signed a three-year Country Programme Action Plan with the Government of Afghanistan focusing on three development areas: state-building, democracy and civil society empowerment and sustainable livelihoods. UNDP new Country Programme focuses on capacity development, national ownership and policy dialogue. UNDP aims to enhance government institutional capacity to deliver public services in an equitable and sustainable manner and to create an enabling environment for legitimate livelihoods.

The expected results are pursued in line with the Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) objectives and benchmarks. In particular, UNDP supports the Government in achieving a number of development benchmarks in the field of security and the rule of law, administrative reform, transparency and accountability, local governance, political processes (elections and parliament), civil society empowerment, gender equality, human rights, environment and rural energy, the reintegration of former combatants into society, the implementation of the national counter-narcotics strategy, as well as rural development planning and private sector development.

All UNDP activities are undertaken in close collaboration with the Government of Afghanistan, sister UN agencies and other development stakeholders.

UNDP has built strategic partnerships with a number of government institutions such as the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry for Rural Rehabilitation and Development, the Ministry of Interior, the Civil Service Commission, the Independent Election Commission, the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission and the Ministry of Women's Affairs. UNDP's top ten donor partners in Afghanistan are the US, the EC, Japan, CIDA, UK, Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Norway and the World Bank.

UNDP is thankful for the support and confidence lent by its national and international development partners.

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