

AFGHAN LINKS

ISSUE – 17 – 9th May 2005 (TOTAL NO. 26)

Afghan Links is a free newsletter for readers who have a keen interest in Afghanistan, 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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EVENT

Invitation to Fashion and Jewellery Design Exhibition on 13th, 14th and 15th May

You are invited to a Fashion and Jewellery Design Exhibition on 13th, 14th and 15th May in Karwan Sara (please find below the schedule).

The theme of the exhibition is..

Mixing old tradition in a new design concept...

As you may know the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization, as part of its Women Entrepreneurs Development -financed by the Italian Government- organised a two months project to train women on Fashion Design and Jewellery Design.

The participants who attended these workshops came both from the Private and NGOs sectors.

We would like to show you how the ancient tradition of tailoring and jewellery has been reinterpreted by Afghan women...

We are looking forward to see you!

13 May 12 to 4.30

14 May 10 to 4.30

15 May 10 to 4.30

Karwan Sara (opposite to the Interior Ministry).

Please feel free to contact me if you wish to have further info at 070.224825 or via e-mail at gabriella.ghidoni@undp.org - Gabriella - Handicraft Specialist - ILO Kabul. [home](#)

HEALTH

A Mother's Day Report Card: The Best – and Worst – Countries to Be a Mother and Child - Save the Children's *State of the World's Mothers 2005* report

Investing in Mothers Key to Child Survival and Well-Being

Sweden tops list, Burkina Faso and Mali Tie for Last, United States is Ranked 11th

Save the Children, a U.S.-based independent global humanitarian organization, released today its annual *Mothers' Index* that ranks the best – and worst – places to be a mother and a child. The *Index*, highlighted in the organization's *State of the World's Mothers 2005* report, ranks the status of mothers and children in 110 countries based on ten indicators pertaining to health and education. The *Index* reveals that where mothers survive and thrive, children survive and thrive. Scandinavian countries sweep the top rankings of the best places to be a mother, while countries in sub-Saharan Africa dominate the bottom tier. The United States ranks in 11th place.

"The *Mothers' Index* clearly shows that the quality of children's lives is inextricably linked to the health and education of their mothers," said Charles MacCormack, president and CEO of Save the Children. "In countries where mothers fare well, children fare well; in countries where mothers do poorly, children do poorly."

Zeroing in on the children's well-being portion of the *Mothers' Index*, Afghanistan finishes in last place. More than 1 out of every 7 children in Afghanistan dies before his or her first birthday, 87 percent of the population is without safe drinking water, and 25 percent of children are suffering from malnutrition. **The situation for Afghan mothers is equally dismal: 1 in 6 mothers dies in childbirth;** 86 percent of all newborns are delivered without trained health personnel, and 96 percent of women are not using modern contraception to space their births at healthy intervals.

The Mothers' Index

<i>Top 10 Countries</i>	<i>Bottom 10 Countries</i>
1. Sweden	109. Mali ; Burkina Faso - tied
2. Denmark	108. Ethiopia
3. Finland	107. Chad
4. Austria	106. Yemen
5. Germany	105. Congo, Democratic Republic of the

6. Netherlands	104. Mauritania
7. Norway	103. Nepal
8. Canada	102. Gambia
9. Australia	100. Eritrea, Cambodia - tied
10. United Kingdom	
* The United States ranks 11th.	

The status of mothers was compared in 110 countries based on six indicators of women's well-being (lifetime risk of maternal mortality, percent of women using modern contraception, percent of births attended by trained personnel, percent of pregnant women with anemia, adult female literacy rate, and participation of women in national government) and four indicators of children's well-being (infant mortality rate, gross primary enrollment rate, percent of population with access to safe water, and percent of children under age 5 suffering from moderate or severe nutritional wasting).

"Conditions for children and mothers in the bottom-ranked countries are devastating. Many children are fortunate just to survive the first five years of life and have a chance to go to school," said MacCormack. "But the situation is far from hopeless. World leaders have agreed on eight Millennium Development Goals to fight poverty, save lives and build security by 2015, and these goals can be reached in many poor countries if the United States and other wealthy nations make a more concerted effort to help them.

"Humanitarian organizations like Save the Children are working in partnership with governments to achieve these goals by investing in proven programs that benefit mothers and children in developing countries. Our 70-plus years of experience on the ground have shown us that effective programs to improve education and child and maternal health – including family planning – help children to survive and thrive, and enable nations to prosper," he said.

KEY FINDINGS: The *Mothers' Index* identifies female education, presence of a skilled attendant at birth, and access to, and use of, family planning services, as the three areas most strongly associated with child survival and well-being.

Women who are educated are more likely to postpone marriage and early childbirth, seek health care for themselves and their families, and encourage all of their children, including girls, to go to school.

As contraceptive use rises, and mothers are able to space their births at healthy intervals, deaths among mothers and children decline. For example, in the United States, 71 percent of women use modern birth control, 1 in 2,500 mothers dies in childbirth and 7 out of 1,000 infants do not make it to their first birthday. Compare this to Mali, where 6 percent of women use birth control, 1 in 10 mothers dies in childbirth, and 1 in 8 infants dies before reaching age one.

COUNTRY COMPARISONS: The *Mothers' Index* exposes an enormous gap between the highest- and lowest-scoring countries and underscores an urgent need to address this divide. For instance, in Sweden, which tops the list, nearly all women are literate. In contrast, in Ethiopia, only 34 percent of women are literate. And a mother in Ethiopia is 37 times more likely to see her child die in the first year of life than a mother in Sweden.

Compared to a mother in the top 10 countries, a mother in the bottom 10 countries is 25 times more likely to see her child die in the first year of life and over 500 times more likely to die herself in pregnancy or childbirth.

In the bottom 10 countries, nearly 1 out of 4 children is not enrolled in school, and only 1 out of 3 adult women are literate. In the top 10 countries, virtually all children go to school and all women are literate.

Trained health personnel attend fewer than 15 percent of births in Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Nepal.

Fewer than 5 percent of women use modern contraception in Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda.

Save the Children's *State of the World's Mothers 2005* report takes a closer look at the power of girls' education in changing the lives of present and future generations of children, and in putting nations on a path for progress.

[Learn more about the *State of the World's Mothers 2005* report.](#)

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INSTITUTE FOR WAR AND PEACE REPORTING (IWPR)

Coalition Seeks To Challenge Karzai - Parties band together to field a slate of candidates in the upcoming election

A leading politician who ran against Hamed Karzai in last year's presidential election has announced the creation of a new coalition that hopes to win a majority of seats in the national legislature this autumn, and create a parliamentary form of government.

Mohammad Yunus Qanuni, who ran for president last October, said that the National Understanding Front (Jabha-ye-Tafahhum-e-Milli), made up of 11 political parties, would act as an opposition to the Karzai government.

Once in parliament, the bloc will seek to amend the constitution to replace the current system of government, which it believes gives the president too much power. Instead, the coalition favours a system in which "the prime minister is chosen by parliament, and power is shared between the president and the prime minister", said coalition spokesman Sayed Ali Jawed, of the Hezb-e-Wahdat-e-Islami party.

"As long as power is concentrated in one person, it is our intention to form a shadow government," he said, adding that the new opposition force will publicise its plans "so the people can compare and see which is better".

Qanuni, formerly of the Jamiat-e-Islami mujahedin faction, has set up his own group called the New Afghanistan Party which is part of the coalition.

He has held several government posts, and finished a distant second to Karzai in the October 2004 presidential election. He has a power base among ethnic Tajiks in northern Afghanistan and helped United States-led Coalition forces overthrow the Taleban in 2001.

The 11-member coalition also includes parties led by two other contenders in last year's election, Haji Mohammad Mohaqiq and Ahmad Shah Ahmadzai.

Citing the results from the October presidential election, Jawed predicted that the bloc could win more than 2.5 million votes for its candidates. Of the more than eight million ballots cast last year, Karzai took 55 per cent while Qununi got 16 per cent and Mohaqiq 11 per cent.

However, few independent observers give the coalition much chance of achieving its goal of winning a majority in the 249-seat Wolesa Jirga or National Assembly.

More than 10,000 candidates are expected to apply to stand for election in the registration process that ends on May 19. By early May, more than 70 parties had registered.

Karzai spokesman Jawed Ludin called formation of the group a step toward democracy, and urged it to put the national good above particular interests.

"May God grant them success in being able to perform their duties as a responsible opposition," he said.

Several people both inside and outside the parliamentary process viewed the coalition with suspicion, some believing it was in fact set up with the blessing of Karzai. They noted that some of its leaders, including Qanuni himself, previously worked in government.

Shukria Barakzai, a member of the commission that drafted Afghanistan's constitution, said, "In my view, the real and strong opposition against the government is a free press, which is several times stronger than Jabha-ye-Tafahhum."

Jabha-ye-Tafahhum-e-Milli (National Understanding Front)

* Hezb-e-Afghanistan-e-Nawin (New Afghanistan Party) - leader Yunus Qanuni

* Hezb-e-Iqtedar-e-Milli Islami Afghanistan (Afghanistan Islamic National Authority Party) - leader Ahmad Shah Ahmadzai

* Hezb-e-Wahdat-e-Islami Afghanistan (Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan) - leader Sayed Ali Jawed

* Hezb-e-Milli Islami Afghanistan (National Islamic Party of Afghanistan) -

leader Ustad Mohammad Akbari

* Hezb-e-Wahdat-e-Islami Mardum-e-Afghanistan (Islamic Unity Party of the People of Afghanistan) - leader Haji Mohammad Mohaqiq

* Hezb-e-Islami Nawin-e-Afghanistan (New Islamic Party of Afghanistan) - leader Sayed Jawad Husseini

* Hezb-e-Solh wa Ukhwat-e-Islami Afghanistan (Afghanistan Islamic Peace and Brotherhood Party) - leader Qadir Imami Ghori

* Hezb-e-Harakat-e-Inqelab-e-Islami Afghanistan (Islamic Revolutionary Movement of Afghanistan) - leader Ahmad Nabi Mohammadi

* Hezb-e-Wahdat-e-Aqwam-e-Afghanistan (Afghanistan Ethnic Unity Party) leader Nasrullah Barakzai

* Hezb-e-Iqtedar-e-Milli Afghanistan (National Authority Party of Afghanistan) - leader Qarabig Ezatyar

* Hezb-e-Isteqlal-e-Milli Afghanistan (Afghanistan National Independence Party) - leader Taj Mohammad Wardak.

Source: , Salima Ghafari - staff reporter for IWPR in Kabul - IWPR'S AFGHAN RECOVERY REPORT, No. 171, May 06, 2005.

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JOB VACANCIES

- **Center for International Journalism requires qualified Administrator, Translator and Marketing Assistant**

The Center for International Journalism - Afghanistan's leading organization for training and protection of journalists - is seeking qualified Afghan candidates for the following openings: Administrator – Translator - Marketing assistant

See attachment 3.17 for job descriptions and how to apply.

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- **Country Manager – Afghanistan - Equal Access**

Equal Access is an international NGO headquartered in San Francisco, USA with offices in Nepal, India and Afghanistan. Our mission is to create lasting impact for large numbers of people in the developing world by providing critically needed information and education through: locally produced and targeted content; use of appropriate and cost-effective technologies; and effective partnerships and community engagement.

Equal Access- Afghanistan Project **Equal Access** has been operational in Afghanistan since 2002. We have offices at the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) and at the Ministry of Education's (MOE) Radio/Television Department.

Our current project in Afghanistan includes the installation and operation of a large rural network of satellite radios broadcasting community development information, distance teacher training, family health, national news and other educational programming for a number of development agencies including a teacher training program for the MOE and as part of the MRRD's National Solidarity Program (NSP).

The NSP program is implemented via community-based outreach through 22 NGO facilitating partners of the NSP. The main goals of this project are to: assist locally elected Community Development Councils to be more effective in implementing village projects; improve teaching practices of under-trained rural teachers; and provide informational and awareness-raising content that will improve the lives of rural people. The project uses two types of radio delivery: terrestrial (MW/FM) and satellite (WorldSpace).

Equal Access assesses the efficacy of each option for each project. Production for the weekly teacher training radio program is coordinated with Educational Radio/Television Afghanistan. Other additional content is collected from a variety of radio producers in Kabul, totaling seven hours of content which Equal Access broadcasts daily to 7,000 rural villages via the satellite radio network. In addition, some villages use loudspeakers for shared listening time in larger communities at the marketplaces, mosques, teahouses, etc. Thus, the Equal Access satellite

communications infrastructure is combined with traditional terrestrial radio infrastructure and locally created content is heard nationally. Equal access also employs monitors/ reporters to obtain feedback on content and resolve technical challenges in the field. In addition to our work with the MRRD and MOE, Equal Access has also developed a number of other opportunities to utilize this communications infrastructure and apply our project methodology to assist the work of additional initiatives in Afghanistan. These include programs focused on: small business development training, women's empowerment, distance literacy training, counter narcotics control, and alternative livelihoods education. The power of our program lies in the ability to target 70,000 elected rural leaders in a position to influence the lives of over seven million Afghans in the most remote areas of the country, where FM radio is non-existent. The satellite radio receivers also have recording capability- making replaying and assembling of audio libraries possible (useful particularly for teacher training and agricultural programming).

Country Manager – Afghanistan Office Reporting to the Equal Access Director of Project Development and Implementation, the Country Manager is responsible for leading the overall organizational operations in the realization of its projects in Afghanistan. The Country Manager leads in-country resource mobilization efforts and oversees the general administration and financial management of the local office, as well as developing and maintaining key partnerships and representing the organization to key donors and partner groups. The Country Manager has oversight responsibilities for staff and shares contract management responsibilities with local staff and staff at headquarters. This position will afford the appropriate candidate the opportunity to play a leading role in the development, maintenance and scaling-up of an internationally recognized community development and education project which supports national efforts toward reconstruction in Afghanistan. Although the candidate will be expected to work autonomously, we provide strong support from staff at our head office in San Francisco.

This position is based in Kabul, Afghanistan. For the full job description and how to apply see attachment 2.17 - www.equalaccess.org [home](#)

- **Amnesty International Require a Research and Campaign Assistant - Afghanistan**

Job title: Research and Campaign Assistant (Afghanistan) **Program:** Asia & Pacific Region

Cluster: Regional **Grade:** A **Reports to:** Program Director's Team

Responsible for: Volunteers in the South Asia Team

Overall Purpose of job:

To contribute to the fulfilment of the South Asia Research and Campaign Team's mission, in particular by developing and maintaining efficient and effective information and administrative systems and procedures and by assisting in the gathering and processing of information relevant to the team's research and campaigning work for the promotion and protection of human rights.

Primary tasks:

1. Research and Campaign Assistant in the South Asia team:

1.1. To be responsible for developing and maintaining effective systems within the team for information sharing and handling, in consultation with other Programs as appropriate, including manual and computerised filing and retrieval systems, and to assist the team in maintaining effective communication with other teams and programs, the membership and the public;

1.3. To assist in the gathering and processing of research information and the drafting and dissemination of action materials, using specialized language skills and country expertise as appropriate; to update case information and service membership structures as appropriate; and to provide logistical support to the development and implementation of other team activities, such as mission preparation.

1.4. To be responsible for the team's internal administrative procedures and to regularly review the administrative systems and practices of the team to identify means to promote greater efficiency and self-servicing;

1.5. To record and periodically report on the team's budget and program expenditure, in consultation with other team members, and to liaise as appropriate

1.6. To assess the volunteer work requirements of the team and to train and supervise the regular volunteer staff of the team;

2. Member of the South Asia Team:

2.1. To maintain an overview of political and human rights developments in the sub - region and to participate in the development of integrated country and sub-regional strategies for research, campaigning, development and the promotion of human rights;

2.2. To participate in and facilitate the collective coordination of the work of the team; preparing and agreeing detailed work plans, budgets and schedules; setting priorities; monitoring progress and quality control including approving materials according to relevant guidelines, and adhering to standards; establishing systems to ensure mutual support and accountability; identifying training and development needs and reporting to the Program Director's team; collecting information based on the agreed work plan and reporting to the Program Director's team; to participate in the supervision of temporary staff and volunteers.

2.3 To carry out own administrative tasks related to the post in accordance with agreed guidelines on self-servicing.

3. Member of the Asia & Pacific Regional Program:

3.1 To contribute to internal discussions on AI's mission, policy and organizational issues and the formulation of the Region's operational plan;

3.2 To contribute to the overall flexibility of resource use in the team and the Program by providing cover for other Research and Campaign Team Assistants and other Program staff as agreed within the team or between Program teams; participate as necessary in cross-program or intra-program teams, project teams and matrix teams and other tasks, as delegated by the Program Director in consultation with the team and with due consideration given to workload considerations. **For Person Specification and Printable Application form see attachment 4.17 or go to** <http://web.amnesty.org/jobs/index/06052005-ASA0504> [home](#)

JOINT ELECTION MANAGEMENT BODY (JEMB)

- **Afghan Governoress Urges Women To Run For Parliament**

Afghanistan's first female governor Habiba Surabi is calling on women across Afghanistan to come forward and nominate themselves as candidates for the September 18 Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council elections.

Governor Surabi, whose appointment to the governorship of the central highlands province of Bamyan earlier this year made history in Afghanistan, said the October 2004 Presidential Elections had been "revolutionary" for Afghan women.

"The high turnout of women voters for the Presidential Elections exceeded all our expectations," Governor Surabi said.

"It was truly revolutionary for the women to turn up to vote in such numbers. What we need now is for women to come forward and nominate themselves as candidates so that their voices will be heard in parliament and at a provincial level."

More than one quarter of the seats in the Wolesi Jirga (the Lower House of the National Assembly) and each of the 34 Provincial Councils have been set aside for women.

Candidates for both elections must submit their nomination forms by May 19 to the JEMB Candidate Nomination office in the province they wish to represent.

Governor Surabi said that a number of women, in Bamyan and in other parts of Afghanistan, had come to her seeking advice about running for office.

"I have given them all the encouragement I could to stand, because their voices must be heard," she said.

"There are certain important matters, such as female and child health, and customs such as forced marriages, where women will be pressing for change."

With women assured of 68 of the Wolesi Jirga's 249 seats, Surabi is confident they can form a powerful block that will push for change.

Across the river from Governor Surabi's office, the female students of Bamyan University burst with pride at having a woman as governor. They want to see more women involved in politics.

"She is a role model for us," said 20-year-old Fatima Fahimi, an agricultural engineering student.

"She shows us that women can stand shoulder to shoulder with men and rebuild our country."

The University counts only six women among more than 200 students -- a direct result of the "lost years" for women under the Taliban, when they were forced indoors and banned from studying.

The women who have made it to the university were schooled secretly at home by their families.

"The rebuilding of Afghanistan will take many years, as will the struggle for women's rights," said lecturer Zobirdha Raza who is planning to contest the next parliamentary elections.

For more information contact:

Bamiyan Regional External Relations Officer: Greg Bearup 079 205838 gregb@unops.org.af

[home](#)

- **The Joint Electoral Management Body invites all media to a Press Conference**

The Joint Electoral Management Body invites all media to a Press Conference by JEMB Chairman Bissmillah Bismil and JEMB Commissioner Momena Yari on Candidate Nominations for the 2005 Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council Elections at the JEMB Electoral Compound, Jalalabad Road, Kabul **on Monday May 9 at 11.00 am.**

N.B. Journalists are advised to arrive 30 minutes earlier to allow for security checks.

For information please contact: JEMB International Spokesperson Bronwyn Curran
bronwync@unops.org.af mob: + 93 (0) 79 205 876 / (0) 70 164 494

JEMB National Spokesperson Sultan Ahmed Baheen

sultanb@unops.org.af mob + 93 (0) 70 298 992 or please consult our website: www.jemb.org
[home](#)

SECURITY

- **ANSO – Regional NGO Security Training courses – FREE OF CHARGE**

Please note the following Regional NGO Security training courses still have spaces available – these will be **FREE OF CHARGE!**

Due to changes in UNHAS Flight Schedules the ANSO/RedR NGO Security Training in Jalalabad will be held from 15th – 16th May.

- Herat – 5th – 6th June 2005
- Mazar – 14th – 15th June 2005

The courses will cover the following subjects and will be contextualised to reflect the different situations in each of the regions.

- Basic principals of security management
- Reducing risk through security planning
- Personal Security
- Specific Threat modules such as IED's and Car Bombs, Vehicle Travel in insecure environments etc.

The courses will be held in English.

If NGOs wish to send staff on these courses please contact redr@afgnso.org

Source: Dave Heed - Regional Security Learning Initiative Coordinator – ANSO/RedR +93 (0)79177017 *RedR/IHE, 1 Gt George St, London SW1P 3AA, UK* Tel +44 (0)20 7233 3116 fax +44 (0)20 7222 0564 Web sites: www.redr.org www.ihe.org.uk [home](#)

- **Insecurity Continues to Impede Aid Delivery in Afghanistan - CARE and Afghanistan NGO Safety Office Issue New Report**

Escalating violence is impeding the ability of humanitarian workers to deliver aid and to implement urgently needed reconstruction and development projects in Afghanistan, according to a new report. The report, by CARE and the Afghanistan NGO Safety Office (ANSO), was released just days after the bodies of three women were found in a northern province, one of whom was said to have been killed because she worked for an aid agency.

“When humanitarian agencies are forced to curtail projects or operate in fewer districts due to violence, it is more difficult to ensure we are reaching those most in need” said Michael Kleinman, one of the report's authors and CARE's advocacy coordinator in Afghanistan. “This is a dangerous trend and could lead to certain geographic areas receiving less humanitarian and development assistance.”

Last year 24 aid workers were killed in Afghanistan, double the number in 2003. Another five have died so far in 2005.

The report includes details of where humanitarian aid workers have been killed and results of a survey of aid workers from more than 50 organizations about the violence they may face.

Researchers found that 53 percent of respondents believed the security situation for employees of their agencies either remained the same or deteriorated.

There is concern that insecurity and violence will escalate as efforts to eradicate opium poppies gain momentum across the country with the arrival of spring and as parliamentary elections draw closer. The elections have been postponed twice already due to concerns about violence. This insecurity places both Afghans and aid workers in jeopardy and threatens Afghanistan's democracy.

For a full copy of the report, visit www.careusa.org or contact CARE as follows: Lurma Rackley, 404-979-9450, lrackley@care.org or Rick Perera, 404-979-9453, rperera@care.org You can also view attachment 3.17 for the full report. [home](#)

TRAVEL

Kabul Caravan: An Online Travel Guide to Afghanistan

"Travelers, empire builders, archaeologists, spies, researchers, traders, diplomats, teachers, and seekers of spiritual or drug-induced fulfilment have flocked to Afghanistan whenever conditions have allowed. Many of these visitors jotted down memoirs and wrote books, in many languages, from the earliest historical period of the Greeks and Romans to the Chinese, Arabs, British, Russians and French. The many rich archaeological sites throughout the country attest both to its position as a crossroads of culture and to its hospitality to diversity and contemplation... Towns such as Kabul, Kandahar, Herat, and Balkh resound through history as remote and slightly dangerous places."
- Ralph H. Magnus and Eden Naby, *Afghanistan: Mullah, Marx and Mujahid*

Kabul Caravan- a travel site dedicated to Afghanistan, the country that fell off the map. From visa and border information to historical sites (and where to stay when you're visiting them), we aim to provide what you need to help plan your trip. Travel in Afghanistan is not easy and subject to frequent restrictions, so we also hope to provide a context for a visit by providing information on safe travel and development issues, as well as details on the best news sources for the country.

New information is added to Kabul Caravan on a regular basis, and we run a mailing list to help you keep in touch with developments in Afghanistan. [Subscribe to our mailing list.](#)

Kabul Caravan strives to offer up to date as possible information on travel to Afghanistan, and always welcomes comments, suggestions and new information. If you can help, Kabul Caravan would like to hear from you- whether it be about the Kandahar road or a debate about the ethics of planning a trip to a country still trying to struggle out of a two-decade civil war. [Send us an email.](#)

Afghanistan is potentially a dangerous country to visit. Although this website is provides information regarding travel to Afghanistan, it does not encourage people to put themselves at risk. All information provided has been collated using primary sources where possible, although the integrity and provenance of sources cannot always be guaranteed. Those planning their own trip to Afghanistan should bear this in mind and are strongly advised to check their own sources of information before deciding to travel. Be aware of government advice regarding travel in the region. Kabul Caravan is not liable for any potential travel problems caused by information provided. Stay safe. <http://www.kabulcaravan.com/> [home](#)

UNITED NATIONS - HABITAT

World Habitat Day 2005 - The Millennium Development Goals and the City

Promoting socially and environmentally sustainable human settlements development and the achievement of adequate shelter for all.

The United Nations has designated the first Monday in October every year as *World Habitat Day* to reflect on the state of human settlements and the basic right to adequate shelter for all. It is also intended to remind the world of its collective responsibility for the future of the human habitat. The theme of this year's *World Habitat Day*, Monday 3 October 2005, is the *Millennium Development Goals and the City*. This theme, chosen by the United Nations, is to remind all of us that in the year

2000, world leaders meeting at the dawn of the new Millennium, committed themselves to launch a concerted attack on poverty, illiteracy, hunger, unsafe water, disease and urban and environmental degradation by adopting a set of eight goals. In September, the UN General Assembly will hold a fiveyear review meeting to weigh progress on the eight goals.

UN-HABITAT is working with a number of international and civil society organizations, cities and governments to realize Target 11 of Millennium Development Goal 7 - *improving the living conditions of at least 100 million slum dwellers by the year 2020*. We are also working together on Target 10 of

MDG 7 – *reducing by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water*.

Our Global Campaign on Urban Governance and our Global Campaign for Secure Tenure enhance this work through a series of UN-HABITAT programmes, mainly in developing countries, that shoulder the heaviest poverty burdens.

The governance campaign seeks to boost the capacity of local governments and those with whom they work to practice good urban governance. It focuses attention on the needs of the excluded urban poor.

It promotes the involvement of women in decision-making at all levels, as crucial for positive change in society. Our secure tenure campaign is an advocacy instrument of the United Nations designed to promote secure forms of tenure for the poorest populations, especially those living in informal settlements and slums in cities.

Our quest for a better urban world is by no means an easy task, as demonstrated by the fact that since the *Millennium Declaration*, the global slum population has already risen by more than 75 million.

Already, half of humankind lives in cities. By the middle of this century, two-thirds of the global population will be living in towns and cities.

Yet nearly 32 percent of the world's urban population – roughly 1 billion people – lives in slums, mostly in or on the edges of cities across the developing world. In process we at UN-HABITAT, the UN human settlements agency, call the *urbanization of poverty*, the locus of global poverty is moving into towns and cities.

Sub-Saharan Africa has the largest proportion of its urban population resident in slums – nearly 72 percent in the year 2001. But our agency's research for that year shows, the figure for South-Central Asia was 58 percent, followed by 36 percent for East Asia, 33 percent for West Asia, 32 percent for Latin America and the Caribbean, 28 percent for North Africa, 28 percent for Southeast Asia, and 24 percent in Oceania.

In absolute numbers of slum dwellers, Asia as a whole has by far the largest number at 554 million making up 60 percent of the world's total slum populations, followed by Africa with 187 million (20 percent of the global figure), and Latin America and the Caribbean with 128 million slum dwellers (14 percent of the global figure). Compare that to the slum population of 54 million in the developed countries making up just 6 percent of the global slum population.

It is not an exaggeration, therefore, to state that we are sitting on a social time bomb, that this is a scandalous situation in our modern world. The goals are also intended at making us think harder and working better to make our towns and cities inclusive, acceptable places of abode. Otherwise the urban time bomb will start ticking faster than ever.

Let us make no mistake: Cities are much more than national engines of economic growth. They are the crucibles of cultural fusion. Standing astride every intersection on the global network of trade and migration, the world's cities must become shining examples of inclusiveness and equity as called for in the *Millennium Declaration*. Otherwise, they will remain potential flashpoints of conflict and reservoirs of poverty – barriers to humanity's further development. We must at least try to keep the promise for the *Millennium Development Goals and the City*.

Write to Jeanne at Afghanlinks@aol.com for the full report as it is rather a large file or go to <http://www.unhabitat.org/whd/2005/documents/brochure%202005.pdf> [home](#)

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.

