



# Rebuilding Afghanistan

Weekly Activity Update for October 23 – October 29, 2003

Issue 35

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:

- **Assistance to the 2004 Electoral Process:** Last week USAID equipped the Afghan Interim Election Commission with needed office equipment, including computers with wireless internet. Tendering is underway to print 250,000 pamphlets outlining the electoral process from the Bonn Accords, through the Emergency Loya Jirga of June 2002 and upcoming Constitutional Loya Jirga in December 2003, to voter registration and the 2004 elections. Two thirds of the pamphlets will be in Dari, one third in Pashtu; they will be distributed nationwide in the near future.

### Recent Progress (continued):

- **Tax Administration:** As an important step to increasing central government revenue through taxes, Tax Identification Numbers (TIN) are being issued to a variety of entities. On October 15, advisors held a "Town Hall Meeting" to explain the new system, answer questions, and distribute TIN applications. Over 100 traders, businesses, and NGOs attended the session.
- **Central Bank Payments System:** The increased capacity and professionalism of the Central Bank's payments system is being leveraged for a variety of important Afghan government initiatives. Meetings with relevant ministries and action plans were drawn up for the implementation of the payments programs for these initiatives:
  - Individual Salary Payments (ISP) program: ISP will modernize salary payments for Afghan government employees.
  - National Solidarity Program (NSP): A Ministry of Rural Reconstruction and Development (MRRD) program financed by the World Bank, NSP will distribute some \$135 million in development block grants to 7,000 communities across Afghanistan.
  - Ministry of Haj: The Central Bank will collect payments from some 27,000 to 30,000 Hajis of 90,000 afghanis each (\$2000) for this important Muslim pilgrimage beginning in mid-November. Deposits will be made in afghanis rather than US dollars, as had been the practice in the past.

## 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.



Formwork and reinforcing bar are erected for construction of this Basic Health Clinic. This past week more than 3000 bags of cement, 50 metric tons of reinforcing bar and other materials were delivered to school and clinic construction sites.

## 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

In July 2003, USAID initiated a major, three year, \$150 million agricultural program. Following mobilization, assessment, and contracting, program activities are now underway:

- Village Women Poultry Production: Poultry and eggs provide a major source of protein to children and families in Afghanistan, and women are the primary managers of poultry production. USAID is investing \$3.6 million to expand poultry production by training 25,000 village women in improved practices. The training will last 6 months and include both theoretical training and practical instruction, including increasing local production of high quality feed crops, genetically improved breeding stock, and a poultry vaccination program. Newly-formed producer and marketing associations will help in the procurement of inputs and marketing of poultry products. Expected results are improved nutrition for 150,000 children and improved income for 25,000 women wage earners.



*In Afghanistan, raising livestock is an activity normally done by women; this is especially true of poultry, which is raised in the family compound.*



## 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

- On October 18, additional construction supervisors deployed to the southern provinces of Faryab, Helmand, Kandahar, and Uruzgon to monitor subcontractor progress. In Ghazni, supervisors reported that 17 sites had demonstrable progress during this past week.



*Construction on the Yakhshi School in the Nawar district of Ghazni province.*

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