



# Rebuilding Afghanistan

Weekly Activity Update for December 10 – December 28, 2003

Issue 41

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 (continued):



*President Karzai officially opening the highway.*

- **Opening of the Kabul-Kandahar Highway:** The first phase of construction for the Kabul-Kandahar highway is complete and all 482 kilometers (300 miles) are paved with at least one layer of four-inch-thick asphalt, allowing vehicles to travel between Afghanistan's two largest cities in less than six hours. The highway also supports communities outside the Kabul region, as approximately 35% of the nation's population lives within 50 kilometers (31 miles) of the road. Upon completion of the first phase, Afghanistan's Interim President, Hamid Karzai, the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, and the Administrator for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Andrew S. Natsios, officially opened the highway. In attendance at the ceremony was a group of delegates from the Constitutional Loya Jirga.
- **Phase Two of the Highway:** Beginning next spring, the second phase of the highway will commence, adding the final layers of asphalt, completing the bridges, widening the shoulders and marking the road with permanent lane dividers, borders and signs. Reconstruction of the Kandahar to Herat Highway, which is 566 kilometers (351 miles) in length, will also begin in the spring of 2004.
- **President Karzai's Inauguration Remarks:** "Today is one of the best days of our lives...The reconstruction of Afghanistan—the reconstruction of our highways—is something asked of me every day, every hour, by the people of Afghanistan, wherever they see me. I am very grateful today to President Bush for fulfilling—very much on time, and with assistance of his colleagues—the promise that he gave me a year ago; and to the government of Japan, Prime Minister Koizumi; and to Saudi Arabia...I thank all those people who worked on this highway—the Afghans and non-Afghans."



*President Karzai delivering his address inaugurating the new highway.*



*A section of the newly paved Kabul-Kandahar Highway.*

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## STRENGTHENING THE GOVERNMENT (CONTINUED)

### Recent Progress (continued)

- **US Ambassador Khalilzad:** “We are standing—literally—on the road to Afghanistan’s future. It is a future of national unity. It is a future of prosperity. It is a future of peace...Our partnership in reconstructing Afghanistan is about more than roads and buildings. It is also about helping the Afghan people rebuild their institutions and their way of life—after decades of deconstruction, suffering and despair...Mr. President [Karzai], on behalf of my President and the people of America, I join you in congratulating those who contributed to making this day possible. Let us celebrate today. And tomorrow let us rededicate ourselves to the work of rebuilding this country—Afghans, Americans and the world community all pulling together.”



### Recent Progress (continued):

- **USAID Administrator Natsios:** “The construction of this road that we are about to dedicate is the direct result of a commitment made by President George Bush to President Hamid Karzai last fall in Washington. Since that time, President Bush has maintained a deep personal interest in the progress of this road and ensured that we had the necessary funding and support to fulfill his pledge to have the highway open by the end of this year. Under his direction and leadership, an extraordinary and diverse group of people, working under the most difficult circumstances, has joined together to complete this historic task and deliver on his pledge.”



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## 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.

- **REACH and Ministry of Public Health Signing Ceremony:** When USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios visited Afghanistan, he was invited by the Ministry of Public Health to attend a grant signing ceremony at the ministry. Also in attendance were the Deputy Technical Minister of Public Health, Dr. Ferozuddin Feroz, all provincial health directors, provincial governors and more than 100 persons representing the Ministry of Public Health, non-government organizations (NGOs) and the donor community.

### Recent Progress (continued):

- **Signing Ceremony (continued):** At the ceremony, \$34.8 million was awarded through 28 grants to 17 national and international NGOs working in 9 provinces. The grants will improve access to basic health services for approximately 2.5 million people in the most remote and underserved rural communities and will directly address the causes of maternal and child mortality, as Afghanistan has among the world’s highest child and maternal mortality rates.



*USAID Administrator Natsios with Ministry of Health representatives signing grants to be awarded to NGOs.*