



Rebuilding Afghanistan

Weekly Activity Update for December 4 – December 10, 2003

Issue 40

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:

- **Constitutional Loya Jirga (CLJ) Update:** Turnout of those eligible to register to select CLJ delegates reached 82% on average country-wide. Eligible participants continued to approach Constitutional Commission secretariat offices to register in the final weeks leading up to the commencement of general CLJ delegate selections.
- **CLJ Delegate Selections and Training:** As of December 1, the process of selecting delegates was underway in Bamian, Kabul, Gardez, Kandahar, Herat, Mazar-i Sharif, Kunduz, and Jalalabad. As of December 6, training for delegates commenced at the Constitutional Commission's secretariat offices. The training takes four days and instructs delegates on the rules and procedures of the CLJ convention as well as the role of the delegate in the constitutional process.
- **CLJ Delegate Handbook:** With the support of USAID consultants, the Constitutional Commission secretariat prepared a handbook for delegates, providing background on the CLJ process, a description of services available on the CLJ site, and other useful information for delegates. The handbook will be available in Dari, Pashto, and English.
- **CLJ Local and International Media Attention:** The Constitutional Commission secretariat, with the advice and guidance of a USAID consultant, has begun processing press credentials for accreditation to the CLJ. As of December 3, over 400 journalists have applied for accreditation to the event. Applications are being vetted in cooperation with the United Nations, and badges have been distributed. So far, over two thirds of the journalists applying for accreditation represent Afghan news agencies. The international press will also be widely represented, with representatives from Al Arabiya, Al Jazeera, AP, BBC, Daily Telegraph, Deutsche Welle Radio, the Economist, Le Figaro, Financial Times, Fox News, London Times, NY Times, Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, Reuters, Washington Post, and UPI.

Recent Progress (continued):



Afghans waiting in line for CLJ delegate selection in Kabul.

- **Provincial Reconstruction Teams:** On November 22, 2003 at the Bagram Air Field, governors and their representatives from Parwan, Kapisa, Wardak, Logar and Kabul provinces joined in officially cutting the ribbons to launch the new Parwan Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT). In cooperation with host Governors, local officials, the Ministry of the Interior, US military personnel, the Department of State, USAID and other USG agencies, the Parwan PRT will serve an estimated three to four million people. In consultation with the governors, local officials and village representatives, the Parwan PRT will focus on security for such projects as road construction, water wells and bridges.



Ribbon cutting ceremony for the Parwan PRT.

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

- **Counter-Narcotics Programs:** To date, USAID has promoted high value crop diversification (i.e., grapes, olives, peanuts) in poppy-growing areas for approximately 18,000 farmers. Since the alternative crops program started, cotton production in the program area increased from 6,000 metric tons to 20,000 metric tons; and a facility in Helmand was opened to produce and market peanut and other oils from high value crops produced with USAID assistance.
- **Women's Economic Development:** The USAID Women's Entrepreneurial Development (WED) advisor led an Afghan women's group to India to attend the Consortium of Women Entrepreneurs in India (CWEI) conference. The group attended workshops and made valuable commercial contacts that will contribute to the success of their businesses in Afghanistan. The information these women obtained will be shared with other women entrepreneurs in Afghanistan. The advisor also met with Senator Clinton at the U.S. Embassy to discuss women's entrepreneurial development.

Recent Progress (continued):

- **Irrigation Systems:** USAID contractors are working throughout the country with the Afghan government to repair irrigation infrastructure. In the process, they are strengthening the capacity of local Afghan government agencies, farmers and regional NGOs to manage their water resources. Afghan laborers in Pul-i-Khumri, Baghlan Province are working hard to rebuild the Gawargan Canal and in the process, revitalize Afghanistan's agriculture sector. Regular employment has brought the first signs of prosperity to this area: many workers can now afford new bicycles so they no longer have to walk each day from their villages.



*Afghans working on the Gawargan Canal.
Photo credit: Development Alternatives, Inc.*

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.
- Develop a public health education program with the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH); and strengthen MOPH capacity at the national and provincial levels.

Recent Progress:

- USAID is currently constructing 43 new health clinics; and 37 additional clinics will soon be under construction.
- \$32 million in new USAID programming will go to 16 non-government organizations (NGOs) to operate 172 health clinics (including 9 district hospitals) in 9 provinces—affecting 2.7 million people.

Recent Progress (continued):

- **Eye Care:** USAID awarded a grant to International Assistance Mission to continue providing services at Kabul's NOOR Eye Clinic and outreach services. The \$461,190 grant will be used to reduce and prevent blindness through supporting a training program, provision of clinical services, and surgery. The grant was signed on December 6, 2003. 160,000 patients are provided these essential services annually.



US Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad joining the Minister of Health, Professor Dr. Sohalia Seddiq at the eye clinic grant ceremony.