

Afghan Links

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Afghan Links is a free e-newsletter for readers who have a keen interest in Afghanistan and its history, people and culture. It invites news and articles from anyone who wishes to create and maintain constructive links between Afghanistan and other countries by sharing their expertise, information and ideas in any field.

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SECURITY

John Reid's Statement on Deployment of UK Troops to Afghanistan – 26th January 2006

The Secretary of State for Defence (John Reid) made a Statement on Deployment of UK Armed Forces to Afghanistan.

Please see attachment 4_G for the full statement.

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ANSO Central Region - Threat warning - Possible Kidnap Attempts - Kabul city

ANSO has received still unconfirmed information about possible kidnap attempts in Kabul city. According to the information, Al Qaida is planning to kidnap three female employees who work for international organizations. The females will be used as an exchange for two Al Qaida members who are currently detained by the US forces. According to the received Threat Warning, a number of individuals have been paid a large sum of money and are equipped with weapons, uniforms and police cars to conduct the kidnap. The mentioned areas where this kidnap shall be accomplished are: Qall-e Fatulla, Wazir Akhbar Khan, Shar-e Now or in the vicinity of Supreme Supermarket.

Although this information is still unconfirmed, it should not be taken lightly. ANSO advises the NGO community to keep to basic security rules such as:

- ❖ if you move, use a buddy system and let people know where you are
- ❖ keep in constant contact
- ❖ know the way and means of help (ANP/ANA/ISAF/CF compounds and Checkpoints) along the route
- ❖ alternate your travel routes
- ❖ know the location you are going to
- ❖ if someone tries to stop your vehicle, react or make the driver react: In all abduction attempts prior to the abduction of the International INGO staff member, the attempt failed because of a reaction by the driver
- ❖ if you think you are being followed – report this immediately and try to get as many details as possible

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See Reference 4_B for advice on kidnap situations.

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It's worth the sacrifice

NATO must move into Kandahar in force, says AHMED RASHID. Any sign of weakness will only bolster the Taliban.

As Canada prepares to send additional troops to southern Afghanistan in the aftermath of a string of suicide bombings in Kandahar province and the death of diplomat Glyn Berry (whom I knew well), Canadians have to expect more casualties and heartache for their commitment to the Afghans. The situation on the ground is likely to get worse before it gets better, but, unlike Iraq, Western forces have the overwhelming support of the Afghan population.

The Canadian deployment lies at the heart of several contradictions. It is part of a major NATO deployment to the south, a result of the Americans' insistence on pulling some 4,000 troops out of Afghanistan by the spring. Unfortunately, that pullout has nothing to do with conditions in Kabul and everything to do with congressional elections in November.

At the same time, NATO countries made a commitment to Afghanistan in the aftermath of 9/11. Western promises that they would not abandon the Afghans and that they would help to reconstruct their country and stave off any renewed threat from Islamic extremists took a back seat to the war in Iraq. The insurgency in Afghanistan is much worse now because of that neglect.

Today, NATO has as much of a responsibility to Afghanistan as the Americans do. But some NATO countries, such as the Netherlands, are balking at the prospect of having to carry out not just peacekeeping but also combat duties, as the south is the epicentre of the Taliban/al-Qaeda resurgence.

Afghanistan is not Iraq. For every layer of lies, subterfuge and lack of legality that we now know constituted Washington's *raison d'être* for its invasion of Iraq, there was a parallel layer of transparency, international legality and massive public support when the United Nations Security Council and NATO sanctioned the removal of the Taliban regime in 2001.

The proof lies in the fact that, five years after the defeat of the Taliban, the majority of Afghans still support the presence of NATO troops in their country. Contrast that with Iraq.

Thanks to the international community, Afghanistan has made dramatic strides in creating a political infrastructure. In short order, Afghanistan has an elected president, a democratic constitution voted in through a national consensus, an upper and lower house of parliament elected in a largely fair electoral process and elected governing councils in all 34 provinces.

Ostensibly, Afghanistan can boast of a political system that is far more legitimate than what exists in neighbouring Pakistan, Iran or the five Central Asian republics. These gains in one of the most destitute but strategically important countries in the world are worth protecting.

Yet, nobody doubts there are problems. As much as 30 per cent of the parliament is filled with warlords or their nominees and drug smugglers. The international community has not given anywhere near the kind of resources it has committed to Iraq -- in Kabul, frigid in winter, there is electricity only every third day in some areas. The government of Hamid Karzai, meanwhile, has yet to make the kind of tough decisions needed to get the country moving.

But no advances can be expected with the current state of insecurity and mayhem that exists in the six provinces of southern Afghanistan, where the Taliban are now killing teachers and girl students in a bid to shut down the few social sector projects such as schools and hospitals that exist.

Last year, the Taliban/al-Qaeda insurgency claimed the lives of 1,500 Afghans and 90 American soldiers. For the first time, a wave of suicide bombers -- emulating their terrorist brothers in Iraq -- have hit urban centres in Kabul and Kandahar. The terrorist coalition has created an effective strategy, striking at the NATO contingents precisely to try to create a wave of public revulsion at home against further troop deployments.

Kandahar province was the birthplace of the Taliban movement in 1994 that arose among the Pashtun tribes as a result of the rampant civil war and warlordism that followed the withdrawal of Soviet troops. Then, there was support for the Taliban; today, after tasting seven years of Taliban rule, there is none, even amongst Kandahar's Pashtuns.

The south is also the centre of opium farming and the heroin trade, a result of the failure of the West to deliver resources to the agricultural sector quickly enough, rather than a desire by Afghan farmers to grow poppies from which opium is derived. The Taliban finance their movement with the drug trade, which, in turn, spawns a much higher level of violence because it involves the drug mafias.

This worsening situation is not likely to improve until NATO forces move into the south in force. The Taliban need to be defeated on the ground, and Pakistan needs to do more to destroy their sanctuaries and logistic hubs across the border. But NATO troops also need to provide more of

the security and support to aid agencies to win the battle for reconstruction. That is precisely what Glyn Berry was doing in Kandahar and what he laid down his life for.

The Taliban are prepared for a long war of attrition that will continue until NATO forces show their staying power. Any weakness shown by the Western alliance now will only bolster the Taliban's morale and claim more Afghan lives. A resurgence of the Taliban and al-Qaeda in southern Afghanistan will only help create more recruits for Islamic extremist groups right across the region, and that will ultimately strengthen such groups in Europe and the Americas.

Pakistani journalist Ahmed Rashid is the author of *Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia* and *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia*. He recently attended the inauguration of the new parliament in Kabul.

Source: Ahmed Rashid - *Globe and Mail*, Canada – 20th January 2006.

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GOVERNANCE, RULE OF LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Human Rights Watch Report 2006 – Events of 2005

Extract on Afghanistan

Four years after U.S. forces ousted the Taliban from Kabul, Afghanistan faces an increasingly violent insurgency in southern and southeastern areas, while in the rest of the country regional military commanders—warlords—further entrench themselves by subverting the political process and controlling the country's drug trade.

Insecurity hampers development in much of Afghanistan, one of the least developed countries in the world. Economic growth remains mostly limited to urban areas, and in particular, Kabul. Human rights abuses, poverty, and insecurity increase markedly with distance away from city centers.

Women and girls continue to suffer from discrimination and restrictions. Only 35 percent of school-age girls are in school. According to 2005 U.N. and Afghan government figures, most marriages continue to involve girls below the age of sixteen, many of them forced.

The election of a parliament completed the process initiated by the Bonn Agreement in 2001. Election day was free of serious violence or technical problems, but during the campaign period Human Rights Watch documented pervasive intimidation of voters and candidates, in particular women. Over half the members of the new parliament are linked to armed groups or have records of past human rights abuses.

In early May 2005, sixteen protesters were killed by police and army troops during violent demonstrations in several cities in response to reports of U.S. interrogators desecrating a copy of the Koran during interrogations at Guantanamo Bay.

Afghanistan again produced nearly 80 percent of the world's heroin, and narcotics production and trafficking brought in an estimated U.S. \$3 billion to the Afghan economy, far and away the largest single source of income for the country and a significant source of criminality and resistance to the rule of law.

For the full extract on Afghanistan see

http://hrw.org/english/docs/2006/01/18/afghan12266_txt.htm and for the whole report go to <http://hrw.org/wr2k6/wr2006.pdf> **Alternatively ask for Reference 4_E.** [home](#)

UN Blueprint for International Engagement in the Development of Afghanistan Finalized

23 January 2006 – A blueprint for international engagement in the development of Afghanistan over the next five years had been finalized, the United Nations Assistance Mission in the country (UNAMA) announced today.

The Afghanistan Compact, to be launched at a conference in London from 31 January to 1 February, covers efforts in security, governance, human rights, the rule of law, development and counter-narcotics, UNAMA said.

"The Compact is a remarkable document, the fruit of detailed consultations between the Afghan Government and the international community," Jean Arnault, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, said.

"It contains some key provisions on Afghan leadership, capacity-building for people and institutions, fairness and transparency aimed at making sure that international assistance to Afghanistan is not only maintained but further improved," he added.

An [Interim Afghan National Development Strategy](#), which will set economic and political priorities for the Government, will also be presented in London, where delegations from more than 70 interested countries and international institutions will meet.

The Compact and the Strategy aim to continue the successes of the 2001 Bonn agreement, which paved the way for a new constitution, presidential elections, and country-wide parliamentary and provincial council elections culminating in last month's inauguration of the first National Assembly for Afghanistan in decades.

"Despite Afghanistan's remarkable progress over the last four years, huge challenges still remain to be addressed," Afghan Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah said. "The Afghanistan Compact sets a new framework for cooperation between Afghanistan and the international community. With continued international commitment we are confident that we will succeed in building on the progress we have already made."

Also from Afghanistan today, the UN-backed Disarmament and Reintegration Commission announced that a militia commander from Logar Province south of Kabul has handed over a range of weaponry, including a SAM-7 Soviet anti-aircraft missile, to a Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups team. See article by clicking [here](#)

At the handover ceremony, the Governor of Logar praised the action taken by Commander Haji Mohammad Nabi Ahmadzai and called for others to follow his example.

Source: UN News – 23rd January 2006.

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Emma Bonino's Statement after the European Parliament's Vote

EMMA BONINO'S STATEMENT AFTER THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT'S VOTE

WITH TODAY'S VOTE ON AFGHANISTAN, THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT PAVES THE WAY FOR NEW AND MORE CREDIBLE STRATEGIES IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST DRUGS

Strasbourg, January 18th 2006 – Thanks to the resolution on Afghanistan adopted today, the European Parliament is the first institution in Europe to take a clear and unambiguous position on the limits of counter-narcotics strategies that have repressive policies as the principal focus. The proposal of flanking measures traditionally pertaining to the 'war on drugs', such as eradication and alternative livelihood programmes, with the possibility of granting licenses for the regulated production of opium for medical purposes, in particular for painkillers, is a fundamental step towards a strategy aimed at affecting not only the weakest link in the chain, the farmers, but also the stronger ones, such as corrupt public officials that create an environment of impunity and the powerful international cartels. The most recent data provided by the UN shows that production has not decreased in any significant manner despite hundred of millions of dollars spent by the international community; in addition opium is increasingly turned into heroin on the spot, thus creating a local market for domestic consumption that opens the door to HIV/AIDS spreading. This represents a clear picture of the high costs and evident flaws, in other words of the failure, of the short-sighted and ineffective policy carried out until now. I hope, as requested by the European Parliament, that governments and personalities that will participate in the international conference on Afghanistan, taking place in London from January 31st to February 2nd with the aim of setting the framework for the post-Bonn transition process, will take into consideration, in a serious and open-minded way, the possibility of granting a license regime, as already foreseen for a number of countries probably more "influential".

Please go to <http://www.emmabonino.it/press/world/3309> see Reference 4_C for the full Statement by Emma Bonino and the EP Resolution. [home](#)

Weapons, Including Sam-7, Voluntarily Surrendered By Commander Haji Mohammad Nabi Ahmadzai

Disarmament and Reintegration Commission Joint Secretariat

WEAPONS, INCLUDING SAM-7, VOLUNTARILY SURRENDERED BY COMMANDER HAJI MOHAMMAD NABI AHMADZAI Logar – January 22nd, 2005

On January 22nd, Commander Haji Mohammad Nabi Ahmadzai from the district of Khoshi in the province of Logar handed over ammunition as well as light and heavy weapons to the DIAG* weapons collection teams. A Soviet anti-aircraft missile SAM-7 was among the weapons surrendered.

The weapons are now under the surveillance of the Afghan National Army (ANA). The weapons will be either used by the security forces of the elected Government of Afghanistan or – if not serviceable - destroyed.

By voluntarily surrendering his weapons, including a SAM-7, Commander Haji Mohammad Nabi Ahmadzai significantly participated in the Disbandment of Illegal Armed Group (DIAG) process. In the speech the Governor of Logar gave during the hand over ceremony, the Governor praised Commander Haji Mohammad Nabi Ahmadzai for supporting DIAG and stressed that "the first Jihad to defend the country is now over, but it is high time for the people of Afghanistan to launch the Great Jihad and rebuild their country", calling for others to follow the example of Commander Haji Mohammad Nabi Ahmadzai.

The DIAG process was launched on 11 June, 2005 when officially announced by Vice President Khalili. So far (18 January, 2006), 16,850 weapons as well as 25,506 pieces of boxed and 69,255 pieces of unboxed ammunition have been handed over to and verified by ANBP collection teams in Afghanistan. 4,857 of the collected weapons have been handed over by 124 candidates to the parliamentary and provincial council elections.

**Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups*

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Senior UN Official Visits Afghanistan to Push For Counter-Narcotics Measures

The potential risk of drug cultivation in Afghanistan topped the agenda of just-concluded talks between the senior United Nations anti-narcotics official and leaders in the country, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported today.

Antonio Maria Costa, who heads UNODC, met with Afghan President Hamid Karzai, government officials, representatives of coalition countries, the ISAF-NATO Commander and heads of UN agencies during his two-day visit to the country, which ended on Saturday.

Mr. Costa complimented President Karzai for the progress made in 2005 in institution building, relating to all areas of governance, but particularly in fighting drugs. The UNODC chief said the year 2005 "demonstrated that strong counter-narcotics policy has a positive impact on cultivation," pointing out that poppy growing was down by 20 per cent from the previous year.

But he also warned that "unless strong measures are taken in the course of 2006, we risk witnessing a reversal."

In talks with government officials, Mr. Costa pushed for thorough implementation of the newly adopted National Drug Control Strategy. "In the immediate future policy will have to concentrate on law enforcement, including eradication of opium fields," he said. "But sustainable success can only be accomplished with the instruments of development, namely providing farmers with the conditions to earn an honest income, alternative to drugs."

The Afghanistan Compact, a visionary framework slated for adoption at an upcoming international conference in London, places counter-narcotics as the key cross-cutting theme that must be addressed. Mr. Costa urged participants at the London meeting "to support concretely the Government's counter-narcotics policy, helping farmers to opt out of opium, but also arrest international traffickers and seize their assets."

In 2006, Afghanistan faces the risk of migration of opium cultures to border areas affected by cultivation, according to UNODC, which is completing its winter opium assessment survey in Afghanistan.

Source: UN News – New York – 22nd January 2006.

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Islamic Republic Of Afghanistan - Afghanistan National Development Strategy - An Interim Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction – Summary Report

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan - AFGHANISTAN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY - AN INTERIM STRATEGY FOR SECURITY, GOVERNANCE, ECONOMIC GROWTH AND POVERTY REDUCTION – SUMMARY REPORT PREPARED BY THE PRESIDENTIAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE FOR THE ANDS SY 4 DALWA 1384 (24 JANUARY 2006)

PREFACE

This is the Summary Report of the Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy (IANDS). The I-ANDS is the product of twelve-months of intensive consultations within Government and with a wide array of stakeholders, including community and provincial representatives, the 'ulama' (learned religious leaders), the private sector, civil society, non government organizations (NGOs), the United Nations, donors and other members of the international community, senior Afghan policy makers, and government ministries and departments.

Led by a Presidential Oversight Committee, the I-ANDS process began in early 1384 (2005) with discussions of Afghanistan Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Throughout 1384 (2005/6) the Oversight Committee met almost every week to develop and refine its core positions on the I-ANDS, and to oversee the process as it moved forward. Following a presentation of the proposed I-ANDS structure and process in June 1384 (2005), a series of consultations were held with donors, NGOs, private sector and civil society representatives.

For each of the eight sectors of the I-ANDS, a consultation draft was then prepared, translated and discussed with both government ministries and donor representatives. Based upon government and donor reaction to those drafts, the sector and program summaries in the IANDS were significantly revised.

As the document has been developed, an External Advisory Group of donors provided informal feedback on the I-ANDS. In the negotiation of the Afghanistan Compact, a series of intensive consultations took place between the international community and the Government of Afghanistan, facilitated by the United Nations. As a result of this process, each benchmark in the Compact has been scrutinized in depth by Government and donor representatives and now represents a consensus set of policy priorities for the I-ANDS.

This document is the Summary Report of the I-ANDS, which comprises three Volumes.

Volume I lays out our overall policy objectives; analyzes the context of and constraints to the achievement of those objectives; summarizes Government's key strategies and programs; and reviews specific steps towards the implementation of the I-ANDS and the development of the full ANDS. Volume II of the strategy document contains a summary of Government's proposed and ongoing sectoral programs and annual indicators against which progress may be measured. While Volume II is not yet Government policy, it will form the basis for consultations towards the development of the full ANDS. Volume III is a collation of strategic plans developed by government line ministries and commissions.

Like the I-ANDS itself, this Summary Report aims to be a living document that will stimulate policy debate within the Afghan government and with our key partners. Our hope is that it will be reviewed by a wide array of stakeholders throughout Afghanistan and beyond our borders, and will be significantly improved as we move towards developing a full ANDS.

Ultimately, we aim for the ANDS to serve as a consensus building tool on Afghanistan's national development priorities for many years to come.

Source:

http://www.ands.gov.af/src/ands/ANDS%20Summary%20Reportfinal%20January%202%20_track%20changes_.pdf

For the full report which will be presented to the London Conference on 31st January 2006 see the above link or ask for Reference 4_A.

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INFRASTRUCTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Environmental Legislation Comes of Age in Afghanistan

New Act Signals New Hope to the People and Ecology of the Country. Laws aimed at protecting the natural resources and environment of Afghanistan have been developed by the Government with assistance from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The Framework Legislation is believed to be the first legislation in Afghanistan designed to conserve and protect the country's wildlife, waterways and forests up to the air and soil.

Klaus Toepfer, UNEP's Executive Director, said "Without laws, environmental treaties and agreements are mere paper tigers. So the Environment Act is the cornerstone for the development of an effective and integrated environmental management regime that secures environmentally sound sustainable development and use of natural resources, while still promoting economic and social well-being and development."

"If we are to help deliver a stable future for this country and for countries across the globe, the environment must be factored into rehabilitation and future planning. For the environment is not a luxury but the basis for economic development and livelihoods. Poverty cannot be defeated and prosperity realized without this pillar of sustainable development being strong and viable," he said.

Studies indicate that over 80 per cent of Afghanistan's population relies directly on the natural resource base to meet its daily needs.

However, more than two decades of conflict, military activities, refugee movements, collapse of national, provincial and local forms of governance, lack of management and institutional capacity, and over-exploitation have heavily damaged Afghanistan's natural resource base.

The recent drought has had an additional negative impact. As a result, the country's vulnerability to natural disasters and food shortages has increased.

Other challenges for natural resource and environmental management include still insufficient institutional capacities and the current absence of legislation in many areas.

In order to bridge these gaps, UNEP has been working to assist in the development of the new Environment Act in partnership with the Government of Afghanistan, the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and international experts.

The Act contains the tailor-made frameworks needed to manage sustainably and use Afghanistan's natural resources and to rehabilitate its damaged environment. The Act also clarifies institutional responsibilities and contains the compliance and enforcement provisions required to allow the Government of Afghanistan to enforce effectively the legislation.

The development of this important legislation is one component of a three year programme for capacity building and institutional development for environmental management, which was initiated at the request of the government of Afghanistan, in October 2003.

It is being implemented by UNEP's Post Conflict Branch. The programme is funded by the European Commission, the Government of Finland and the Global Environment Facility.

For More Information Please Contact Nick Nuttall, UNEP Spokesperson, Office of the Executive Director, on Tel: +254 20 62 3084; Mobile: +254 733 632 755, E-mail: nick.nuttall@unep.org

If there is no prompt response, please contact Elisabeth Waechter, UNEP Associate Information Officer, on Tel: 254 20 623088, Mobile: 254 720 173968, E-mail: elisabeth.waechter@unep.org

Source: United Nations Environment Programme – 3rd January 2006.

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EDUCATION

Schools Shut Down In Helmand

Nearly 165 schools have been closed down because of security concerns in the southern province of Helmand, officials said on January 22. Provincial education director Haji Mohammad Qasim, said schools located in the Nadali, Nawzad, Baramcha and other districts of the province were shut down due to increasing threats from Taleban fighters. He said, "First, security should be established in the region, without which the smooth process of learning is impossible." Deputy education minister Seddiq Patman also said a sense of widespread insecurity had halted the mechanism of education in the province. Outlook is an independent daily published in English.

Source: Afghan Press Monitor – 24th January 2006.

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HEALTH

UK Department for International Development (DfID) - New White Paper: Humanitarian and conflict reform...an emergency service for the world

Hilary Benn spoke to the UN about the need for reform in the second in his series of speeches he is making as part of a consultation on the **new development White Paper**.

Speaking last night (23 January) in New York, the Secretary of State said:

"I'm encouraged by the progress that is being made by WHO and UNICEF for example on improving the quality of information about the health of those affected by crises. Their work will help us to know how many people are dying and how many children are malnourished.

"But I think we need to do more to increase accountability; accountability to those who suffer in disasters and accountability to our public, who through their taxes and personal contributions pay for the international effort.

"Ultimately what we are together striving to build is a coherent international system for humanitarian emergencies. An emergency service for the world."

"It is now changing but it could be better. We have made big progress on humanitarian reform in 2005. Now we must make sure we achieve as much in 2006, not least because it shows the way for wider UN reform.

"The international commitment to increased aid should allow us to properly fund humanitarian crises, including those that are forgotten. In the end we will all be judged by whether it works. Now, that's what I think. What do you think?"

For news and blogs on the new White Paper, visit [Guardian Unlimited](#), our media partner. Or, go straight to our website [for the full text of Hilary Benn's speech](#) and links to more about the new White Paper. [home](#)

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Funding: Livestock for Life, Wellcome Trust

Authors: Wellcome Trust.

The Wellcome Trust has launched final call for proposals for their global grant scheme, Livestock for Life. **Awards ranging from £20,000 to £150,000 are available.**

Livestock for Life aims to strengthen links between livestock keepers, practitioners, researchers, policy makers and other stakeholders working in the field of international health. Open to a wide range of organisations in Sub-Saharan Africa, South and South East Asia and Latin America, particularly aimed at national and international development organisations (NGOs), charitable bodies and other non-profit organisations and academic or research institutions based in (or active in) the developing world. For more information on applications, visit <http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/livestock/pe> or write to Afghanlinks@aol.com for details.

Circulated on Eldis Announcements Listing, Eldis (2006) [home](#)

Afghanistan Exports 9,600 Tons of Dry Fruit, Cereals

The Afghanistan International Chamber of Commerce (AICC) Sunday said a total of 9,600 tons of dry fruit, cereals and herbs had been exported to Pakistan and India last month.

In an exclusive interview with Pajhwok Afghan News, chief of the Kandahar branch of the AICC Faridullah Habib said they had earned US\$15 million from the exports.

He said dry fruit included raisin, apricots, almonds, pistachio, peas and mulberries. He added: "Traders have to face a number of problems in exporting produce in the past, which have now been removed." The government had talked to the official concerned who had remitted the toll tax for three years.

Asked about any negative impact on exports due to the recent suicide attacks, Habib said they had seen no such effect. Even today, a large number of traders were here to register their shipments for export, he informed.

He said in some parts of the province, Taliban had created hurdles for merchants as well as growers. Complaints had been received regarding the miscreants forcing farmers to grow poppy instead of fruits and cereals.

Haji Fida Mohammad, resident of the Arghandab district, who had come to register his shipment of raisin with the AICC, told Pajhwok Afghan News they were faced with problems in exporting their produce in the past.

"Now the AICC has searched a place for our goods in the international market. Our produce is being sold like hot cakes and we earn a reasonable income now."

But another dealer, Haji Shah Wali, said the recent suicide attacks had bitterly affected their businesses. He said they always remained in a state of fear as well as searched by security officials at a number of points.

Source: Kandahar City - Asia Pulse - (Pajhwok Afghan News) – 23rd January 2006. [home](#)

DACAAR Sewing Centre turned into new independent Afghan NGO

PRESS RELEASE - Kabul, 23 January 2006

DACAAR Sewing Centre turned into new independent Afghan NGO

Zardozi, meaning 'golden thread' in Dari, is the name of the new independent NGO taking over DACAAR Sewing Centre activities. *Zardozi* now registered as an Afghan NGO is still based in Kabul from where handicraft, embroidery and clothes made by Afghan women will continue to be sold.

Today, DACAAR is focusing more on long-term development activities in rural Afghanistan through three comprehensive programmes – the Water and Sanitation Programme, the Rural Development Programme, the microfinance programme MADRAC - and through continued involvement in NSP (National Solidarity Programme) as an implementing partner with the Afghan Government.

By turning DACAAR Sewing Centre into an independent NGO an era is over with DACAAR as this was how the Danish commitment to help Afghan refugees in Pakistan all started.

In 1984, DACAAR (Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees) was established and started activities in refugee camps in Pakistan to support Afghan refugees. War and conflicts had resulted in a major influx of Afghan refugees to Pakistan and especially to North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and destructed Afghanistan as well as the rich and precious traditions of the country. At the height of the first flow of refugees from Afghanistan, DACAAR launched its first activities in Pakistan opening the Sewing Centre project. By creating income-generating projects Afghan women in refugee camps were provided an option through which livelihood could be earned and at the same time it preserved traditional embroidery and handicrafts of Afghanistan. DACAAR activities in support of Afghan women are now completely taken over by *Zardozi*.

Zardozi will continue creating income opportunities for women in Afghanistan while at the same time preserving traditional handicraft.

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SOCIAL PROTECTION

Emerging Markets Group Require a Social Safety Net Expert

Emerging Markets Group (EMG) provides development consulting services under donor-funded initiatives such as USAID, DfID, CIDA, Global Fund for HIV AIDS, MCC, the European Commission, and the World Bank.

EMG is currently seeking a Social Safety Net Expert responsible for setting up the practical steps for implementation of social safety net plans. The expert will work closely with the counterpart in the Ministry of Finance and relevant line ministries.

Key tasks will include working with the current social safety net plan defining detailed procedures for implementation; implementing the plan for three to four enterprises scheduled for privatization and liquidation; recruiting and training Afghan staff to be responsible for preparing and implementing social safety net plans for subsequent privatization and liquidations. The expert will work closely together with other members of the expatriate team including the methodology advisor, the legal advisor, the public outreach advisor, and the social safety net team. The expert will manage Afghan staff.

The ideal candidate should have a minimum of 7 years hands-on experience from downsizing staff of State Owned Enterprises in countries in transition; experience in preparing all documentation for downsizing required and strong knowledge in administrative procedures; Good communication, negotiation, training, and analytical skills are needed; A systematic work style and sensitivity to Muslim culture a must. An advanced degree in a relevant field required. Please visit our website www.emergingmarketsgroup.com to learn more about EMG.

Send your resume and cover letter to recruitment@emergingmarketsgroup.com . Please enter Social Safety Net in the subject line. EEO/M/F/V/D. Please reference the "Recruiting Center at DevelopmentEx.com" when you apply by email. [home](#)

ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE AND PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT
Asian Development Bank (ADB) Technical Assistance Report

New Report - Preparing the Financial Market and Private Sector Development Program
(Afghanistan) [PDF] <http://mms.adb.org/e-Notification/url.asp?ID=1947&DOCID=6984>
Reference 4_E [home](#)

Afghanistan: Managing Public Finances for Development – World Bank Report

Washington, January 23, 2006 - A new World Bank report released today warns that fragmentation of foreign assistance may adversely affect the accountability and capacity of the Government of Afghanistan. According to the study – [Afghanistan: Managing Public Finances for Development](#) – around three-quarters of foreign aid is channeled outside the government's own budget, presenting a serious constraint to the country's long-term fiscal planning. Issued ahead of the [London Conference on Afghanistan](#) on January 31, the report urges donor countries to direct more of their aid through government channels to help ensure fiscal sustainability and support the country's long-term development. It also urges the Government of Afghanistan to step up its efforts to improve the quality of budget preparation and execution, including strengthening fiduciary standards.

The report, which analyzes challenges for public finance management in Afghanistan and suggests an agenda for action, says improved aid efficiency requires a deeper partnership between the government and donors. This should occur around the national development strategy and budget process. The report further says that fragmented, ring-fenced projects that bypass government systems and use donors' own fiduciary processes can be less cost-effective and a heavy burden on the government's time and capacity. The simple challenge of keeping track of projects over which it has no control and often little knowledge, strains government capacity and undermines its authority. In short, it is not the most effective way to develop the aid relationship in Afghanistan, suggests the report.

“Experience demonstrates that channeling aid through government is more cost-effective,” said **Alastair McKechnie, World Bank Country Director for Afghanistan**. *“To take one example, a basic package of health services contracted outside government channels can be 50 percent more expensive than the package contracted by the government on a competitive basis. Furthermore, the credibility of the government is increased as it demonstrates its ability to oversee services and become accountable for results to its people and the newly elected parliament.”* The report highlights the benefits of using government channels, as demonstrated by the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), which finances most of the civilian recurrent budget. *“The ARTF provides funding predictability and enables the government to meet its basic requirements, such as paying teachers and doctors,”* said **Jean Mazurelle, Country Manager for Afghanistan**.

The budget process should be the central instrument of national policy and reform, the report argues. To make this key objective of the government happen, and to help encourage more donor funding to go through government channels, further improvements in all parts of the budget process are needed, building on the impressive recent progress as documented in the report. The recently elected Parliament will need to exercise constructive oversight in this regard as stipulated in Afghanistan's Constitution – in particular approval of the annual budget and review of audits.

To make the most of using the budget process, Afghanistan's vulnerability to corruption must be reduced, the report underlines. It argues that improvements in the public finance management system as well as other preventative measures will be critical – not just focusing on investigation and prosecution of specific cases.

Facing a difficult post-conflict situation, Afghanistan has accomplished remarkable progress, including rapid economic growth, unprecedented primary school enrollments, rehabilitation of major highways, a new and stable currency, and presidential and parliamentary elections. Fiscal discipline has been strictly enforced and maintained, notably through control over the government wage bill. The government has also made a strong commitment to financial transparency and accountability, resulting in improved fiduciary performance.

For more – and the report – see

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/SOUTHASIAEXT/0,,contentMDK:20792751~pagePK:146736~piPK:146830~theSitePK:223547,00.html> **and**

<http://www.worldbank.org.af/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/SOUTHASIAEXT/AFGHANISTANEXTN/0,,contentMDK:20792871~pagePK:141137~piPK:141127~theSitePK:305985,00.html>

or ask for Reference 4_D.

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Afghanistan Hopes Future Aid Will Go Directly to Government

Afghanistan's finance minister has asked Japan to continue its assistance to Afghanistan. The appeal comes ahead of a donors' conference in London next week, at which several countries are to unveil their future aid pledges for Afghanistan.

Finance Minister Anwar ul-Haq Ahadi says the Afghan government expects in five to six years to generate enough revenue to finance most of its regular needs.

But in the meantime, he told reporters in Tokyo Friday, it will need international support to avoid sinking back into the violence and anarchy that has plagued the nation in recent decades. Before meeting with the Japanese finance minister, Mr. Ahadi told reporters that Afghanistan welcomes a coming World Bank report urging donor countries to funnel more aid directly to his government. The report also urges Kabul to strengthen its fiduciary standards.

"We'll be very pleased if that report from the World Bank were to come out on Monday," he said. "I think that the Ministry of Finance has improved its ability to handle international assistance money."

The country is struggling to recover from more than two decades of war and economic neglect. It is heavily dependent on foreign aid to rebuild its infrastructure and keep the government going. But much of the aid does not go to the government directly, which makes it hard for Kabul to plan its budget and address issues it considers a priority.

Mr. Ahadi and other Afghan officials were in Tokyo this week to talk with Japanese officials ahead of a meeting of Afghanistan's major donors in London. They say they expect the United States to make a "big announcement" regarding the amount of its future contributions at the conference next week.

They also termed Tokyo's support as critical, noting that Japan has contributed one billion dollars for the reconstruction of Afghanistan over the past four years.

In response to questions about Afghanistan's thriving opium trade, Ahadi said his country has "not lost the war on drugs," but he acknowledged that opium constitutes one-third of his country's economy and eradicating it without compensating poppy farmers and others in the business would plunge Afghanistan into economic depression.

"The total size of the economy is less than \$3 billion," noted the finance minister. "I think for the entire international community to get rid of or to reduce the problem of drugs by 80 percent or so, \$3 billion might not be such a huge price to pay for that. But without providing an adequate alternative livelihood, I'm afraid that we will create huge economic problems."

Security concerns have deterred foreign and domestic involvement in Afghanistan for decades. But Friday said that Afghanistan now is safer than it has ever been in modern times. He said terrorists in Afghanistan are sometimes able to carry out attacks, just as they are in such advanced nations as the United States, Britain and Israel.

Source: Steve Herman – VOA – 20th January 2006.

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JOB VACANCIES

Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) Require a Deputy Director of Administration & Finance

Please see the attached pdf Reference 4_A for full details and how to apply.

Sent to Afghanlinks by Brandy Bauer brandy@areu.org.af Communications Editor – AREU. [home](#)

Emerging Markets Group Require a Social Safety Net Expert

Click [here](#) to be taken to the details.

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NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Christian Aid's endeavours to strengthen Afghan Civil Society in Afghanistan

Christian Aid started the New Year by organising two one-day civil society strengthening workshops in Herat on 2nd and 3rd of January 2006. The civil society workshops were the first ever workshops conducted in the western region of Afghanistan. The workshops were conducted by the Afghan Civil Society Forum (ACSF) and sponsored by Christian Aid. Fahiz (CA's Programme Officer) said that the civil society training in Herat was a good start and now needs to be taken at the grassroots levels.

The main purpose of the workshops were to bring these actors together i.e. to build their capacities on the roles and responsibilities of civil society, to enable them understand the importance of civil society in a democratic, dynamic and challenging environment and broadening and strengthening Christian Aid's partners' civil society networks with other civil society actors.

The participants of the workshops were Christian Aid's partners and other civil society organisations such as cultural associations, women's organisations, youth associations, NGOs, religious scholars, Journalists' associations, foundations, members of Community Development Shuras, etc. Christian Aid also invited two representatives from most of the governmental departments in the province (e.g. Ministry of Economy, M. of Women's Affairs, M. of Education, M. of Health and Ministry of Agriculture).

More than 50 organisations consisted of almost 100 individuals (including government departments) attended the two one day workshops. More than 40% of the participants were consisted of women. The emphasis on women's participation in this training was to ensure women's inclusion in the civil society development so that they can actively take part in the civil society debates/discussions. Ferishta who is the director of WASSA (a women organisation and partner to CA) said that Christian Aid's role is always appreciated in the west i.e. always come up with innovative initiatives to promote Afghan civil society. She continued saying that these kinds of training will build trust and confidence and make people understand to work together to achieve synergy.

It was the first time that such diverse number of actors were brought to together to discuss the concept of civil society, its legal doctrines, and the role and responsibilities of civic institutions.

Sultan Maqsood Fazel (CA's Advocacy Officer) said that the rationale behind organising such a kind of training is to ensure Afghan civil society understands their roles and responsibilities and take strategic steps to demand actions from their leaders/policy makers. Now the next step will be to take these kinds of initiatives down to the community level. This training will certainly create a better space for our partners and others to better understand the Afghan civil society and strongly advocate on their behalf.

Source: Sent to Afghan Links by Sultan Maqsood Fazel – Christian Aid.

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If you want further information on any of the above subjects please email Jeanne Bryer at Afghanlinks@aol.com NB. All information contained here identifies the source and is shared with readers in good faith. If you find any incorrect details please let me know and they will be rectified immediately. Afghan Links is produced by Jeanne Bryer who formerly worked for the British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and who currently works for Khorasan Orphanage in Kabul and the Kathy Evans Afghan Education Trust. If you no longer wish to receive the Afghan Links Newsletter please send an email to Jeanne Afghanlinks@aol.com and your address will be removed.

