



Rebuilding Afghanistan

Weekly Activity Update for October 16 – October 22, 2003

Issue 34

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 access to revenue (e.g., customs).
- Build capacity to carry out other legitimate government functions and support; reconstruction of health, judicial, education, economic, agricultural and transportation infrastructure.

Recent Progress:

- Voter Registration for 2004 Elections:** This week, voter registration kits, used by registration teams to register Afghans to vote, are set to arrive. Recruitment of registrars will also begin this week. USAID contributed \$1 million to the \$8 million total needed for the registration kits.
- Election of Constitutional Loya Jirga (CLJ) Delegates:** The first of the elections to choose delegates to the CLJ has been held in Badakhshan province. The elections went smoothly over a 4 hour period. Of the 23 candidates, 13 delegates to the CLJ were elected, including 1 woman. Reports indicate that the Rules of Procedure, developed with USAID assistance, were followed.

Recent Progress (continued):

- Banking Sector:** The Central Bank continues to lead the reintegration of Afghanistan into the global financial community:
 - The National Bank of Pakistan, which received a permit from the Central Bank to open a branch office in Kabul in the previous week, last week opened its Kabul facility.
 - USAID assisted the Central Bank in meeting with Bank of America to reactivate its correspondent bank relationship, which will broaden coverage across the U.S. for remittance transactions to Afghanistan.
 - The U.S. Army made additional U.S. dollar remittance and withdrawal in Afghans through the Central Bank; the process was handled effectively without expatriate advisor assistance.
 - This week the Central Bank's inter-branch payments system will be used to transfer World Bank grant funds to nine provincial universities. USAID will be assisting in this important use of the system.

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

- This year's bumper cereal harvest in Afghanistan is expected to be 50% higher than in 2002. Recent analysis of the harvest indicates that, while the country is close to self-sufficiency in cereals this year, transport and logistical constraints limit the ability of traders to move food from surplus to deficit areas. Nevertheless, prices of wheat (the principal cereal crop) in surplus areas have not yet dropped significantly, as was expected with this year's record harvest. Analysts believe that much of this year's crop has not yet arrived at grain markets, as farmers wait to see if there will be any government intervention that could affect the price they receive.

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Provinces with Expected Wheat Surplus or Deficit in 2003



Note: The Salang Tunnel, the only reliable road link between north and south, is expected to remain out of operation for needed repairs (funded by World Bank) through November 2003.

With ongoing investment by USAID and other donors in major transportation infrastructure, including the Kabul-Kandahar-Herat Highway, the benefits of increased interprovincial trade will start to be realized by next year's harvest, with lower prices to consumers in deficit areas (such as Kabul) and higher prices to producers in surplus areas.

Expanding Educational Opportunity

Program Goals

- 1,000 schools and at least 18 provincial women's centers rehabilitated or constructed.
- 10.2 million textbooks printed and distributed for 2003 school year
- 30,000 classroom teachers trained.
- 80,000 students enrolled in accelerated learning programs to reach their appropriate grade level.

Recent Progress

- This past week a construction supervision team visited 17 of the 23 school construction sites assigned to the team to confirm construction progress. A second construction supervision team is beginning its mobilization to monitor 24 additional sites.



Excavation for the foundation of Saeed Mortza School in Ghazni province.

Increasing Access to Basic Health Care

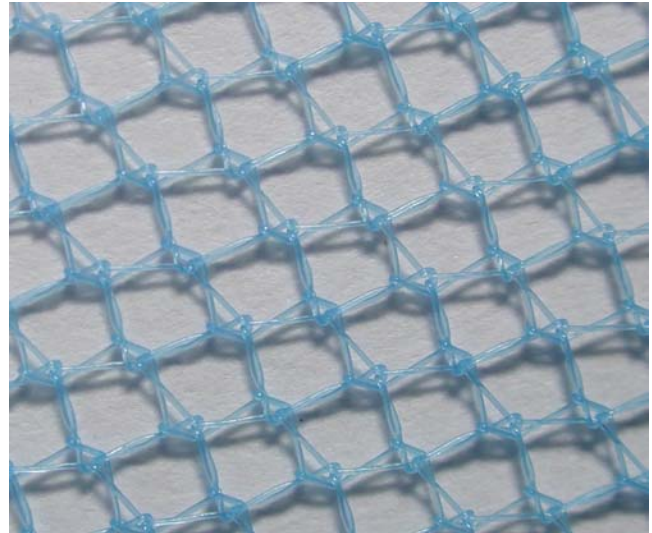
Program Goals

- 400 health centers renovated or constructed in rural areas throughout Afghanistan 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 Health (MOH); strengthen MOH capacity at the national and provincial levels for guiding effective health care policy.

Recent Progress

During the late summer and early fall, work continued on projects to combat malaria:

- 14 malaria referral centers are being built or rehabilitated; priority is being given to centers in Baghlan, Takhar, Laghman, Kunar, and Badghis.
- 15,000 long-lasting bed nets were distributed in Faryab, Badghis, Kabul and Bamiyan provinces.
- Training programs for doctors and laboratory technicians are being carried out. 150 doctors will be trained with a malaria refresher course starting in September 2003; 11 technicians were trained in a two week course from September 27 to October 10.
- Salary support is being provided for the 14 malaria provincial directors for September 2003 to August 2004.



Close up photo of the Olynet™ long lasting mosquito nets being distributed by USAID in Faryab, Badghis, Kabul, and Bamiyan provinces. Such nets are an important recent technological advance in the fight against malaria as the plastic from which they are made incorporates an insecticide and is durable enough to last 3 to 4 years.

Photo courtesy of WHO.

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