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ASSISTANCE TO LEGISLATIVE BODIES OF AFGHANISTAN

QUARTERLY REPORT

July – September 2015



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ASSISTANCE TO LEGISLATIVE BODIES OF AFGHANISTAN

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ACRONYMS

ALBA	Assistance to Legislative Bodies of Afghanistan
APAP	Afghanistan Parliament Assistance Program
API	Afghanistan Parliamentary Institute
AO	Assistance Objectives
AUAF	American University of Afghanistan
BMP	Branding and Marking Plan
CI	Counterpart International
COP	Chief of Party
COR	Contract Officer's Representative
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
CTAP	Civilian Technical Assistance Program
DAI	Development Alternatives Incorporated
DG	Director General
DIPR	Directorate of Information and Public Relations
DSG	Deputy Secretary General
ICLAD	International Consortium for Law and Development
IDLG	Independent Directorate of Local Governance
IR	Intermediate Results
MEC	Independent Anti-Corruption Monitoring and Evaluation Committee
MJ	Meshrano Jirga
MOPA	Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MOWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
MSI	Management Systems International
NDI	National Democratic Institute
PACC	Parliamentary Anti-Corruption Caucus
PC	Provincial Council
PMEP	Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
PRD	Public Relations Directorate
SG	Secretary General
STTA	Short Term Technical Assistance
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WJ	Wolesi Jirga

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT ALBA

The Assistance to Legislative Bodies of Afghanistan (ALBA) project is a four-year technical assistance initiative funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), implemented by Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI). Work under the project supports the development of the Afghan Parliament to enable it to operate as an independent and effective legislative, representative and oversight body.

USAID's overarching Assistance Objective (AO) 1 for Democracy and Governance in Afghanistan is "Improved performance and accountability of governance." Five intermediate results (IRs) comprise this AO. ALBA supports the third IR, "Strengthened governance and service delivery at national and sub-national levels." Specifically, ALBA supports the following sub-IR: "Institutional capacity and oversight capacity of elected bodies at all levels strengthened."

ALBA will assist in the continued development of the Afghanistan Parliament as a strong, effective, and independent parliamentary institution. The four key areas of the program are: Legislative Support; Oversight; Outreach; and Institutional Development of the Parliament with a major focus on the commissions as a vehicle for many of ALBA's activities.

CHAPTER I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report period (July-September 2015) covers the final weeks of the Spring 2015 legislative session, the Summer 2015 recess period, and the start of the Fall 2015 legislative session of the Afghan Parliament. As with last year, ALBA supported both houses and their legislative agenda. Key legislation that was debated at both the commissions and the plenary sessions included amendments to the **Human Trafficking Legislation**; the proposed **Banking Legislation**; the **Civil Servants Law**; the **Law on Acting Ministers**; the **Tax Administration Law**; and the **Law on Residence and Travels of Foreign Nationals to Afghanistan**.

As reported in the previous quarterly report, the issue of parliamentary elections remained a central issue during this reporting period. The Special Electoral Reform Commission (SERC) was announced in late July (during the Eid break) headed by Mr. Shah Akifi – a respected technocrat who has served in both the Lower and Upper Houses (most recently serving as Deputy Secretary General of the Meshrano Jirga). During this quarter the commission delivered its preliminary recommendations to the President, of which 3 were rejected¹. Some of the major suggestions include registration of voters; making the election bodies accountable; the presence of two international observers on the Independent Election Complaints Commission (IECC); and reservation of one seat at the Wolesi Jirga for the Hindu minority. Other proposals include distribution of the computerized identity cards; a 25 percent representation of women in provincial and district councils; and invalidation of the current voter cards. The most problematic of the reform proposals and which was subsequently rejected by the President is the setting aside of 83 seats for political parties with a national constituency — essentially meaning that party leaders in Kabul would get to choose candidates for those seats based on the votes the party gets throughout all provinces. The Chair of the Committee in an interview with the New York Times noted “the proposal to give political parties a share of the seats in Parliament to encourage their development had been around for years. Most of the commission members felt the time was right to act on it. The way the Parliament is now, we have 250 representatives who have run as independents and who have 250 different views.”²

The two other proposals rejected by the President included the size of constituencies (the proposal was to make them smaller) and the formation of a transparency commission. As reported in the local press, most MPs were critical of the SERC recommendations and

¹ <http://www.khaama.com/president-ghani-approves-7-recommendations-of-electoral-reform-commission-1482>

² http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/01/world/asia/afghanistans-electoral-reform-plan-is-met-with-skepticism.html?_r=0

the Speaker of the Wolesi Jirga said the recommendations “needed to be reconsidered” and “stressed the distribution of e-ID cards for ensuring free and free elections”.³ SERC is continuing its work and was tasked by the President to “further scrutinize the legal technical aspects along with the comparative and practical aspects of the remaining recommendations”.⁴ As of this report’s date there has been no date set for parliamentary elections, leaving considerable ambiguity around parliament and its work.

Under **Objective One – Strengthened Legislative Processes**, as mentioned, ALBA supported work on several key pieces of legislation, including the **Human Trafficking Legislation**; the proposed **Banking Legislation**; the **Civil Servants Law**; the **Law on Acting Ministers**; the **Tax Administration Law**; and the **Law on Residence and Travels of Foreign Nationals to Afghanistan**. In addition, the 3rd edition of the **Legislative Bulletin** was finalized and sent for printing and the Legislative team was actively involved during the summer recess with training activities on topics such as legislative drafting at the API for parliamentary staff, parliamentary fellows, and staff from the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs (MoPA).

Under **Objective Two – Improved Oversight**, ALBA delivered a series of presentations on the Qatia report to a variety of audiences as well as provided a number of trainings at the API for parliamentary staff, parliamentary fellows, and staff from the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs (MoPA). The PACC team also provided support to members attending the weekly National Procurement Committee (chaired by President Ghani) and also reviewed a ‘Whistle-blowers’ protection legislation that is at a draft stage. Oversight was also taken outside of Kabul during the quarter. Taking advantage of the parliamentary recess ALBA sponsored a number of oversight visits to Afghanistan’s provinces: ALBA’s Oversight team supported a delegation from the MJ as it visited 4 Northern provinces to inspect a variety of development projects and meet with Governors, Provincial Council members, CSOs and the general public. Similarly, ALBA assisted a PACC delegation on a visit to Bamyan province to inspect a variety of projects and hold meetings with the Governor, Provincial Council members, CSOs and the general public. Another objective of the trip was to explore the establishment of an anti-corruption caucus in the Provincial Council.

Under **Objective Three – Increased Outreach**, the Outreach team distributed 6500 copies of the Budget Oversight bulletin, Legislative bulletin, Anti-Corruption Policy Resource Guide, Citizen Guide to Parliament, and ALBA In Brief in Pashto, Dari and English, as well as pocket calendars listing Parliament contacts to a large number of organizations including CSOs, ministries, universities and provincial government offices.

³ <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2015/09/16/electoral-reform-suggestions-incomplete-mps>

⁴ <http://www.khaama.com/president-ghani-approves-7-recommendations-of-electoral-reform-commission-1482>

The publication distribution gives Parliament and USAID greater visibility to all recipients. The Outreach team was also busy during the month of August, taking advantage of the recess period and assisted the First Secretary of the MJ in organizing a large public outreach event in Kunduz where over 500 people attended to discuss the security situation in that province. They also organized another large outreach event in Panjshir and, in conjunction the MJ Budget and Finance Commission and ALBA's Oversight team, organized an event in Kabul bringing together CSOs from around the country to discuss the 1393 Qatia report in September.

Under **Objective Four – Increased Institutional Development**, again, taking advantage of the parliamentary recess ALBA held more than a dozen training sessions at the API for secretariat staff, parliamentary Fellows, and staff from the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs during the quarter, focusing on topics such as legislative drafting, legislative oversight, the budget process and a range of other management topics as well as language and IT courses.

CHAPTER II: SUMMARY OF PROGRAM OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS

OBJECTIVE ONE – STRENGTHENED LEGISLATIVE PROCESSES

Task 1.1 - Institutionalize Legislative Drafting and Analysis

TASK 1.1 – INSTITUTIONALIZE LEGISLATIVE ANALYSIS AND DRAFTING

ALBA provided a variety of support to both the Wolesi Jirga and Meshrano Jirga to facilitate the analysis, amendment, and eventual passage of both pieces of legislation. Examples of ALBA engagement in this process include:

- ALBA provided support to the Legislative Affairs Commission of MJ on the **Law on Salary and Privileges of High Ranking Officials**. The commission requested ALBA to assist them specifically on the issue of MPs' pensions. Currently, the law excludes MPs from receiving pensions and as a result MPs are seeking to amend this law and add an article that will make them eligible to receive pensions and related privileges. ALBA Legislative team provided legal assistance to the commission in this regard.
- At the request of the Legislative Affairs Commission, the Education and Higher Education Commission, and the Health and Public Welfare Commission, the Secretary General of the MJ formally requested ALBA to assist with the **Civil Servants Law**. For the past number of weeks the doors of several schools have been closed due to an ongoing teacher's strike. The above mentioned commissions have been tasked to figure out a legal and reasonable way by which the teachers' demands could be met. The ALBA Legislative Team developed a research note and draft amendments on the mentioned issue and then they shared that with the MJ Legislative affairs, Education and Health commission members and their staff to assist in developing amendments.
- ALBA's Legislative Team attended meetings of the Legislative Affairs Commission of WJ. The commission is working on the **Banking Law** with government officials. The Commission is opposed to the conventional banking system and unwilling to approve those articles which it believes are in contradiction with Article 3 of the Constitution (which deals with the application of Sharia Law). ALBA's legislative team is attending these meetings, providing technical advice and assistance on an ad hoc basis.
- The Commission on Justice and Judicial Affairs of WJ intends to increase the punishment for Human Trafficking and ALBA, working with the commission has studied and made recommendations for revisions and amendments to articles 6, 7 and 9 of the **Human Trafficking Law** and increased the punishments set forth in these articles. ALBA's Legislative Team also made recommendations to the commission on oversight of the implementation of the legislation and to summon relevant governmental agencies to ensure that the law is being implemented

correctly and to find out, to date, how many criminals have been caught and prosecuted for human trafficking crimes.

- The Legislative Affairs Commission of MJ, based on the recommendation made by the ALBA legislative team, summoned officials from several governmental organs including Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Education and Civil Service Commission in order to have their views and inputs concerning the draft amendments brought to the **Civil Service and Education Laws**. They all agreed that this is a very common concern for all governmental employee including Teachers so they recommended that a very general amendments is needed in the Civil Service Law for all governmental officials, including Teachers.
- During the quarter, the WJ International Affairs Commission requested ALBA to prepare a briefing analysis on two documents signed between Afghanistan and UAE: 1) Agreement on the **Extradition of Sentenced Persons between Afghanistan and UAE**, and 2) **Security Cooperation Agreement between Afghanistan and UAE**. ALBA's Legislative team provided this to the Commission Chair.
- During the quarter the Women Affairs Commission of MJ requested ALBA's Legislative team to deliver a power point presentation on the **Anti-Money Laundering Law**. ALBA delivered a detailed presentation that included definitions of money laundering, methods of money laundering and also clarified the amendments made by the government and WJ. ALBA's Legislative team advised the Commission that most important point to take into consideration is the implementation of the law and that the law requires proper and continuous legislative oversight by Parliament. Based on this presentation, the Commission asked that ALBA prepare a presentation on legislative oversight to the Commission members. The Chair of the Commission also said that she will share this idea with Speaker of the House and will draw his attention to the importance of such presentations and have them delivered to all commissions.

Task 1.2 - Develop Effective Communications Processes with the Executive

Meeting with Minister of Parliamentary Affairs – ALBA met with Deputy Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Qutbuddin Royedar, to discuss cooperation in certain areas, including:

- **Support to the network of Parliamentary Liaison Units with the Government.** These units have been established to support coordination between the Ministries and Parliament, but have been relatively inactive. ALBA and the Minister agreed to explore ways in which the Units can be a resource to Parliament and its commissions.
- **Training for MoPA Staff.** The Deputy Minister enquired about the training offered through the Afghan Parliamentary Institute (API) and noted that a number of his staff would benefit from such trainings. It was agreed that the matter be raised at a planned meeting with the Deputy Minister and the Secretary Generals of both houses, scheduled for early August. But in principle it was agreed that such trainings not only provide technical skills but foster better executive-legislative

relations at both a senior level as well as at a more functional level and that all such opportunities should be rigorously pursued. A brief overview of trainings provided by ALBA to MoPA staff can be found in section 4 of this report.



COP of ALBA meets with Deputy Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Qutbuddin Royedar, July 27, 2015

A briefing session was held with Mr. Sayed Hafez Hashimi, Secretary-General of the MJ, and the Deputy Minister of Parliamentary Affairs (MoPA) to discuss common grounds for improving coordination among the MJ secretariat, MoPA and ALBA for the creation and full implementation of **Commission Support Units** (CSUs) for all Upper House commissions. The Secretary-General warmly welcomed this idea and requested ALBA to develop a concept note. CSUs are designed to: 1) assist in preparing a work plan for the commission; 2) conduct research and analysis for pending legislation and oversight activities; and 3) assist in preparing bill summaries, proposed amendments and a final commission report.

Task 1.3 - Strengthen Research Methods for Oversight and Legislation

Conduct Legislative Research Training for Staff – see section 4 for a summary of trainings provided

Developing Policy Research Guides

ALBA Legislative Team completed Legislative bulletin #3. This bulletin encompasses two research analyses on “Legislative Oversight” and “The Doctrine of Non-Retroactivity of the Law” as well as a briefing on the following legislation:

- Wedding Ceremony Law
- Geographical Indications Law
- Tax Administration Law
- Law on Acting Ministers
- Law on Residence and Travels of Foreign Nationals to Afghanistan
- Tobacco Law
- Bilateral Strategic agreement between Afghanistan and Turkey
- Higher Education Law

- Banking Law

OBJECTIVE TWO – IMPROVED OVERSIGHT

Task 2.1 – Increase General Oversight through Commissions

Supporting Key Commissions on Effective Oversight

The Health Commission of WJ held an oversight visit to a MoPH project and subsequently called the Deputy Minister for Administration and Finance of the MoPH to discuss the project. The Commission discovered the MoPH has received approximately 23 containers of equipment in 1387 but does not have adequate storage or facilities from which to operate. As a result, the project has been carried forward from year to year and has failed to meet its objectives. The Commission has promised to closely monitor the project after receiving a detailed report from MoPH on the matter. The ALBA team also attended the regular WJ Health Commission meeting and discussed plans for provincial oversight activities during the upcoming recess. Mr. Saljoqi from Herat province said that his fellow MPs from Herat wish to conduct regional oversight visits at district level in the west of Afghanistan during the recess and will also have a public hearing on the health sector in Herat.

In late August the MJ Commission on National Economy, Finance and Budget undertook an oversight visit to two of the most important customs offices in Northern Afghanistan: Aqina and Hairatan. During the visit the commission reviewed complaints regarding corruption and conducted oversight visits of a number of development projects at the region. Finally, it consulted with provincial councils in 4 provinces. The trip report is included in the annex of this report.



The Budget and Finance Commission of the WJ met in July in order to explore ways to increase government revenue generation and sought ALBA's technical assistance. The Oversight team proposed to that special focus should be placed upon tax collection, especially from the imports coming into Afghanistan. The Commission formally called

upon the Deputy Minister of Customs from MoF and the Director of Protocol from the MoFA to discuss the matter of tax exemptions for fuel importer companies on 7 July 2015. At that meeting it was highlighted that there was an existing agreement between the Government of Afghanistan and Coalition Forces (entered into in 2002) that all companies who are importing fuel and equipment were exempt from customs tax. However, even after ISAF forces left Afghanistan this exemption remained in place. The Commission stated that it would closely monitor the matter and develop possible solutions in order to increase government revenue generation from this hitherto exempt revenue stream. During the discussion Deputy Minister for Customs classified the problems and stated that:

- The office that issues tax exemption certificates in the MoF is issuing more exemption certificates compared to the requests for tax exemption
- Contractors are not presenting the actual contracts to MoF
- The Ministries of Interior and Defense have verified that the amount of the fuel they received and that most of the fuel imported is sold on the open market

Both the Ministries of Finance and Foreign Affairs agree that a problem exists and that the contracts do not show the real amount of imported fuel. In the end, the Commission decided to receive all documents related to the tax exemption from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to investigate. It was also decided in the Commission to meet with both NATO and ISAF on this matter.

The team had several meetings with the committee assistant and technical advisor of the Budget Commission of the MJ to discuss provincial oversight mission to the Northern provinces.

The ALBA Oversight Team met with Mr. Mohammad Nayeem Fayaz, Advisor to the Complaints Commission of the Wolesi Jirga (WJ), to discuss ALBA support to the commission. Mr. Fayaz spoke about the nature of complaints received, the commission's workload, and the general dissatisfaction and lack of resolution that leads to complaints being submitted. He mentioned many of the complaints received are from government high officials such as Ministers, Deputy Ministers, officials in the Attorney General's office, provincial governors and provincial police chiefs. In many instances, cases received could not be solved in local courts. The commission also receives many other cases which are not necessarily appropriate for the Complaints Commission, but plaintiffs do not know where else to turn.

Mr. Fayaz requested the following support from ALBA:

- Begin a pilot program in different regions to clarify the role of the Complaints Commission and instruct how to bring a case and submit a complaint. These

- types of trainings would build stronger public relations and give greater awareness to citizens about submitting complaints.
- Provide links on the Parliamentary websites for citizens to submit complaints directly to the Commission as well as contact their Parliamentarian representative.

The Oversight team finalized Ministry profile of both the education and health sectors. These documents were shared with related Commissions in both Houses during budget discussion and were used as a powerful tool for oversight activities.

Task 2.2 – Support Parliament’s Oversight of Budget Priorities & Implementation

Strengthening Parliamentary Research and Budget Office

Budget Bulletin – The Budget Team has been busy in July completing the Budget Bulletin and will be printed in late September 2015. The document will be presented to the leadership of both Houses, who will distribute it to the MPs and Senators in upcoming plenary sessions. The objective of the bulletin is not only to inform Parliament on various aspects of budgetary oversight, but also to focus their attention on the upcoming components of the budget process, with the Qatia Report and Mid-Year Budget Review coming out in the next few months, followed closely by the Supplemental Budget for 1394 and the introduction of the 1395 National Budget later in the fall. The Bulletin, which will be issued quarterly, will also serve as a tool for general training sessions provided through the API for both Parliamentarians and staff.

Qatia Report – The Budget and Finance Commission of the WJ received the Qatia Report from Audit Office and analysis of the report by ALBA’s Oversight team was undertaken during this quarter and presentations were made to a number of commissions (at their request) in both houses. During the August ALBA’s Oversight team prepared and compiled the list of all projects which have zero percent (0%) expenditure in the year 1393 by Ministries and Budgetary Units. All documents were presented to all the Commissions in both Houses. The documents include very useful data for questioning and interpellation of the Ministers and high officials of the government and can be used for decision-making in next year’s budget allocation.

Database Development – The Oversight team created a database to track operating and development budget expenditures and analyze the report for MPs and committee assistants in all Line ministries and independent directorates. The report includes 717 development projects approved in the 1393 Fiscal Year budget in which the Oversight team identified 347 development projects which had zero expenditure. This report will be

shared and presented to both Houses and commissions through the Budget and Finance Commissions of the WJ and MJ.

Task 2.4 – Support Anti-Corruption Activities

National Procurement Committee – PACC representatives participated in the weekly sessions of National Procurement Committee, chaired by President Ghani.

Afghan President Discusses PACC and its role on the National Procurement Committee – Afghan President, Mohammad Ashraf Ghani in a televised interview with



Tolo News highlighted the role PACC played in overseeing the award of national contracts. In response to a question regarding the fight against corruption, the President stated:

“In order to prevent corruption in government, at first we tried to bring fundamental changes in banking system of Afghanistan, and we did this by introducing of Mr. Khalil Sediq as Head of Afghanistan Central Bank. So we are not facing any crisis in the banking

system and this is directly helping us in the fight against corruption. A second issue is the awarding of national contracts as the procurement process was where most of the corruption existed. In order to combat corruption the government established the National Procurement Committee, which has five permanent members including the President, the CEO, the 2nd Vice-President, the Ministers of Justice, Finance, and Economics. To date, the committee has met on 22 occasions and has saved approximately 125 million USD. Fortunately, the Parliamentary Anti-Corruption Caucus has been participating in order to ensure both accountability and transparency” (emphasis added).

He went on to mention that the problem of corruption still exists within both government and non-governmental entities and that they will need more time to combat and eliminate corruption.

Whistleblower’s Protection Law – The Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (MEC) – a body comprised of both Afghan and expat advisors working in the area of anti-corruption – is currently developing a ‘Whistleblowers’ Protection Law and is coordinating efforts with PACC. A draft of the proposed legislation was shared with PACC to solicit their input and this, in turn, will be sent back to MEC. Once finalized, the plan is for the legislation to be presented to the WJ as members’ bill.

MJ Complaints Hearing System – ALBA Anti-Corruption Team finalized the assessment of MJ complaint hearing system and it is ready to be presented to the MJ for their input. An official letter will be drafted by ALBA and will be sent to the MJ along with the hard copy of the assessment.

PACC Bamyan Trip – The ALBA Anti-Corruption team worked with PACC on the establishment an anti-corruption committee within the provincial council and create



coordination between the PACC and other entities such as civil society, provincial councils, and other government agencies. The PACC chair coordinated the delegation meeting with the Governor of Bamyan Province and met with the Education Department of Bamyan to collect information regarding ‘ghost’ (absent or nonexistent) schools, ‘ghost’ teachers and ‘ghost’ students in this province.

OBJECTIVE THREE – INCREASE OUTREACH CAPACITY

Task 3.1 – Number of Public Forums where Legislators and the Public Interact

Follow up on Baghlan Public Hearing with the Defense Commission of MJ – The Outreach team worked with the MJ Defense Commission to develop the report as well a recommendation paper to discuss the findings and recommendations with the Ministry of Defense. The Commission met with the Chief of Army staff and the Director of Operations of the Ministry of Defense and, as a result of this meeting, the Ministry of Defense decided to reinforce the local security forces with extra brigade of 700 new ANA personnel.

Distribution of Publications to Stakeholders – During this reporting period a specific list of recipients of the publication including CSOs, International Organizations, Institutes, Universities, Media and other stakeholders were developed for distribution:

- Anti-Corruption Policy Guide (English, Dari and Pashto)
- Budget and Oversight Bulletin (English, Dari and Pashto)
- Legislative Bulletin (English, Dari and Pashto)
- ALBA in Brief (English, Dari and Pashto)
- Citizen Guide to parliament (English, Dari and Pashto)

The Outreach team distributed a total of 6500 copies various publications, including the budget oversight bulletin, the legislative bulletin, an anti-corruption policy resource guide, a citizen guide to Parliament, a pocket calendar with Parliament contacts, as well as the

“ALBA in brief” in Pashto, Dari and English to Parliament and several organizations such as the police library, Afghanistan Resource Center, Human Rights Commission, Afghanistan Science Academy, 6 CSOs umbrella organizations, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and most of the universities in Kabul and 4 key provinces. The publication distribution will give Parliament a very high visibility to all the aforementioned stakeholders.

Public Awareness Event on Security Situation in Kunduz Province – The MJ recently questioned Mr. Ulumi, Minister of Interior Affairs, on the deteriorating security situation in



the Northern provinces. Mr. Ulumi explained that insurgents have been running an effective propaganda campaign against the government in remote districts, prompting security forces to give up control of their check posts. Citizens have condemned local government officials for their inability to effectively respond to the security threats which have caused mistrust and discouragement among Kunduz inhabitants. Security officials respond by stating their confidence in their ability to meet the challenges.

Given these circumstances, ALBA initiated and supported a joint awareness public event with local security officials in Kunduz and the Administration Board and Defense Commission of the Meshrano Jirga (MJ) to assure residents of the security force’s abilities and strategy to combat security threats in the province.

The event was held in Kunduz Hotel on 8 August 2015 with over 500 citizens participating including:

- Provincial Council members
- Provincial security officials
- Civil society groups and community activists
- Community elders and religious leaders
- District shura (council) members

The Secretary of the Meshrano Jirga Administration Board, Mr. Abdullah Qarluq, provided an extensive overview of the security plan designed for Kunduz and assured the people that the security forces of Afghanistan are doing their best to keep Kunduz province stable and safe. After an open discussion, the following points were considered:

- The Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior Affairs must deploy additional troops in Kunduz
- The Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police need to be equipped with modern weapons

- Reform is needed in the local administration beginning at the governor level
- A serious campaign against corruption must be organized
- Jobs opportunities for Kunduz youth would lessen the impact of insecurity
- Criminal elements in Kunduz should be disarmed

Panjsher Province Public Hearing – The Outreach Team and the First Deputy Speaker



of the MJ held a public hearing in Panjsher on 26 August 2015. The venue was Panjsher governor's office with more 400 attendees. The delegation was led by MJ First Deputy Speaker, Mohammad Alam Ezedyar along with a number of other senators. The hearing focused on citizen issues and their local representation in Parliament. A trip report is attached in the annex.

Meeting with CS JWG – During this quarter the Outreach team met with a number of CSOs to assist with their efforts in providing meaningful input into draft legislation and to transform the existing ad hoc interaction into a more systematic and institutionalized relationship. The purpose of these efforts is to enhance CSO-Parliament interactions. 2 coordination meetings with the Civil Society Joint Working Group (CS-JWG) were held in September 2015 and the following action points were agreed up on:

- CS-JWG should pave the ground for more coordination among CSOs to mobilize potential capacity for effective advocacy efforts in the legislative process. To this end, CS-JWG partners with ALBA and Counterpart International will form thematic advocacy groups as per the focus area of member CSOs.
- ALBA and Counterpart International will support formed thematic to build their capacity. ALBA's Outreach team will facilitate linkages with these groups with standing Commissions of Parliament and prepare the ground for clear and effective interaction between Commissions and the formed advocacy groups on legislative matters.
- To address uncertainty in CSOs-Parliament relationship in legislative process, ALBA will support and facilitate two conferences, one with MJ and one with WJ, the objective of which is to arrive at an agreed definition of a relationship mechanism. The mechanism will have two pillars; an overarching MoU to describe both parties overall role, responsibilities, expectations, and level of involvement in legislative process; and a 'commission-advocacy group' level MoU to formalize advocacy groups' interaction with the specific Commissions.

Qatia Conference. The MJ's National Economy Committee with support from ALBA convened a National Conference on the Qatia (National Audit Report) on 2 September

2015. The conference launched a debate on the 1393 national expenditure and brought together Parliament, civil society organizations (CSOs), and standing commission assistants in order to foster greater cooperation between commissions and CSOs in order to enhance government accountability and effectiveness in public service delivery.



About 200 participants attended the conference (approximately 40% of participants were female). During the conference presentations were made by the chairman of the National Economy Commission, Senator Anarkaly Honaryar, Deputy Speaker Mohamad Alam Ezadyar, General Secretary Mr. Mohamad Hafiz Hashimi, ALBA COP, and joint working group representative Mr. Rahim Jami regarding the importance of Qatia and CSOs engagement in budgeting and parliamentary oversight over the public programs. A summary of the 1392 Qatia presented by the ALBA Budget and Oversight team then a Q & A session was held. The following three questions were discussed in detail:

What are the main lessons to be learned from the 1393 Qatia report?

- What are CSOs recommendations on steps to be taken by MJ?
- How can CSOs and MJ come up with a specific interaction mechanism to sustainably support each other to enhance accountability in public sector?

Task 3.2 – Strengthen Parliament Visibility

The ninth session of 16th term of Parliament began on 8 March 2015 and ended on 22 July 2015. End of session report for the mentioned period will be including the number of

the plenary sessions held during this session; number of full House hearing and questioning sessions, the number of laws, treaties and conventions approved and adopted. Besides, the end of session report will be including a summary of the activities done in and performances of the standing commissions during the session which include the number of sessions held by every commission, the laws treaties and conventions discussed in every commission, the hearing and questioning sessions held in the standing commissions along with other actives done by the commissions.

Task 3.3 – Improved Media Access to and Coverage of Parliament

Website – The revamped website is proceeding, albeit slightly slower than initially planned. Secretary-General of the MJ, Mr. Sayed Hafizullah Hashimi, requested the inclusion of the complete history of approved and pending bills by ALBA's website development team for the legislative tracking system, which will be part of the revised websites. ALBA received almost 60% of the data which is now uploaded and the team is waiting for the remaining data. The MJ website is 90-95% done and ALBA has begun work on the Wolesi Jirga website which will have many similarities. ALBA expects the launch of the websites (both Upper and Lower House sites in three languages) in November 2015.

OBJECTIVE FOUR – INCREASED INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PARLIAMENT

Task 4.1 – Strengthening the Afghanistan Parliamentary Institute

API Courses in Summer, 2015 – ALBA is planning for an intensive training curriculum for Secretariat staff during the summer parliamentary recess, modelled after the successful training program delivered during the Winter/Spring recess earlier this year. The following schedule reflects the greater intensity of training during the parliamentary recess where API has greater access to staff and Fellows:

7 July	Parliamentary Fellows Orientation <i>Target: Parliamentary Fellows</i>
26-28 July	Legislative Research <i>Target: MJ Legislative/Research staff</i>
27-28 July	Separation of Powers <i>Target: Parliamentary Fellows</i>
28 July	Parliamentary Oversight <i>Target: Staff of Budget and Legislative Research Units</i>
1 August	Presentation Skills <i>Target: Secretariat Staff / Commission Staff</i>

3 August	Committee Procedures <i>Target: WJ Fellows</i>
8 August	Parliamentary Oversight <i>Target: Secretariat Staff / Commission Staff</i>
9 August	Civic Education <i>Target: Secretariat Staff / Commission Staff</i>
10 August	Budget Process <i>Target: Staff of Budget and Legislative Research Units</i>
12 August	Conflict/Economic Development <i>Target: Secretariat Staff / Commission Staff</i>
15 August	Legislative Process <i>Target: MJ and WJ Fellows</i>
16 August	Legislative Online Research <i>Target: MJ and WJ Fellows</i>
17 August	Legislative Drafting <i>Target: Staff of Legislative Research Units</i>
24 August	Effective Communication Skills <i>Target: MJ and WJ Fellows</i>
24 August	Legislative Research <i>Target: Staff and MJ/WJ Fellows</i>
7-8 September	Legislative Drafting <i>Target: WJ Fellows</i>
14 September	Effective Communication Skills <i>Target: MoPA staff</i>
20-21 September	1394 National Budget <i>Target: MJ Fellows</i>

CHAPTER III: PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The report period witnessed progress on several key indicators within the ALBA PMEP:
See Excel file attached to this report

CHAPTER IV: PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

Staffing. A second M&E officer and an additional senior procurement officer were added to the ALBA team during this quarter with USAID approval. Recruitment for a senior anti-corruption advisor, a senior gender advisor, and a senior legislative advisor were also undertaken during this quarter to replace outgoing staff.

DQA. A DQA was undertaken during this quarter. The report is attached in the annex.

ATTACHMENTS

- M&E reporting file (excel sheet)
- Northern Provinces Trip Report
- Kunduz Event Trip Report
- Panshjr Event Trip Report
- Bamyan PACC Trip Report
- Qatia Conference Report
- Legislative Bulletin
- Budget Bulletin
- End of Session Report
- ALBA Quarterly Financial Report
- DQA