



Rebuilding Afghanistan

Weekly Activity Update for August 28 – September 3, 2003

Issue 28

United States Agency for International Development

Revitalizing Agriculture/Creating Jobs

Program Goals

- 100% increase in average productivity for 500,000 farm families through improved technologies, better infrastructure, and access to markets.
- 615 irrigation projects repaired/constructed to increase water use efficiency by 50% and agricultural productivity by 20%.
- 1000 km of improved village feeder roads rehabilitated.
- 1000 village agricultural market centers built.

Recent Progress

- Rehabilitation of two major irrigation systems fed by the Kajaki reservoir in Helmand is nearing completion. The 50,000-hectare irrigated area, which includes crops such as wheat, cotton, peanuts, melons, watermelons, okra, tomatoes, beans and onions, has been under rehabilitation since October 2002. The rehabilitation of 270 kms of canal has employed local Afghans for 331,500 labor days to remove 581,000 cubic meters of silt from the previously unmaintained irrigation works, thus reducing water logging and increasing crop yields. Work will conclude at the end of October 2003.

The repair of two of three irrigation systems is complete in Baghlan, where water is being diverted from the Kunduz River to irrigate 51,000 hectares. Crops in this area include winter and spring wheat, cotton, rice, beans, sugar beet, potatoes, lettuce, carrots, and tomatoes. The work thus far has employed Afghans for 350,300 labor days, rehabilitating 125 kms of canal and removing 358,000 cubic meters of silt. Before the two systems were repaired, only 17,000 of the 51,000 hectares received full irrigation. The area is now fully irrigated. The repair of the third system is now under way.



Local Afghans are employed on this labor-intensive dam project.



Rebuilding a diversion dam for irrigation system. Work must be done while the river's water level is relatively low in order to permit construction.



Map of irrigation work in Baghlan province in northeastern Afghanistan. Red lines denote rehabilitated canals; red hatching denotes irrigated areas

Expanding Educational Opportunity

Program Goals

- 1,000 schools and at least 18 provincial women's centers rehabilitated or constructed.
- 10 million textbooks printed and distributed for 2003 school year
- 30,000 classroom teachers trained.
- 60,000 students enrolled in accelerated learning programs to reach their appropriate age level.

Recent Progress

- Four Afghan construction companies were awarded contracts this week to build 35 new schools in the provinces of Helmand, Kandahar, Ghazni, and Uruzgan. Contracts for 16 more schools are imminent for Faryab and Uruzgan provinces. Construction of 48 of the 51 new schools will be complete by the end of the year; the remaining three will be complete in February 2004. Forty-seven of the schools will have eight classrooms; the rest will have between 10 and 16 classrooms. Six groundbreaking ceremonies for the new schools are now being planned—one in a central location in each province and one in Kabul.

School rehabilitation projects are now being planned for 12 provinces. Construction contracts to local contractors and/or NGOs will be awarded to complete 152 schools, with a target to complete work by the end of the year.

To date, USAID has rehabilitated 203 schools.



One of the four firms awarded a school construction contract this past week, Bahar Rehabilitation and Construction Company, is owned by a local businesswoman.

Increasing Access to Basic Health Care

Program Goals

- 400 health centers renovated or constructed in rural areas
- 13 million women and children given access to basic health care through grants to NGOs to operate clinics
- 3,300 new community health workers, 180 midwives, 4860 clinic staff trained
- Make oral rehydration salts, iodized salt, contraceptives, mosquito nets, and other health products available at reasonable prices using existing trading and marketing system
- Develop public health education program with the Ministry of Health (MOH); strengthen MOH capacity at the national, provincial and district levels for guiding health care

Recent Progress

- Seven local construction firms have been selected for the award of contracts to build 78 new health clinics in the provinces of Helmand, Kandahar, Ghazni, Zabul, Paktia, and Badakhshan. Final contract documents are being prepared, and the contracts are expected to be awarded in the next few days. Seven groundbreaking ceremonies, similar to those planned for the new schools, are being scheduled for central locations in Kabul and in each of the six provinces. The construction of 50 new basic health clinics is scheduled for completion by the end of this year, and the remaining 28 comprehensive health clinics by February 2004. To date, USAID has rehabilitated 121 health facilities including clinics, feeding centers, and obstetrical clinics.
- The "National Medicines Policy and Law" were finalized and endorsed in a national workshop. These documents specify the nation's priorities for the selection, procurement, distribution and use of medicines and will result in better quality drugs in the market place. In addition, they define a framework and direction for the development of future laws and regulations as well as a potential role of the parastatal institution, Avincenia Pharmaceutical Institute, in drug regulation and cost containment.

Note: Progress on the Afghanistan Ring Road is reported in USAID's Weekly Afghan Road Update.