



# Rebuilding Afghanistan

Weekly Activity Update for December 29 – January 8, 2004

Issue 42

United States Agency for International Development

## STRENGTHENING THE GOVERNMENT

### Program Goals

- Support the Bonn process: the Constitutional, Human Rights, and Judicial Commissions; the elections scheduled for June 2004; and a free and independent media.
- Improve government planning, budgeting, revenue generation (e.g., customs), monetary management, and private-sector related legal and regulatory frameworks.
- Build capacity to carry out other legitimate government functions and support reconstruction of health, judicial, education, economic, agricultural and transportation infrastructure.

### Recent Progress:

- **Afghan Constitution Adopted:** The Constitutional Loya Jirga (CLJ) ratified Afghanistan's constitution on January 4, 2004. An overwhelming majority of the 502 CLJ delegates voted for the constitution. Under the new document, women's rights are protected, as Article 22 states that all Afghan citizens, whether male or female, have equal rights and duties before the law. The constitution also lays out the powers of the government for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.
  - **Executive Branch:** The government will have a strong executive branch with a president and two vice-presidents. The president will be elected with 50 plus 1 percent of the vote from a general, free and secret election. He/she will serve a term of five years and will—in coordination with the National Assembly—determine the fundamental policies of the state, appoint ministerial and judicial officials, act as Commander-in-Chief of the military and call national referenda on issues.
  - **Legislative Branch (National Assembly):** The National Assembly will be made up of two houses, the Wolesi Jirga (lower house) and the Meshrano Jirga (upper house). Both houses will write laws, approve executive appointees, approve the state budget and ratify international treaties.
  - **Judicial Branch:** The judicial system will have a constitutional supreme court (the Stera Mahkama) that will head the judiciary organ of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and upon the request of the government or the lower courts, can review laws, legislative decrees, international treaties and international conventions to ensure that they are in compliance with the constitution.
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- **Customs Reform:** USAID customs reform teams have been established at the key regional customs houses in Herat, Kandahar, Jalalabad and Mazar. All four locations have been equipped with computers to begin computer training and the data input elements of the importation process. The reform teams have implemented the Afghan Customs Coding Document (ACCD). The ACCD is the basic customs clearance document for all commercial importations and will provide statistical data for the majority of imports into Afghanistan. Once established, the ACCD will be followed by a new customs tariff with simplified tariff rates and consistent exchange rates, a new customs broker system and a new customs law.

### Recent Progress (continued):

- **Free and Independent Media:** USAID funded the recent establishment of seven independent radio stations in Afghanistan. Planning is underway for the launch of another seven by February 2004. The media development program is designed to ensure that radio fulfills its potential as the medium that can reach the largest numbers of Afghans, as 24% of rural Afghanistan is within the footprint of local radio stations. This is compared to the small proportion of rural Afghans with access to print and TV media. The program aims not only to build 14 independent community radio stations but also provide radio programming and manage other central support services, giving the stations a reasonable chance of long term viability.



An Afghan radio announcer testing the equipment.



An Afghan radio announcer recording a show.

## INCREASING ACCESS TO BASIC HEALTH CARE

### Program Goals

- 400 health centers renovated or constructed in rural areas, providing services to an estimated 12 million people.
- 11 million beneficiaries assured improved access to basic services in 13 provinces; 4.4 million women and children given access to services through USAID's health care initiative grants.
- 3,400 new community health workers, 990 midwives, 6,000 clinic staff trained.
- Make safe water systems, iodized salt, contraceptives, mosquito nets and other health products available at reasonable prices using existing trading and marketing systems.
- Develop a public health education program with the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH); strengthen MOPH capacity at the national and provincial levels for guiding effective health care.

### Recent Progress:

The USAID-funded REACH (Rural Expansion of Afghanistan's Community-Based Healthcare) program aims to improve the health of women of reproductive age and children under 5 years of age through increased use of basic health services in rural areas.

- **Training of Community-based Health Workers:** A critical component of USAID's REACH and the Ministry of Public Health's program is to increase the provision of community level outreach and health care through the activities of community health workers. Community health workers are volunteers who work within a village to educate the population on issues of basic hygiene and sanitation, safe motherhood, nutrition, immunization and other ways to prevent communicable diseases. Community health workers also provide basic health care, and are able to recognize and refer severe cases to the appropriate higher-level health facilities. In late December, the REACH Program conducted its second community health workers' Training of Trainers (TOT) workshop in Kabul city, where participants were coached in the best methods to instruct community health workers. Thirteen community health worker trainers—including five females—from Kabul, Bamyán and Ghazni provinces participated in the program. REACH will provide TOT workshops to all of its community health workers in the 13 most underserved provinces in Afghanistan.

### Recent Progress (continued):

- **Reproductive Health Program:** Number One, Afghanistan's newest condom brand supported by USAID and social marketed by Population Services International (PSI), has spread across the Afghan market with unprecedented momentum. Recognizing that the introduction of Number One could trigger social tension among conservative Afghan communities, the condom was introduced in early December with a minimum of radio advertising and educational programming. Despite this soft launch, condom sales reached 100,000 in just three weeks. The rapid uptake of Number One on the market underscores a growing recognition among Afghans that condoms can be used to improve the lives of their families through individual choice on family size. With the expansion of a culturally appropriate behavior change communication campaign, USAID expects condom sales and other forms of birth spacing across Afghanistan to maintain this momentum, securing a healthier future for women and children in a country where maternal and infant mortality rates remain among the highest in the world.



*Afghans purchasing Number One condoms*



*Community health workers participate in the Training of Trainers workshop in Kabul.*



*PSI in partnership with CARE International employs widowed Afghan women—among the most vulnerable populations in Afghan society—to assemble condom packaging.*