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Checchi and Company Consulting, Inc.

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**NINTH QUARTERLY
PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT**

For the Period October 1 to December 31, 2006

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INTRODUCTION

The contract between Checchi and Company Consulting, Inc. (Checchi) and USAID/DCHA/DG for the Afghanistan Rule of Law Project (ARoLP) was signed on September 28, 2004 and its implementation began on October 1, 2004. ARoLP supports the Afghan Justice Sector Institutions with assistance in areas of 1) Strengthening Court Systems and the Education of Legal Personnel, 2) Law Reform and Legislative Drafting, and 3) Access to Justice/Informal Sector. During the Quarter reported on here, USAID requested that ARoLP support three additional areas: 1) Support for Commercial Court Reform, 2) Human Rights and Women's Rights under Islam, and 3) Infrastructure. Reports on all but the Infrastructure component are included below. ARoLP plans to begin providing architectural and construction monitoring services for the Afghan justice sector under the Infrastructure component early in 2007.

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS OF THE QUARTER

- Initial development began on the National Court Administration System (NCAS)
- Supreme Court personnel records, for both judges and administrative staff, were re-organized, and personnel data added to a new project-developed database.
- ARoLP assisted with the second publication of the Kabul University Law Journal. The issue included 10 research articles on legal and political science subjects.
- After completion of the ARoLP Computer and Internet Literacy classes, 63 professors of the Law and Sharia faculties in Herat, Balkh, Nangarhar, and Kabul universities are now able to use the technology to prepare lectures, conduct research and communicate more effectively.
- The 11th Foundation Training Program was completed.
- 173 candidates graduated from the Judicial Stage Training Program.
- ARoLP sponsored its second 5-day training of trainers for senior judges.
- Stage Training partners, ARoLP, IDLO, IIPLD, and the Max Planck Institute agreed on a MOU relating to the scheduling and implementation of the 2007 Stage Training Program.
- An action plan for the development and implementation of a Commercial Court Training Program was created.
- A curriculum for the Commercial Court judges training program was created.
- ARoLP concluded Legislative Drafting Training for Staffers of the Wolesi Jirga (Lower House) and the Meshrano Jirga (Upper House) and the Afghanistan Independent Electoral Commission.
- ARoLP uploaded the contents of the ARoLP legal information DVD to the official website of the MOJ, making all Afghan laws enacted to-date publicly accessible on the site. ARoLP also upgraded its own translations website which now includes an important collection of Afghan law and regulations translated into English.
- The Afghan Council of Ministers approved a legislative agenda for the first time since 1993 – a milestone that the MOJ credits to the ARoLP/MOJ joint conference entitled, “The Legislative System of Afghanistan and its Current Challenges”. As a result the Taqin was able to send nine draft laws to the Office

of Administrative Affairs and five important commercial draft laws out of the nine were signed into law by the President.

- Established six community cultural centers in Parwan, Kapisa and Panjshir to carry out community-based public legal awareness activities.
- Produced two radio and television dramas in both Dari and Pashto on the education rights of women.
- Negotiations on a subcontract to provide the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission with \$2 million to pay for salaries in FY 2007 were completed in October and a subcontract between Checchi and the Commission was signed on November 14, 2006.
- ARoLP issued a Request for Proposals to identify a subcontractor to implement women's rights under Islam activities in the provinces. Ten non-profits responded.

PROGRAMMATIC TRENDS AND CONSTRAINTS

Afghanistan provides a very difficult environment in which to work. The political situation is unsettled and security is a constant concern. The numerous donors have frequently competing agendas, which place a premium on coordination, while simultaneously making coordination more elusive. Increasing politicization in the general post-parliamentary election environment is also a matter of particular concern regarding ARoLP's work. Uncertainties in the political environment of ARoLP's operations concern the relationship of the Law and Sharia faculties. The direction the universities will take in legal education is a political issue, at least as much as it is an educational one..

Difficulties in communication caused by language barriers and limited translation capacity and low level of current human resource capacities within the justice institutions, which makes introduction of new ideas and new technologies extremely difficult and subject to non-sustainability, are further challenges. Checchi has found from its early experience that as important as good planning is, flexibility also is extremely important. While plans may go astray due to unforeseeable circumstances, opportunities to move in new and unanticipated directions often offset disappointments. Even so, this report covers the first quarter that ARoLP advisors have had implementing a newly approved work plan which, after much reflection, sets new goals for the project with different strategies for obtaining these goals. Legal Education and Court Administration are examples of components which have changed both goals and strategies at the beginning of FY 2007.

Legal Education had focused in the first two years of the project on providing teaching staff at Afghanistan's leading law and Sharia faculties with the basic skills they would need to improve the curriculum at their universities. These basic skills included training in computers and English. In large part this phase of the training has been completed and ARoLP is shifting its resources from basic skill development to the development of modern courses in law for both the law and Sharia faculties. Course development will include the development and publication of new textbooks on commercial law subjects. In Court Administration, the continuing lack of electricity meant that ARoLP had to develop and implement paper-based court management systems instead of the computer-based systems that had been developed in the first two years of the project when there was greater optimism that crucial infrastructure would in place by now. This has been a critical quarter for ARoLP as it shifts its strategies in key areas. So far it looks as if these strategies will work to obtain the goals that have been set for the project with little needed now in the way of mid-course corrections. Unfortunately, ARoLP is going to have to slow the pace of its activities until future funding becomes clear

since the project is spending at a pace that will exhaust its funds before the end of the contract.

Finally, ARoLP is not able to prepare for the anticipated upsurge in violence this spring and will have to limit its activities in the provinces because of a lack of vehicles with the most basic armor. ARoLP has been trying for months to lease vehicles with some level of armor and has not been successful.

Component 1.A Support for Court Administration

AR 5: NEW NATIONAL COURT ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM (NCAS) IMPLEMENTED

| Indicator | Baseline As of Sept 2006 | Cumulative Total Through Jan.,2007 | FY 2007 Target | FY 2008 Target |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. Adoption of NCAS by Supreme Court | NO | NO | YES | -- |
| 2. Number of courts using NCAS | 0 | 0 | 4 | 14 |

PROGRESS TOWARD ACTIVITY RESULTS

Development of National Case Administration System (NCAS)

Indicator 1: The basic strategy for developing the NCAS includes the following milestones:

- determine what courts will assist with developing the system
- create working groups at each court
- develop a methodology that allows for incremental implementation the system (e.g., begin using the new case numbering system while working on the simplification of the case registration process)

Working closely with senior administrative staff at the Supreme Court (SC), ARoLP identified the following four model courts to develop, test and implement the NCAS:

- Wardak Provincial Court of Appeals
- Maidan Shahr Urban Primary Court (UPC)
- Kabul Provincial Court of Appeals
- Kabul District 10 UPC
- In addition to the four model courts, the Supreme Court will implement a model system designed for their workload.

The selection process took into consideration proximity to project advisory staff, diversity of court functions (district vs. appeals), and commitment from senior court staff to the process. The courts in Wardak province have been actively involved with regional justice sector activities and expressed interest and willingness to take a role in developing the NCAS. The project met a number of times with the Appeals Court Chief Judge in Wardak Province to discuss the NCAS and its development process. In Kabul, the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals has worked with project staff on a number of initiatives and was a member of an

earlier study tour. He is very committed to being part of the NCAS development. ARoLP has also worked for several months with the Kabul District 10 UPC on case registration forms and case tracking. The Chairperson (i.e., Chief Judge) of District 10 UPC also expressed commitment to the project and his willingness to have senior staff, including judges, participate in the development of the NCAS.

Each court named a working group of senior staff, and the initial focus of each working group has been the development of a unique case identifier. Various case numbering methods were discussed with each group, and while the concept of case numbering is commonplace in most court management systems, in Afghanistan it is a new idea, so in addition to discussing the case number, ARoLP is working with the groups to gain a better understanding of records management generally so that as cases are numbered and filed the courts have a better capacity to plan and adopt a systematic case management system.

Indicator 2: ARoLP is developing the NCAS and once this process is complete and the system is adopted by the Supreme Court, ARoLP will replicate the system in 14 additional courts in 2008.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Improved Personnel Records Management at the Supreme Court

All personnel records for judicial staff are kept and maintained at the Supreme Court's Personnel Department. With approximately 1,500 judges and 1,400 support staff, an efficient and simple system for records management is essential. ARoLP has been assisting the Supreme Court with developing a simple, yet detailed, database for recording judicial personnel information. Initially, this database was used to create and print judicial identification cards. Upon review of the personnel system in place at the Supreme Court, ARoLP staff developed a plan to re-organize and re-index all judicial personnel files.

The old system was organized around provinces. Information on all judges assigned to a particular province was stored in the cabinet or drawers for that single province. Inside the drawer(s) was an index sheet that changed as a judge was reassigned, an event that happens very frequently. The index sheets were out of date, the files were misplaced as they were moved often and file space was often restricted as records on newly reassigned judges were moved to drawers that were not up to date.

To simplify the filing system, ARoLP designated a unique personnel ID number for every judicial officer. Once each judge had an ID number, the files were arranged in numeric order, drawers labeled accordingly, and the files tagged with the ID number, current assignment location and the date of the most recent assignment.

Development of a Management Support Unit at the Supreme Court

ARoLP worked with the Office of General Administration of the Judiciary to develop job descriptions and scopes of work for 14 specialized staff positions to assist with the administration of the judiciary. ARoLP assisted with developing the overall budget requirements as the positions will be funded entirely by the Supreme Court.

Development of the Supreme Court Website

As part of the overall goal of providing access to judicial and court information, ARoLP has been assisting the Supreme Court with development of an official website. ARoLP worked with the Supreme Court's website committee to develop procedures for determining what information will be uploaded, how the information will be reviewed prior to uploading, and the maintenance of accurate and up-to-date Supreme Court information.

Continued Assistance to Pilot Courts

The Appeals Courts in Parwan and Mazar-e-Sharif provinces continued to register cases and develop better procedures for tracking cases. ARoLP staff continued with English training and computer training. Twenty-five judges and administrative staff completed computer training during the period. Computers previously dedicated to training activities were moved to the operations units in the courts.



Certificate distribution ceremony for judges and staff who completed computer training in Parwan. From the left, Judge Mohammad Eshaq Mujadidi, the Chief Judge of Parwan Provincial Appeals Court; Mr. Ghulam Sediq Sediq, the Deputy Governor of Parwan Province; Mr. James Agee, ARoLP COP, Mr. Sulaiman Ghafoori, ARoLP Legal Specialist, Mr. Kelly Gavagan, ARoLP Court Administration Advisor



NCAS working group from the Kabul Provincial Court of Appeals. From the left, Mr. Mohammad Sharif, Assistant Administrator - Criminal Division; Mr. Hafizullah, Chief Administrator - Public Security Division; Mr. Qudratullah, Chief Administrator - Civil and Public Rights Division; Mr. Mohammad Rahim Niazi, Assistant Administrator - Traffic Division.

KEY EVENTS FOR NEXT QUARTER

- The NCAS working groups will begin to document the procedural changes required to fully implement the system.
- ARoLP will begin space modifications to selected court space that will support the new filing systems being developed as well as “front counters” that will provide added security for court records and files.
- The Supreme Court’s judicial personnel files will be audited to ensure all records in the newly developed personnel database system are accurate and current.
- The Supreme Court’s website will be launched.
- Supreme Court staff will be selected to participate in an intensive computer and technology training program designed to develop the Court’s information and technology management capacity

SUMMARY OF COMPONENT TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS

| Date | Title | Agencies Involved | Number of Participants |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| October to December | “Beginning and Intermediate English” | Judicial staff – Parwan | 11 |
| October to December | “Beginning and Intermediate English” | Judicial Staff – Balkh | 21 |
| October to December | “Learning MS Windows, Word and Excel” | Judicial staff – Parwan | 15 |
| October to November | “Learning MS Windows, Word and Excel” | Judicial Staff – Balkh | 10 |

Component 1.B Legal Education

AR 5: FORMAL LEGAL EDUCATION STRENGTHENED

| Indicator | Baseline As of Sept 2006 | Cumulative Total Through Jan.2007 | FY 2007 Target | FY 2008 Target |
|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. Number of syllabi developed and being taught in the Faculty of Law | 0 | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| 2. Competency test in place | No | No | No | Yes |
| 3. Number of Articles in Law Journal | 11 | 10 | 20 | 25 |

PROGRESS TOWARDS ACTIVITY RESULTS

Indicator 1: The responsibility of Kabul University Faculty of Law is to implement a new curriculum and develop academic programs that promote greater scholarship. To assist this process, ARoLP facilitated a number of meetings on updating syllabi, conducting research, enhancing teaching methods and producing legal textbooks. Meetings were held at Kabul, Herat and Nangarhar universities. One outcome of these discussions is that ARoLP will support the development of a number of syllabi for courses such as Tax Law, Commercial Law, Commercial Procedure, International Commercial Law, Civil Law, Civil Procedure and other subjects.

The ARoLP Judicial Training Advisor, will provide leadership to create a commercial law textbook. ARoLP coordinated a series of meetings with Kabul University Law faculty. The meetings focused on developing the course in commercial law and the identification of law faculty who will work on the course. It is taking longer than expected to get Afghan faculty to participate in the development of the course, a result of so many active young faculty members being at the University of Washington. All but four of the participants in the Washington program will return to Afghanistan at the beginning of the next quarter and this should speed up syllabi development.

One new possibility that was explored during the quarter was working with University of Washington faculty and Afghan LLM students in Washington to develop course materials. ARoLP will fund the necessary research with the University of Washington providing faculty supervision.

Indicator 2: Having a competency test mechanism in place will insure a more uniform legal education throughout the country and result in more competent legal professionals. In the first quarter of 2007, ARoLP will open a dialogue with the law schools, law students and Afghan Lawyers Union to discuss ways to implement a test.

Indicator 3: In order to promote professional writing, legal research and scholarship, ARoLP supports the Kabul University Faculty of Law Journal. In December the second issue of the Law Journal was published with professors contributing 10 research articles on different law and political science subjects. One of the challenges in the publication of the Law Journal has been the frequent changes of editors. This has put strain on ARoLP's advisors who spend time collecting articles and preparing the journal for publication. The increase in the number of articles will likely come from participation of other Afghan universities. In the next quarter ARoLP advisors will meet with the deans and faculty of the Law Faculties at provincial universities to encourage them to contribute to the Journal.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Distribution Process of Basic Legal Texts (BLTs)

With the goal of making the Basic Legal Texts (BLT's) accessible to the students and professors of Law and Sharia faculties, ARoLP distributed over 800 BLTs at Kabul, Herat, Balkh and Nangarhar universities during this quarter.



Faculty of Law and Political Science Kabul University, submission of the BLT to the Faculty

English and Computer Classes

On-going English and computer classes were offered to both law and Sharia professors. In addition to making measurable progress in English, professors in the provinces also gained substantial computer skills. Both law and Sharia professors were able to demonstrate usage of a variety of computer programs in order to write and store lectures. In addition, they were beginning to format and publish legal texts and research relevant legal sites on a regular basis.

Law Journal

The second issue of *Mojala eHoqooq*, the Law Journal, was printed and published for the Faculty of Law and Political Science of Kabul University. The Journal consists of 10 research articles as well as a report on the activities of the faculty. 800 copies of the second journal were printed for distribution.

Text Books of Law Curriculum

ARoLP organized and attended a number of meetings in order to identify members of the faculty who would participate in the development of a syllabus and textbook on commercial law. Faculty members have been identified from Kabul and Nangarhar universities. They are currently working on an outline for the textbook and developing a syllabus for the class.



Professors of law and Sharia at Internet Lab of Herat University

Curricula Reform

Chief Justice Azimi, the Minister of the Higher Education, representatives of the Ministry of Justice and the Attorney General and the Deans of Law and Sharia faculties at Kabul University met to discuss ways in which to revise the curricula to meet the needs of a modern

Afghan judiciary. The Chief Justice lead the meeting in which it was agreed to appoint a committee to review the curricula and report back to the Chief Justice.

KEY EVENTS FOR THE NEXT QUARTER

- Short-term legal education advisor Prof. Ted Parnall, former Dean of the University of New Mexico School of Law, will assist the project in identifying subjects in the new law curriculum for development with ARoLP assistance.
- The new law curriculum is expected to be approved by the University Administration and the Ministry of Higher Education.
- ARoLP will complete setting up of the Legal Research Center at the Faculty of Law at Kabul University.
- The faculty preparing the commercial law textbook will travel to France to complete their research.
- The Legal English course will be taught at Kabul University to students from both the Faculty of Law and the Sharia Faculty.

SUMMARY OF COMPONENT TRAININGS AND WORKSHOPS

| Date | Title | Agencies Involved | Number of Participants |
|----------|-----------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| On-going | “Legal English ” | Faculties of Law and Sharia, Kabul University | 12 |
| On-going | “ESL Training /Lower Level” | Faculties of Law and Sharia, Kabul University | 12 |
| On-going | “ESL Training/Intermediate Level” | Faculties of Law and Sharia, Kabul University | 6 |
| On-going | ESL Training/Lower Level | Faculties of Law and Sharia, Balkh University | 16 |
| On-going | ESL/Intermediate Level | Faculties of Law and Sharia, Balkh University | 10 |
| On-going | Level one Beginner English Class | Faculties of Law and Sharia, Nangarhar University | 14 |
| On-going | Level two Beginning English Class | Faculties of Law and Sharia, Nangarhar University | 11 |
| On-going | Level two Beginning English Class | Faculties of Law and Sharia, Herat University | 12 |
| On-going | Intermediate Level English Class | Faculties of Law and Sharia, Herat University | 16 |

Component 1.D Support for Judicial training

AR 3: OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE JUDICIAL PROFESSIONALISM AND SKILLS IMPROVED

| Indicator | Baseline As of Sept 2006 | Cumulative Total Through Jan .2007 | FY 2007 Target | FY 2008 Target |
|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. Code of Judicial conduct adopted | NO | NO | YES | -- |
| 2. Number of hours of offerings increased | 0 | 143 | 180 | 360 |

PROGRESS TOWARD ACTIVITY RESULTS

Indicator 1: ARoLP's strategy for adoption of a Revised Code of Judicial Conduct and Ethics stands on three legs.

- Counseling and support for stakeholders of improved public integrity within the Afghan judiciary through partners such as the Judicial Ethics Working Group.
- Drafting of a proposed Code integrating international best practices, such as the provisions of the Bangalore Principles.
- Education of the decision makers concerning the benefits of swift adoption of a modern Code of Judicial Conduct and Ethics.

ARoLP made some progress toward the adoption by the Afghan judiciary of a Code of Judicial Conduct and Ethics, although progress was negatively affected by unforeseen events that delayed the arrival of Judge Thomas Wallitsch. Judge Wallitsch was originally scheduled to arrive in November 2006; Judge Wallitsch is now expected to arrive in mid-February 2007. Although unable to travel to Kabul, Judge Wallitsch has been working in the US drafting a model Code that will serve as the basis for the final Code adopted by the Afghan judiciary. Further, ARoLP continued to build consensus toward the adoption of a Code of Judicial Conduct and Ethics by creating the Judicial Ethics Working Group, and work on this activity remains substantially on track. A draft Code from Judge Wallitsch is expected in late January. The newly arrived Deputy CoP and Commercial Court Advisor took responsibility for this activity in the latter part of the quarter.

Indicator 2: The number of hours of judicial training offerings will increase significantly for both the Foundation and the Stage Judicial Training programs. In addition ARoLP implemented a 35 hour Judicial Training of Trainers Workshop during the quarter. The Judicial Stage training was set at 36 weeks and the Foundation training will be expanded from 3 to 4 weeks.

The Stage and Foundation training programs are the backbone of ARoLP's portfolio of judicial training activities. The Stage will be implemented through a partnership among ARoLP, IDLO and the Max Planck Institute in 2007 and the number of participants will be increased to 200. By providing the Afghan judiciary with a group of better trained judicial candidates grounded in international best practices, the Stage and Foundation trainings directly contribute toward the Activity Result related to the improvement of judicial professionalism and the institutionalization of skills and knowledge. Through activities such

as broadening the number of implementing partners in the Stage and revising the text materials, ARoLP continued to improve the already high quality of training provided in the Stage program. Further, ARoLP has not only increased the amount of training, but also ARoLP improved the quality of the Foundation training, and will expand its training activities through implementation of a Commercial Court Judicial Training Program, contemplated to begin on March 25, 2007 and run through July 31, 2007.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Stage Training

The Stage ran from September 24, 2005 to October 22, 2006. This Stage was implemented by ARoLP and IDLO/Italy. ARoLP provided overall leadership and approximately 900 hours of training related to the Afghan Commercial Law, Fair Trial, Human Rights, and the Commercial Procedure Law, in addition to international best practices related to areas in which Afghanistan has no statutes.

Judicial Foundation Training Program

The 11th Foundation Training Program was implemented by ARoLP and ran from November 15, 2006 through December 5, 2006. During the training 40 members of the Afghan judiciary received basic judicial training in subject areas such as the Afghan Constitution, the Civil Procedure Code, the Commercial Law and Commercial Procedure Law, among other topics.

Training of Trainers Workshop

ARoLP implemented a Training of Trainers Workshop in partnership with the Afghan Supreme Court from November 25 through November 29, 2006. The focus of the workshop was to provide technical assistance to the senior management of the Afghan judiciary with respect to the development and implementation of effective judicial education and training programs. ARoLP engaged an internationally recognized expert from Australia, Livingston Armytage, to facilitate the workshop. The Workshop was attended by 21 judges and members of the Supreme Court Judicial Education Committee and the Faculty of Trainers. The Chief Justice attended the Certificate Ceremony on the last day of the workshop.

Creation of the Judicial Conduct and Ethics Working Group

The Code of Judicial Conduct and Ethics Working Group was established with input from ARoLP to review and revise and recommend adoption of a modern draft Code of Judicial Conduct and Ethics that incorporates international best practice, the US experience, as well as the Bangalore Principles. After completion of a draft Code the working group will assist the Chief Justice in obtaining approval of the Code. It is further, contemplated that the working group will provide technical assistance to the drafting of necessary annotations to the Code and assist in development of a training program to make judges, judicial officers, and the public aware of the Code's provisions.

KEY EVENTS FOR NEXT QUARTER

- Completion of draft Code of Judicial Conduct and Ethics.
- 12th Foundation Training Program to include approximately 40 judges.
- Examination of 800 candidates for the Stage training program. The results of the examinations will be used to select 170 – 200 candidates for the Stage.

- Start of the Stage.
- Start of the Commercial Court Training Program to include approximately 60 participants.

SUMMARY OF COMPONENT TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS

| Date | Title | Agencies Involved | Number of Participants |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| September to October | Stage Training | Judicial staff | 175 |
| November to December | Judicial Foundation Training Program | Judicial Staff | 40 |
| November | Training or Trainers Workshop | Judicial staff | 21 |

Component 1.E Support for Commercial Court Reform

AR 6: FOUNDATION FOR EFFECTIVE RESOLUTION OF COMMERCIAL DISPUTES IN PLACE

| Indicator | Baseline As of Sept 2006 | Cumulative Total Through Jan. 2007 | FY 2007 Target | FY 2008 Target |
|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. National policy on enforcement developed | NO | NO | NO | YES |
| 2. Supreme Court clarifies jurisdiction of Supreme court | NO | NO | YES | -- |
| 3. Number of hours of judicial training for Commercial Court Judges | 0 | 0 | 204 | TBD |

PROGRESS TOWARD ACTIVITY RESULTS

Although the Commercial Court Advisor arrived with only a few weeks left in the quarter, progress was made toward the three goals set for this activity.

Indicator 1: The development of a national policy on enforcement of commercial judgments requires the consensus of a large group of stakeholders. The current policy of enforcing commercial judgments through the authority of the Ministry of Justice is ineffective, inefficient and subject to fraud, corruption and abuse. ARoLP's strategy to facilitate development of an Afghan National Policy on Enforcement relies on gathering responsible stakeholders with a view toward creating an efficient acceptable alternate mechanism to enforce such judgments.

By building on the expertise and commitment of the members of the recently created Commercial Court Training Working Group, ARoLP created a base from which it can reach

out to stakeholders to facilitate discussion of alternatives and development of a national policy consensus.

Indicator 2: ARoLP continued to build upon its strong relationship of trust and confidence enjoyed with the Supreme Court. Through counseling, education and technical assistance related to Supreme Court strategic planning, ARoLP is well placed to make clarification of the Commercial Court jurisdiction a high priority.

Indicator 3: Because of the date of arrival of the Commercial Court Advisor, there are no results to report for this quarter. ARoLP anticipates reporting the results of the Commercial Court Training Program in the next quarterly report.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Numerous meetings were held with responsible stakeholders related to this activity, including representatives of the following counterparts:

- Members of Kabul University related to their participation in the Commercial Court Training Program Working Group and using university facilities for the training program.
- Representatives of the Supreme Court related to the composition of the Working Group.
- Representatives of international donor partners such as IDLO and UNDP related to the training of Commercial Court judges and locating a suitable venue.

KEY EVENTS FOR NEXT QUARTER

- Start of the Commercial Court Training Program. The Commercial Court Training Program, scheduled to start in March 2007, is targeted at current and future judges of the Commercial Courts, members of the Hoqooq, members of the Taqin, and junior members of the Sharia, Law and Economics faculties of Kabul University. The training will provide judges with knowledge and skills in commercial issues that may be faced by members of the Commercial Courts as Afghanistan's economy expands. Further, by including members of the Afghan government and junior instructors at Kabul University, it is hoped that course attendance will improve both the quality of future commercial law and the quality of university training related to commercial law. The program will include training in accounting and finance as well as international best practices relating to those areas in which there is no Afghan law on point.
- Meetings with senior members of the Afghan judiciary and the Commercial Court Working Group to discuss strategies for the clarification of the jurisdiction of the Commercial Court.

Component 2: Law Reform and Legislative Drafting

AR 8: LEGISLATIVE PROCESS IMPROVED

| Indicator | Baseline As of Sept 2006 | Cumulative Total Through Jan.2007 | FY 2007 Target | FY 2008 Target |
|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. Number of draft laws sent by the MOJ Taqin to the Office of Administrative Affairs | 5 | 9 | 8 | 12 |
| 2. Number of Agencies with members trained in legislative drafting | 1 | 3 | 6 | 12 |
| 3. Number of institutions or entities distributing Afghan laws, regulations, and legal information | 1 | 3 | 4 | 6 |

PROGRESS TOWARD ACTIVITY RESULTS

Indicator 1: ARoLP managed to make a major advance in improving the legislative process by organizing with the MOJ a conference entitled, “The Legislative System of Afghanistan and its Current Challenges.” The conference brought together stakeholders from the government, private sector and international donors to discuss the roles of these organizations in the development of a legislative agenda. The group was also able to discuss an agenda to the point where the MOJ felt confident enough to issue and act on a preliminary six-month agenda. In total, nine laws that were on this agenda were reviewed and sent by the Taqin Department to the Office of Administrative Affairs of the President with five being signed into law and the remainder being sent on to the National Assembly for further consideration. A new agenda is being developed for next year and ARoLP advisors will be playing a role in the development of this agenda.

ARoLP advisors also continued various cooperative activities with the MOJ and other organizations in drafting new laws for Afghanistan. Specifically, ARoLP continued its role as the Secretariat of the Law Reform Technical Working Group (LRTWG) with the MOJ as the national lead. The Working Group provided input and comments on various draft laws under review by the MOJ. The drafts reviewed by the Group included the draft partnership, mediation, and forestry laws. Additionally, ARoLP provided a detailed analysis to the Legal Advisory Board of the President of Afghanistan on the U.S. Constitution and how it is amended.

Despite this progress, ARoLP must continue to play a role in developing written policy position papers that explain the issue and the need for a law to address the issue. The paper would also discuss how the draft law proposes to address the issue in a way appropriate to the Afghan situation as well as alternatives that were considered. Finally, implementation and budgetary concerns should also be thoroughly discussed in the position paper. Position papers will also assist members of the executive branch to explain the legislation before committees in the National Assembly. Giving careful thought to the policy being implemented through law and the rationale behind the approach to the implementation will result in better drafts that are properly implemented. ARoLP involvement in the production

of position papers will include technical assistance in research, writing, discussion, and ultimately the drafting of the law. This approach will also foster a more collaborative approach by the stakeholders to sponsoring, drafting, and adopting new laws.

Indicator 2: From November 26 to December 13, 2006, ARoLP conducted a 9-session training workshop entitled “Introduction to Legislative Drafting” for 32 legislative staff members of the National Assembly and the Independent Electoral Commission, in cooperation with the State University of New York’s Afghanistan Parliamentary Assistance Project (APAP). The workshop was held at the National Assembly and consisted of nine 90-minute sessions, which were presented partially in lecture format and partially in a discussion format that encouraged active participation.

ARoLP has also been asked to repeat the workshop in February or March 2007 for the legislative staff of the National Assembly (mostly the lower house) who could not participate in November and December due to their work loads or scheduling conflicts. In addition, ARoLP has been asked to provide the training to certain staff of the Ministry of Defense.

The success of the of training program at the National Assembly and requests for more legislative drafting training are sound indicators that the strategy ARoLP has been pursuing is contributing to the improvement of the legislative process. ARoLP believes it is crucial to train the agencies most closely involved in legislative drafting so that they will have a shared perspective on the drafting of legislation that will contribute as much to the development of the process as will the improved skills.

Indicator 3: ARoLP has been active in the development and dissemination of legal information in both electronic and print form even before its Legal Publishing Specialist arrives (Andrea Muto has been approved for this position and will be arriving 1 March). ARoLP completed uploading the most complete collection of Afghan law available anywhere in the world to the MOJ web site so that anyone with internet access can view and download Afghan law. ARoLP has also made its own collection of English translations available via the internet during the past quarter.

ARoLP updated its own Basic Legal Texts by printing 1,600 copies of a supplement which includes amendments to the laws continued in the original sets. This is just the first of a number of specialized legal print publications that ARoLP has planned for FY 2007 and 2008. Working with international partners ARoLP has typed, edited, formatted in electronic form a compilation of criminal laws which includes all current amendments for publication by the UNODC, JSSP, and GTZ. These partners plan to distribute and disseminate the compilation to police, prosecutors and judges throughout the country. In December, GTZ published approximately 1,500 sets for nationwide dissemination to police and prosecutors. These laws include the Dari and Pashto versions of (1) the Criminal Law (with its amendments), (2) the Criminal Procedure Code (with amendments), (3) the Interim Criminal Procedure Code, (4) the Law on Internal and External Security, (5) the Police Law, (6) Law on Detection and Discovery, (7) Juvenile Code, (8) the Law on the Organization of the Courts, and (9) the Constitution.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

ARoLP Support to the MOJ in Improving the Legislative Process

ARoLP continued its work in advising the MOJ (MOJ) on draft laws, legislative process, agenda and drafting. ARoLP also provided support to the Afghanistan MOJ by translating draft laws, such as the draft law on anti-terrorism, as well as providing the Ministry with the English titles for forthcoming *Official Gazette* publications (issues 900 & 902). ARoLP transcribed and edited speeches from the MOJ's conference on the legislative process held in September 2006. These speeches were published by the MOJ in its monthly journal ADALAT (vol. 8, No. 44) for the month of October. ARoLP advisors continued their collaboration with the Minister of Justice regarding dissemination of laws and legal material, distributing 2,000 ARoLP – MOJ legal database DVDs to government personnel and the public.

Council of Ministers Approved Legislative Plan

As mentioned above, the Council of Ministers approved a 6-month legislative agenda for the first time since 1993. The legislative agenda sets forth the government's priorities in terms of new legislation to be drafted and submitted for approval through March 2007. The Taqin Department of the MOJ credits the publicity and dialogue generated by the September ARoLP – MOJ joint conference, "The Legislative System of Afghanistan and its Current Challenges" with the development of the legislative agenda. Over 180 people from government agencies, non-governmental and international organizations took part in the conference which was publicized on radio, television and in the press. Speakers included the second Vice President, Minister of Justice, and presidential advisors, as well as USAID and ARoLP representatives. Additionally, the MOJ released its monthly journal ADALAT (Vol. 8, No. 44) for the month of October that contained the published speeches from the MOJ Conference. The speech of ARoLP Senior Advisor Mark Hamilton on the legislative processes in other countries was also in this issue.

Legislative Drafting Training

In November and December 2006, ARoLP conducted an "Introduction to Legislative Drafting" training workshop for staff of the National Assembly and the Independent Electoral Commission, in cooperation with the Afghanistan Parliamentary Assistance Project (APAP/SUNY).

The purpose of the workshop was to give a thorough introduction to the concepts, theory, methodology, and processes of legislative drafting. The workshop is intended to be the first part of a series of legislative drafting training workshops, the second part of which will focus more on practical legislative drafting skills.

The subjects discussed in this workshop included topics such as "Understanding the problem to be solved by the legislation," "Communicating with the proponent of the legislation in order to facilitate a better draft and drafting process," "Understanding the persons (stakeholders) and agencies (implementers) involved," statutory interpretation in the U.S. and Afghanistan, and the comparative legislative processes in the U.S. and Afghanistan.



Training on electronic legal research using the AROLP legal information DVD.

ARoLP also distributed to all the participants copies of the AROLP legal information DVD and the recently produced printed supplement to the basic legal texts of Afghanistan, containing the amendments to those important laws. As part of the workshop, AROLP provided training on how to use the DVD (as well as other resources) to research existing law, in order to put draft legislation into the appropriate legal context.

Expanding the Availability of Afghanistan Laws and Legal Information

The need for access to laws and legal documents in Afghanistan has presented challenges to those interested in investing in the country. International organizations and foreign companies are unable to find vital English language translations of Afghan laws and, likewise, Afghan nationals cannot find important international treaties, conventions or other documents in Dari or Pashto. To address this issue, AROLP continued to add documents and make improvements to the Afghanistan Legal Documents Exchange website (www.AfghanistanTranslation.com). AROLP has been collecting translations from a wide variety of other organizations, institutions and contractors working in the country – most of which are USAID-funded. The improved site contains a list of translations organized into categories and alphabetically, available in three formats: PDF, HTML, and Word. The translations are divided into the following categories: constitutions, laws, regulations, decrees, international treaties/conventions, and other documents. The site serves as a point of exchange for sharing of translations and will help us avoid duplication and make better use of our resources.

ARoLP Legal Database in the Internet

ARoLP recently uploaded the entire content of the AROLP legal database DVD to the official website of the Afghanistan MOJ (www.Moj.gov.af). Now, the entire collection of Afghan law, including laws enacted as recently as last week, are publicly accessible on the site by anyone with internet access. AROLP also added links between all these websites: the official website of the MOJ, Supreme Court and AROLP Legal Documents Exchange Center.

ARoLP Finalizes and Distributes Supplement to the Basic Legal Texts

With 4,000 sets of the 1st and 2nd editions of the Basic Legal Texts distributed across the country, AROLP has updated the laws contained in these sets and has produced 1,600 sets of a Supplement which updates those laws printed in the 1st and 2nd editions. This will give the Basic Legal Texts sustainability and further utility into 2007.

USAID Central/South Asia Economic Cooperation: AROLP and Partners Contribute to Publicizing Regional Integration and Economic Growth

ARoLP Advisors Richard Remias and Mark Hamilton authored an article, *Current Legal Reform in Afghanistan*, for publication in the December issue of INVESTORS' VOICE – a popular journal of the American Chamber of Commerce in Kazakhstan. The issue focuses on potential Central and South Asia Economic Integration and includes remarks made by

USAID Mission Director for Central Asia, Chris Crowley, and Deputy Secretary of State, Evan Feigenbaum, as well as an article on the USAID-sponsored Afghanistan International Chamber of Commerce provided by the Center for International Private Enterprise.

KEY EVENTS FOR THE NEXT QUARTER

- Official launch of ARoLP on-line Afghanistan Legal Database that will allow free public access to the entire body of legislation in Afghanistan, including international treaties. The on-line legal database will have comprehensive search capabilities allowing users to find the relevant laws or legal materials by using any of the following data fields: title, topic, category, date(s) of enactment or by a phrase or word contained in the text of a given law.
- Completion of the second series of legislative drafting training for staff of the MOJ’s Taqin Department by February 2007.
- Completion of the second series of legislative drafting training for line ministries and both legislative committees of the National Assembly by March 2007.
- Further dissemination of legal publications on a nationwide basis in cooperation with international and national counterparts.

SUMMARY OF COMPONENT TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS

| Date | Title | Agencies Involved | Number of Participants |
|-----------------------------|--|---|------------------------|
| October 1 to December 31 | “Beginning and Intermediate English” | Afghanistan MOJ | 31 |
| October 1 to December 31 | “Advanced Legal English” | Afghanistan MOJ | 6 |
| October 1 to December 31 | “Learning MS Word and Basic Computer Skills” | Afghanistan MOJ | 30 |
| November 26 to December 13. | “Introduction to Legislative Drafting” | Afghanistan MOJ; Upper House of the National Assembly; Lower House of the National Assembly; and the Afghanistan Independent Electoral Commission | 32 |

Component 3: Access to Justice/Informal Sector

AR 2: APPROPRIATE SECTOR FOR RESOLVING DISPUTES

| Indicator | Baseline As of Sept 2006 | Cumulative Total Through Jan. 2007 | FY 2007 Target | FY 2008 Target |
|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. National policy on informal justice sector developed | No | No | No | Yes |
| 2. Change in public attitude toward the formal justice sector | 20.1% | 20.1% | 21.8% | 25% |

PROGRESS TOWARD ACTIVITY RESULTS

Indicator 1: ARoLP continued its efforts to influence national policy on informal justice in Afghanistan. ARoLP advisors attended a two-day USIP conference from December 12-13 to advocate for a national policy to be developed by the MOJ. The USIP conference led to a follow-up meeting chaired by Deputy Minister of Justice Mr. Hashemzai. At this meeting, it was decided that a committee should be formed to develop a national policy. ARoLP has conducted a number of follow-up meetings with Minister of Justice on activities and progress of this committee. At present the MOJ is still waiting for a report on the recommendations from the conference.

Indicator 2: A comprehensive study on the attitudes of justice in the informal sector was carried out by ARoLP in 2005 and a report was published by The Asia Foundation (TAF) on the Afghan judiciary in 2006. According to these studies most of the disputes are reported to the Shura, Girgas, tribal leaders and elders rather than to the formal courts. In light of these studies, ARoLP created and broadcast radio dramas on role of the formal and informal justice through national and provincial radio stations. The radio programs were also aired through community cultural centers in four central region provinces. ARoLP continued its efforts to produce and broadcast public legal awareness activities through national, provincial and community radio and TV stations. The project also disseminated and aired its written, audio and video legal awareness materials through community cultural centers and USAID- PRTs throughout Afghanistan.

According to TAF's report, 20.1% of Afghans turn to the formal justice sector when they are involved in legal disputes. Most cases are settled in the informal justice sector. ARoLP hopes through its outreach program to increase Afghan awareness of the formal justice sector and thus increase the percentage of Afghans using it.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Establishment of Community Cultural Centers

ARoLP established six community cultural centers in Parwan, Kapisa and Panjshir, with two centers in each province. The centers were established to carry out community based public legal awareness activities on the rule of law, women's rights under Islam, and informal justice. The project provided personnel of these centers with public legal outreach/awareness materials and digital equipment to provide outreach to the general public in their districts.

Each center received training in community public legal awareness, civic education, legal referrals and computer skills. Because of this training, the centers can now also answer basic legal questions in community forums. The centers also disseminate other kinds of awareness materials, on topics such as agriculture, health and education. Each center received an eight day training in Public Legal Awareness, Civic Education Techniques and Legal Referrals. The training was coordinated with International Legal foundation (ILF) and the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC).

Public Legal Awareness, Legal Referrals and Computer Training

ARoLP continued to deliver its eight day trainings on public legal awareness. The trainings were delivered to the heads of six community cultural centers of Parwan, Kapisa and Panjshir provinces. The centers were trained to conduct legal awareness activities and to answer basic legal questions of the communities. The subjects of the training were rule of law and judiciary, women's rights under Islam, and human rights. The training was conducted by the project's trainers. The focus of the training was to explain the role of defense lawyers and human rights. The staff of the centers received ARoLP certificates for participation in this training.

In addition to the Public Legal Awareness Training, the project also conducted an eight day basic computer training for computer operators of six community cultural centers. The computer operators were trained to install and operate the computer, scanner, printer, mini discs, digital camera and cool edit. The training was conducted by project community computer trainer Omid Raji. The trainees were awarded USAID-ARoLP's certificates for participating in this training.

Production of Public Legal Awareness Materials

ARoLP signed an agreement with a local production company (AWAZ) to produce two 15-minute radio and TV dramas in Dari and Pashto. As a result of this agreement, two dramas on women's rights under Islam and informal justice for legal awareness were produced for the Afghan public. The content of the dramas was extracted from Sharia, (Quran and Hadith), the Afghan constitution and customary law practices. The dramas focus on the violation of educational rights, especially women's lack of access to educational opportunities in Afghanistan.

Broadcasting of Public Legal Awareness Materials

ARoLP aired a total of 846 minutes of Dari and Pashto audio and T.V. programs at 17 community cultural centers in Maidan-Wardak, Parwan, Kapisa and Parwan provinces. The broadcast contained information on the Afghan constitution, basic legal rights of citizens, and human rights, women's rights under Islam, the informal justice sector, and the Afghan judicial system. The materials included 540 minutes of radio dramas, 120 minutes of radio and TV spots, 106 minutes of radio and TV quiz shows, the 44 minute movie, Justice at Work, and 36 minutes of animated cartoons.

Conference on the Relationship between Formal and Informal Justice

ARoLP participated in a two day conference which was organized by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) in partnership with the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) and the MOJ. The focus of the conference was on the roles of the formal and informal justice systems of Afghanistan. This conference was an important precursor to the development of a national policy on the informal justice sector. As a follow up to the

conference, there was a meeting held at the MOJ on the strategy and implementation of conference recommendations. USIP will report on the findings and recommendations of the conference.

Distribution of Public Legal Awareness Materials

ARoLP continued distribution of public legal awareness materials based on the requests from counterparts in Kabul and other provinces. ARoLP distributed the following public legal awareness materials:

Audio materials: 190 audio CDs including 35 radio spots, 20 radio talk shows, 70 radio dramas and 65 radio quiz shows, 259 video CDs which included 49 TV Spots, 67 TV quiz shows, 63 movies and 80 animated cartoons.

Printed materials: 12,366 copies which included, 4153 comic books, 7783 pamphlets, 240 constitution and 190 posters.

KEY EVENTS FOR THE NEXT QUARTER

- ARoLP will establish six more community cultural centers in Parwan, Kapisa, and Panjshir.
- ARoLP will develop and broadcast 10 radio and TV spots in both Dari and Pashto.
- The project will develop 10 bumper stickers and five pamphlets.
- The project will produce the third radio and TV quiz show.
- The project will conduct a dialogue between formal and informal justice in four districts of the Parwan and Wardak.
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SUMMARY OF COMPONENT TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS

| Date | Title | Agencies Involved | Province | Number of Participants |
|-------------------|---|-------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| December 4 to 6 | Civic Education, Public Legal Awareness and legal focal point | ILF, AIHRC, UNAMA | Parwan, Kapisa and Panjshir | 6 |
| December 16 to 20 | Civic Education, Public Legal Awareness and legal focal point | ILF, AIHRC, UNAMA | Parwan, Kapisa and Panjshir | 6 |
| December 4 to 6 | Community center computer training | ARoLP | Parwan, Kapisa and Panjshir | 6 |
| December 16 to 20 | Community center computer training | ARoLP | Parwan, Kapisa and Panjshir | 6 |

Component 4. Human Rights and Women's Rights under Islam

AR 1: KNOWLEDGE OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN ISLAM INCREASED

| Indicator | Baseline As of Sept 2006 | Cumulative Total Through Dec. 2006 | FY 2007 Target | FY 2008 Target |
|--|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. Number of dialogue events on women's rights | 0 | 0 | 22 | 22 |
| 2. Public attitudes on women's rights changed | No | No | No | Yes |

PROGRESS TOWARD ACTIVITY RESULTS

Indicator 1: To prepare for the dialogue events outlines in the work plan, ARoLP conducted a total of 72 meetings with relevant stakeholders to discuss the objectives of ARoLP's Women's Rights under Islam program and to seek support in its implementation. Meetings were held with the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Women's Affairs, MOJ, Council of Ulama (scholars), Supreme Court, Islamic Research Center, educational institutions, civil society groups and media representatives. Through these meetings, ARoLP has identified 35 individuals as potential members of a consultative group. Meetings with stakeholders are still being held to identify the rest of the consultative group members (a total of 45). The consultative group will participate in forums to exchange knowledge and information; identify problems as a result of strict implementation of Sharia/customs and traditions; monitor the themes of *Khutbas* in mosques; and participate in gatherings and forums to promote women's rights through progressive interpretation of Sharia.

ARoLP conducted several consultative meetings with *Khateeb*s (the speakers at the Friday prayer) and *Imams* (the persons who lead the prayers) of Wazir Akbar Khan, Hazrat Ali, Haji Yaqub, Usman bin Afwan mosques and Takya Khaana-e-Chendawel in Kabul. The purpose of the meetings was to get the views of the individual *Imams* and *Khateeb*s on women's rights in Islam and to seek their support for ARoLP's women's rights activities. In general, the meetings were positive and beneficial. In other meetings, some mullahs (while recognizing women's rights) felt that there were other more important issues such as security and corruption in the country that needed more attention. Other consultations and networking meetings included discussions with officials at the Islamic Research Center.

ARoLP organized the first joint consultation meeting/workshop with a group of seven influential scholars and Sharia experts to review the questionnaire that had been prepared by ARoLP for assessing the women's rights knowledge of the consultative group members. The consultative group members include scholars, Sharia law experts, *Khateeb*s, *Imams*, academics, and civil society and media representatives. After an intense discussion on different meanings of certain *Ahadith* (sayings of the Prophet), on women's rights and privileges as well as on limitations on women's participation in public life, the group selected 10 questions that they felt will aid the program in assessing the group members' knowledge and training needs. After the identification and selection of the consultative group members,

ARoLP will organize a two-day joint meeting to introduce the program, provide an opportunity to group members to get to know each other and to assess their knowledge and view points on women's rights in Islam. In addition the responses will be used for categorizing group members into focus and core groups.



From right to left Mawlawi Abdul Basir Fayez, Mawlawi Abdul Malek, Mawlawi Abdul Rahman Hakimzad, ARoLP's Sharif Nasry, Fazel Ahmad Manawi, Mawlawi Munir, Mawlawi Sediqullah Muslim and Qari Fahim Qaweem.

Indicator 2: ARoLP has also established contacts with a number of Muslim women's rights groups in Malaysia and Pakistan to seek their assistance in the identification of progressive scholars and to exchange information and lessons learned. Additionally, ARoLP established contacts by sending introductory letters to fourteen scholars and Sharia experts in Egypt, Malaysia, Morocco, Kuwait, Sudan, and South Africa. Scholars have expressed their support for the program. ARoLP is in the process of reviewing the scholars' publications and statements to assess their perspective on women's rights in Islam. After a thorough study and consultation with progressive Muslim women's groups from other countries, ARoLP will identify a pool of experts who will be selected to take part in public discussions and dialogues with Afghan scholars in Afghanistan.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Publication Meetings

ARoLP's Women's Rights under Islam component conducted meetings with the Publication Department of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The Ministry's resource center has some 3700 books in Arabic, Dari, Farsi and Pashto languages. Nearly all books and materials are in Arabic except for some Farsi books and booklets donated by the embassy of Iran. The majority of these publications are written by *Shia* scholars on subjects pertinent to the *Shia* sect of Islam. The resource center is used by approximately 60 persons, mostly by mullahs and researchers (who can read Arabic) on daily basis. ARoLP is seeking ways to support the Ministry's resource center by providing them with books and materials that contain progressive interpretations of Islamic laws concerning women's rights. The provision of books and materials to the Ministry may take longer than expected as most progressive

religious books are published in Iran. The alternative is to translate books and materials from Arabic into local languages.

Guidelines for RFP

On December 6, 2006, ARoLP conducted an information session to provide guidelines on the Request for Proposal to support women's rights under Islam activities. ARoLP received 10 proposals from Afghan and international non-profit and non-governmental organizations. The successful bidder will develop a program in accordance with ARoLP's Women's Rights under Islam Program's goal to promote women's rights through the progressive interpretation of Islamic laws.

Media Meetings

ARoLP held several meetings with the Islamic Education Department of Radio Television Afghanistan (RTA) to discuss ARoLP's women's rights activities, specifically roundtables and public discourse between Afghan and non-Afghan scholars and Sharia experts. RTA has regular radio and television programs on Islamic traditions and jurisprudence. Follow-up meetings will be held to discuss a strategy for organizing roundtables with scholars and experts who will be introduced by ARoLP.

Conference and Seminars

ARoLP provided technical advice to the Afghan Women Skills Development Center (a local NGO) at a conference on Advocacy for Women's Rights that took place on January 9-11, at the Ministry of Women's Affairs. The objective of the three-day workshop was to discuss different types of violence against women and to highlight the government's responsibility in establishing effective mechanisms for protecting women's rights. ARoLP facilitated a session on the role of scholars in promoting women's rights

ARoLP's women's rights under Islam program actively participated in the review process of the draft law on Elimination of Violence against Women. ARoLP's provided a presentation on the domestic violence acts from Malaysia, Morocco and Pakistan as a comparison. The meetings were facilitated by the Afghan Women's Network with participation of 20 representatives from different civil society groups.

Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) Meeting

ARoLP Advisors attended the International conference hosted by the AIHRC and Medica Mondiale on "Addressing Self-Immolation in Afghanistan: Developing a Response Strategy." At the end of the conference, AIHRC concluded that cultural and traditional practices such as early age marriage, exchange of women to end disputes and other forms of violence against women are perceived as Islamic in most parts of the country. Participants emphasized the need for a strategic approach in tackling violence against women and the importance of work with the religious community and other influential stakeholders to end violence against women.

Subcontract Awarded to AIHRC for Staff Salaries

Negotiations on a subcontract to provide the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission with \$2 million to pay for salaries in FY 2007 were completed in October and a subcontract between Checchi and the Commission was signed on November 14, 2006.

KEY EVENTS FOR THE NEXT QUARTER

- Needs Assessment. A two-day informal gathering will be held with the consultative group to assess their knowledge and perspectives on issues concerning women's rights in Islam. Participants will be requested to write down their viewpoints on the pre-identified topics: 1) marriage in Islam (*mahr*, age, consent, etc.), 2) women's right to an education, 3) women's right to a public life. ARoLP's trainings and public discussion subjects will be based on the responses from the participants.
- Consultation with women's groups in other Muslim countries. ARoLP will meet with Muslim women's groups in the region to discuss practical approaches and learn from the experiences from similar programs in other countries.
- A two-day training on the sources of Sharia. The focus of the trainings will be on the sources of Sharia and its different interpretations in other Muslim countries. Participants of the training will include members of the consultative groups.
- ARoLP will also organize roundtables and public discussions between Afghan and non-Afghan scholars and Islamic law experts on the sources of Sharia and the authenticity of the sources. Dialogues will be televised and broadcast through national and local radio stations.
- Seminar on the sources of Sharia for students of Law, Sharia and Journalism. Through interactive activities students will learn how Sharia is interpreted and implemented in progressive Muslim societies.
- Translation of key materials containing pro-women's rights messages based on progressive interpretations of Islamic norms. ARoLP, in consultation with Muslim women's groups and progressive scholars, will select key materials for translation into Dari and Pashto.
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SUMMARY OF COMPONENT TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS

| Date | Title | Agencies Involved | Number of Participants |
|------------|---|---|------------------------|
| January 20 | Consultation on finalizing the questionnaire. (The questionnaire will be used to assess the consultative group members' knowledge and perspective on women's rights in Islam) | Ulama Council, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Department of Religious Verdicts, Center for Islamic study and research, and <i>Khateeb</i> s and Imams from different mosques in Kabul | 7 |