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# **Civic Advocacy Support Program**

## **In Uzbekistan**

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### **QUARTERLY REPORT**

**Cooperative Agreement Number: 122-A-00-02-00044-00**

**Reporting Period: January 1 – March 31, 2002**

**Submitted To: USAID/CAR/Tashkent**

### **COUNTERPART INTERNATIONAL, INC.**

**1200 18th Street, NW, Suite 1100  
Washington DC 20036  
Tel: (202)296-9676**

**11-A Donskaya Street  
Tashkent, Uzbekistan 700000  
Tel: (998-71) 169-16-13**

**Civic Advocacy Support Program  
Second Quarterly Report: 1 January-31 March 2003**

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## **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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## **II. PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The goal of the Civic Advocacy Support Project (CASP) is to strengthen democratic culture in Uzbekistan by building constituencies for political, economic, and social change. CASP is designed to help citizens and non-governmental, non-commercial organizations (NNOs) to more effectively articulate to the government of Uzbekistan issues that concern them and to work for satisfactory solutions. The program has three primary objectives:

- To enhance the capacity of local NNOs to carry out national level advocacy campaigns on issues that concern them;
- To engage citizens in the democratic process by involving them in advocacy efforts;
- To improve the ability of the national government to engage in policy dialogue and reform in consultation with citizens and NNOs.

The central thrust of the program will be a total of seven multi-faceted advocacy campaigns on issues of concern to Uzbek NNOs but that also affect a wider segment of the population. CASP has five basic implementation tools:

- Advanced advocacy materials and information dissemination;
- Capacity building for NNOs;
- Regional NNO and Government Networking;
- Capacity Building for Government Officials;
- Grants and mentoring for National Advocacy Campaigns.

The performance indicators for CASP are as follows:

- Number of national advocacy campaigns initiated by NNOs and their coalitions;
- Number of issue-based coalitions formed by NNOs for national advocacy activities;
- Number of occasions on which print and electronic media publicize significant information arising from CASP advocacy campaigns;
- Number of citizens involved in advocacy campaigns;
- Number of regulations or policy changes adopted or underway by local and national governments;
- Number of government entities with established mechanisms for policy dialogue with citizens and their organizations (NNO).

In carrying out its mandate, CASP will involve international resource partners including the American Bar Association / Central and Eastern European Law Initiative (ABA/CEELI), the International Center for Not-for-profit Law (ICNL) and the Advocacy Institute. It will collaborate closely with other USAID democracy programs in Uzbekistan and work through the network of Civil Society Support Centers in Uzbekistan and with other donor-funded projects throughout the country.

## **II. ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS**

The major activities during CASP's second quarter completed the preparatory phases of the program and set the stage for announcing a competition for the first round of advocacy grants and their subsequent implementation. Activities included:

- Completed baseline interviews;

- Held CASP launch conference;
- Finalized plans for CASP Advocacy Training;
- Began training program for Advocacy Specialist;
- Developed guidelines for CASP Advocacy Grants and created application form for CASP Grants;
- Held a follow-up meeting of Core NNO Working Groups;
- Developed job descriptions and recruited for a third CASP staff person;
- Discussed development of monitoring and evaluation systems with Counterpart M and E personnel in Almaty.

### **Baseline Interviews**

Aimed at providing a baseline against which to monitor CASP progress, a survey of advocacy activity among core NNOs was initiated in the first quarter and completed early in the second. The survey was designed to define levels of current advocacy activity by core NNOs, using the CASP performance indicators contained in the CASP proposal. The survey measured:

- Advocacy campaigns in which core NNOs participated in the previous year;
- Number of campaigns involving coalitions and the nature of those coalitions;
- The amount of media exposure previous advocacy campaigns had received;
- Numbers of persons involved in each advocacy effort;
- The results of the advocacy efforts;
- Nature, frequency and regularity of contact with government officials.

The interviews were conducted face-to-face with senior core NNO officials by the CASP Advocacy Specialist. The questions asked in the interview are attached. (Attachment I-Baseline Interview Questionnaire). Broadly, the results of the baseline surveys demonstrated a strong competence in advocacy and a willingness to undertake advocacy efforts on matters that concern core NNOs. A tally of survey results is attached. (Attachment II-Baseline Survey Results). Responses indicated that over the previous year, CASP core NNOs have undertaken a total of 17 advocacy campaigns involving at least 24 coalitions of organizations.

An estimated 188 media events resulted directly from the campaigns or reflected issues of direct relevance to the campaigns. NNOs seem adept at using all forms of the media, from newspapers to the Internet. Television, especially local television stations have been especially willing to feature NNO issues and several core NNOs have their own regular programs on which they discuss matters relevant to their missions.

The bulk of the advocacy efforts undertaken by CASP core NNOs to date concerned issues at the local or regional levels. They included topics such as drinking water, women with mental illness, the rights of the disabled, employment, the plight of internally displaced persons and AIDS information. A surprising number touched on topics with a national scope such as the Uzbekistan condominium law, micro-finance regulations, and formation of credit unions. Not surprisingly, the Uzbekistan Business Women's Association has been in the forefront in pressing these national issues.

Although the figure is unreliable owing to the NNOs' weak understanding of constituency participation, respondents indicated that upwards of 10,000 individuals were involved in the 17 advocacy efforts cited. Of the campaigns described by core NNOs, they reported that seven resulted in concrete change in official policy. One of the most striking results of the baseline interviews was the number of NNOs that reported easy and frequent access to government officials. All saw this access as essential the success of their efforts and a surprising number said they have regular meetings with government officials and that they are sought out for advice by these officials on issues in which they are considered expert.

## **CASP Launch Conference**

The public launching of CASP was held at a conference on 12 February at the Business Center of Uzbekistan in Tashkent. It was attended by approximately 200 persons, including government officials from both the national and regional levels, representatives of 50 selected Uzbek NNOs, international organizations, the media, civil society support centers, USAID and the US Embassy. Welcoming remarks were given by Hon. John Herbst, US Ambassador to Uzbekistan, and Dr. Akmal Saidov, Head of the Oliy Majlis Committee Coordinating NGOs and Self-Management Bodies. Elena Abrosimova of IREX/Moscow provided the keynote address. An agenda for the conference, which was conducted entirely in Russian, is attached. (Attachment III-Conference Agenda).

Ms. Abrosimova is Program Director of the USAID-funded Promoting and Strengthening Russian NGO Development program in Moscow and Assistant Professor in the Commercial Law Department at Moscow State University. A respected NGO specialist, Ms. Abrosimova discussed the advocacy experience in Russia—how advocacy can help both citizens and government improve the quality of life for ordinary people. Conference participants seemed especially gratified that the nature of Mr. Abrosimova's remarks, emanating as they did from a country with a common historical roots, made them relevant to the Uzbekistan context.

Feedback about the conference was extremely positive. In this sense, it has achieved its aim of serving as a high profile launch of CASP with strong representation of the institutions and organizations likely to be most affected by it, including governmental entities. The willingness of Dr. Saidov to make opening remarks and the positive message sent by the presence of Mr. Herbst were especially important in this regard.

The bulk of the day was given over to working group meetings, facilitated by Counterpart trainers. The groups were organized around possible advocacy themes identified by core NNOs in November during the CASP assessment phase. Nine working groups considered topics including:

- Environment;
- Housing Owners' Associations;
- Economic Issues;
- Youth;
- Medicine and Health;
- Women, Family and Society;
- The Disabled;
- NGO Legislation;
- Minimum Standards of Livelihood;
- Transborder Issues.

The aim of working groups meetings was twofold: (1) to enable participants to discuss issues of concern to them and (2) to refine their ideas and identify a leader who could help take the nascent ideas to a second level. Though it was clear that interest in some groups was stronger and more cohesive than in others, in every case a core group of at least three or four persons, and in some instances as many as eight or 10, coalesced around the issues and a leader was identified. Casual observation suggested that housing, economic issues, the disabled and women's issues were among the strongest groups.

Among the conference participants, three groups were most significant to the larger aims of CASP. The first of these were the NNOs themselves. In addition to the 20 CASP core NNOs and alternates, the only other NNOs invited to the meeting were those that had applied to be selected as CASP NNOs. The rationale was to include in the conference only those groups that already had manifested an interest in advocacy. Almost all NNOs invited attended and participated enthusiastically in the working groups.

Equally significant were government representatives. In the planning, CASP staff made a special effort to encourage government attendance, seeking advice from Civil Society Support Centers and core NNOs about whom to invite. More than half the government officials invited actually attended the conference. Some 21 were present, six of whom represented national bodies, including the Ministry of Health, the Customs Committee, the National Human Rights Center and the Antimonopoly Committee. Dilnoza Matyakubova, the Uzbekistan Ombudsman also attended. The remaining government representatives were local- and oblast-level officials representing Nukus, Bukhara, Termez, Fergana, Namangan, Karshi, Jizzak, Navoi, Samarkand in addition to Tashkent City and oblast officials.

The third major group was media representatives. There were a total of 35 media representatives from Tashkent, Samarkand, Navoi, Karshi, Namangan, Fergana, Termez, Bukhara, Urgench and Nukus. Their attendance resulted in several mentions of the conference on national and regional television news programs and a variety of print articles. (Attachment IV-Selected Media Publications).

### **Advocacy Training**

An important accomplishment in the second quarter was finalizing plans for CASP's basic training module. There were five major activities:

- Delivered existing Counterpart Advocacy module to core NNOs;
- Planned for development of a CASP training module focused on advocacy campaigns;
- Concluded contract with CASP Training Consultant;
- Identified a group of CASP trainers;
- Established process for outside validation of CASP training and technical assistance. .

#### *Existing Module*

In mid-February, shortly after the launch conference, CASP offered the existing Counterpart advocacy module to its 20 core and alternate NNOs. Counterpart developed the module several years ago and built a cadre of experienced trainers throughout Central Asia to deliver it. Per the CASP workplan, delivering it to the core NNOs was intended both as a refresher and a point of departure for designing a more relevant curriculum suited to the needs of CASP. As such, participants were asked to be particularly precise in their critique of the module in light of their anticipated needs under CASP.

The Counterpart module is based in large part on consultations provided in 1998-99 by XXXX of the XXXXX in the Philippines. A number of Counterpart trainers visited the Philippines following Ms. Rice's consultations in Central Asia. Among them was Elena Sabirova, who delivered the module to the CASP NNOs. Ms. Sabirova is considered to be one of the most effective of Counterpart's advocacy trainers and adapted many of the Counterpart materials to her own work as former Director of Umidvorlik, a Tashkent-based NNO focused on the needs of disabled children.

In the critique that followed delivery of the Counterpart module, participants had two overriding concerns. While they saw it as a valuable basic building block, they found the module theoretical, lacking both in specific tools and in concrete examples relevant to their work. CASP staff, who participated in the training throughout concurred in these criticisms and also found that it did not adequately prepare participants for the complex sequential steps in carrying out campaigns as opposed to one-off efforts to address a specific issues, usually in one-on-one negotiation with relevant government officials.

#### *Advocacy Campaign Module*

As a result of the critique, CASP staff identified the most important need for CASP training as a broad-based module focused on implementing campaigns. A draft curriculum for a campaign module

was developed and shared with a number of knowledgeable advocacy experts, whose comments were sought. Among them were CASP partner Lynn Sferazza of ABA/CEELI, ABA/CEELI's Rule of Law Liaison, the Director of the Civic Initiatives Program in Novosibirsk, Richard Stoddard of USAID/Uzbekistan, Counterpart/Washington staff and the Director of NDI's Kyrgyzstan program.

Refined on the basis of their comments, the final SOW was used as the basis for selecting an expert consultant to assist CASP staff in developing the module. (Attachment V-Campaign Module SOW). Expressions of interest in serving as expert consultants for module design were sought from a variety of sources including several independent consultants, Partners for Democratic Change/Slovakia, two local organizations—Youth Information Service and the Republican Network of Independent Monitoring—that have carried out effective advocacy in Kazakhstan.

Lorel Donaghey, a former Counterpart Country Director in Uzbekistan, was selected on the basis of the timeliness of her availability, her familiarity with the Uzbekistan context and many of the NNO players in CASP and her work in recent years on advocacy training in the US and the developing world and her knowledge of the advocacy literature. (Attachment VI-Lorel Donaghey CV). A two-week constancy with Ms. Donaghey is planned for early May, to be followed immediately by a TOT for CASP trainers and delivery of the module to CASP NNOs.

#### *CASP Training Consultant*

CASP has concluded a contract with Elena Sabirova to serve as the program's Chief Training Advisor. Originally proposed as Advocacy Expert in Counterpart's proposal for CASP, Ms. Sabirova declined the position after the contract was awarded, preferring to pursue a purely training role, both with CASP and as Director of her firm, *Bilim va Jamiyat*. She will operate on retainer, ensuring that CASP will be a priority among her activities. She will spearhead the development of the CASP Campaign Module, assisted by CASP staff and Ms. Donaghey.

By contract, Ms. Sabirova will assist CASP as follows:

- Serve in a quasi staff relationship to CASP as primary resource for advocacy training expertise;
- Provide technical advice on training and technical assistance offerings provided by CASP;
- Design new training modules including a comprehensive Advocacy Campaign module;
- Create specialized short modules derived from the overall Campaign module;
- Design and implement programs for building expertise of CASP trainers in key areas;
- Assist in designing and implementing a mentoring/coaching module for CASP trainers;
- Advise on use of other staff required in implementation of the CASP training and technical assistance program.

Ms. Sabirova is well established in the Central Asian training community and has demonstrated a lasting commitment to advocacy. This arrangement with a respected trainer will serve not only the needs of CASP but also of creating a lasting technical assistance resource on advocacy in Uzbekistan.

#### *CASP Trainers*

Nine trainers were selected from a pool of 18 applicants. Of these, six are current Counterpart trainers and three are new trainers. All are Uzbek speakers. Only two trainers are based in Tashkent; the others are from Kokand, Bukhara, Namangan, Nukus and Samarkand. Selections were made against the established criteria by CASP staff and the Chief Training Advisor. The geographic mix and the valuable language skills of the selected trainers will assist in achieving one of CASP's goals of creating a cadre of skilled advocacy technical assistance advisors that will serve as a long-term resource for Uzbekistan.

The nine new trainers will participate in a Training of Trainers exercise immediately following the Campaign module design consultancy in May and then, assisted by the Chief Training Advisor, will

deliver the new module to core NNOs in preparation for their applications for grants to conduct advocacy campaigns.

It is anticipated that once the CASP trainers have become proficient in the new module, they will identify particular aspects of it in which they wish to specialize. CASP will provide them opportunities to deepen their knowledge in these areas. In addition, per the first year workplan, they will be provided in coming months with skill-building which will enable them to work as one-on-one advocacy “consultants” to organizations implementing CASP-financed campaigns as well as other advocacy efforts.

### *CASP Training and Technical Assistance Validation*

In order to ensure that CASP’s training and technical assistance offerings are relevant to participating NNOs and take full advantage of the partnership arrangements developed by Counterpart International to support the program, CASP has concluded an arrangement with partner ABA/CEELI. Not only will this help to ensure high quality of technical assistance by CASP but it will serve to reinforce the complementary aims of these two programs.

Tamara Lashbrook, Director of ABA/CEELI’s NIS Regional Institution Building Program, will make semi-annual formal reviews of CASP’s training and technical assistance provision. She will provide a brief report after each review, containing a summary, findings and recommendations on how to address her observations. Her role is particularly appropriate because of her broad knowledge of resources throughout the former Soviet Union, her own work in advocacy for ABA/CEELI, her fluency in Russian, her long residence in Central Asia and familiarity with many individual and institutional players.

In order to minimize financial demands on CASP, Ms. Lashbrook and the CASP Program Director, David Smith, have concluded a reciprocal arrangement whereby the CASP Program Director will be part of a peer evaluation team reviewing the technical assistance of ABA/CEELI’s programs and Ms. Lashbrook will provide validation reviews for CASP. Only Ms. Lashbrook’s actual expenses will be charged to the CASP budget. The following criteria will inform the ABA/CEELI review of CASP technical assistance:

- Relevance to CASP aims;
- Appropriateness to advocacy campaigns being carried out under the program;
- Coordination and linkage to other advocacy programs in Uzbekistan and Central Asia;
- Completeness of presentation;
- Gaps and weaknesses to be addressed.

Counterpart International’s Washington staff will continue to coordinate US-based technical support relationships, such as those with The Advocacy Institute and Grassroots Enterprise. They also will help to facilitate exchanges and expert visits involving other, more established advocacy organizations in the Europe & Eurasia region.

### **Training for Advocacy Specialist**

In late February, Bakhodir Umar Khanov, CASP’s Advocacy Specialist, attended an advocacy training workshop sponsored by the Siberian Center for the Support of Public Initiatives in Novosibirsk. The training was part of an effort to increase his advocacy-related skills and was a valuable contribution to his knowledge base. The training was conducted by two US trainers who are well-respected by senior officials at the Midwest Academy in Chicago and drew heavily on the Midwest Academy approach to advocacy. (Attachment VII-Agenda of Specialist Training).

In general, Mr. Umar Khanov found the training useful and stated in his report on the experience that it exposed him to “the whole process of advocacy campaign – starting from identifying the problem and

finishing with evaluation of campaign results.” He appreciated the fact that the trainers, Janice Fine and David Donnelly, had extensive hands on experience in organizing and conducting advocacy campaigns and had concrete examples to offer.

At the same time, he found that the approach, which the Midwest Academy calls “Direct Action,” was not appropriate to the Uzbek context and observed that many of the Russia-based training participants felt similarly. Mr. Umarchanov does not believe the confrontational methods inherent in the so-called Direct Action approach is viable in Uzbekistan. His report states that the “methods and tools which were suggested by trainers (strikes, political gatherings), will not work in Russia or Uzbekistan because of legislation. For example, according to laws of Russia or Uzbekistan political gatherings (rallies) are prohibited without official sanction from the government.”

Thus, while the training was beneficial in providing Mr. Umarchanov a better grasp of strong basic advocacy tools, some of the learning was negative in the sense that it clarified what approaches will and will not work in the context in which CASP operates. In fact, as a result of his visit to Novosibirsk it was determined not to use the Midwest Academy to assist in designing the CASP advocacy campaign module.

As a part of this trip, Mr. Umarchanov spent two working days in Moscow en route to Novosibirsk and met with several advocacy practitioners there, further enhancing the breadth of his understanding and also providing an opportunity for CASP to forge useful linkages that will serve the program and to provide possible locuses for exchange visits. While in Moscow, Mr. Umarchanov met with, among others, Elena Abrosimova, IREX; Dmitriy Grigoriev, “Marshak” Foundation; and Anna Sevortian, Center for Development of Democracy and Human Rights.

In Novosibirsk he was able to develop relationships more fully with Siberian Center staff, including Sarah Lindeman, the Director, Dmitriy Baradachyov, the XXXXXXX and Elena Malitskaya, Siberian Center for Support of Public Initiatives. These relationships will be valuable to CASP because the Siberian Center is strongly committed to advocacy and is likely to be a useful resource for CASP during future program implementation.

### **Grant Guidelines and Application**

Draft guidelines for CASP grants have been available for several months on the assumption that the sooner potential grantees understood the requirements for grants, the more focused they would be in planning to meet them. The draft guidelines were reviewed by each of the core NNOs during the Baseline Interviews and were distributed at the CASP conference. They have also been shared with USAID. There have been no significant negative comments about them and they were finalized during the second quarter. (Attachment VIII-Grant Guidelines). The most significant aspect of the guidelines is the requirement that successful grantees must apply as coalitions of organizations jointly interested in the advocacy issue selected for the campaign.

Finalization of the guidelines made it possible to prepare a Grant Application format. The format reflects the emphasis on coalitions and also stresses involvement of NNO constituencies in campaigns and on an articulate plan for using media. (Attachment IX for Grant Application Form). The Application Form will guide applicants in designing a coherent and sequential advocacy campaign of at least several months duration.

The application template will inform design of the Campaign module since it is clear that while NNOs are in general familiar with advocacy and committed to its use, few of them have a clear understanding of what a multi-faceted campaign entails. In order for them to plan and design such campaigns and to articulate strategies in their application, it seems wise to provide them with as much guidance as possible. It is hoped that, armed with the knowledge they derive from participating in the campaign training module, they will be able to use the application form to guide their planning efforts.

## **CASP Working Groups**

Working groups on key advocacy themes were the most important outcome of the February CASP Launch Conference. On March 19, at the Turkvo Hotel in Tashkent, CASP provided an opportunity for these working groups to refine their ideas for advocacy campaigns and give further thought to the types of coalitions they will form in order to apply for CASP Advocacy grants. Nine working groups availed themselves of the opportunity to meet in small sessions to which CASP provided facilitation services by the same Counterpart trainers who had facilitated the conference working groups. Of the nine groups, by the end of the day six groups had emerged with viable topics for potential advocacy campaigns. They were:

- Environment;
- Owners of Cooperative Housing;
- Economics;
- Medicine and Health;
- Women, Family and Society;
- Disabled Persons.

In some cases, issues from the original nine groups were folded into one of the remaining six. Some, such as the disabled organizations could not reach a consensus on a single topic and so maintained two separate streams. Hayot of Samarkand led a group committed to pressing for social infrastructure, such as ramps for handicapped persons, and Umidvorlik of Tashkent led a group committed to integration of handicapped children into mainstream education.

Each group defined their topic, identified a preliminary advocacy strategy for achieving it, outlined a tentative coalition that would be engaged in an advocacy campaign, focused on the constituency likely to support their work and assessed their potential for success. An English translation of the results for the six most viable groups is attached. It outlines the decisions reached by each group on each of the questions they considered. (Attachment X-Working Group Results).

These six topics conform to the criteria set forth for CASP grants and the wishes of USAID that CASP focus on mainstream NGO concerns. It seems likely that three strong advocacy campaign proposals can be selected for funding from this pool.

## **Information and Training Officer**

One of the important legs of the CASP technical assistance design is dissemination of written and electronic material concerning advocacy. The first such document was produced for distribution at the Launch Conference and is an adaptation of materials developed by the USAID-funded NGO support program in XXXXX, incorporating materials originally developed by World Learning and the Advocacy Institute for US-based advocacy training at the School for International Training in Brattleboro, Vermont. (Attachment XI-XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX).

To provide full attention to the information dissemination function of CASP, a job description for a CASP Information and Training Officer (I and T Officer) was developed and advertised late in the second quarter. In brief, the responsibilities of the I and T Officer will be to seek out a wide range of information relevant to the advocacy needs of Uzbek NNOs, particularly CASP core NNOs, catalog it and devise systems for making it readily accessible. Since much of the most useful information is not available in Russian, the I and T Officer also will identify the best of what is available and arrange for translation. Ultimately, toward the end of CASP, a small Essential Library of such information will be selected for wide distribution in the Uzbek civil society community.

The I and T Officer also will assist in developing a CASP website, which is expected to be one of the ways advocacy information is made widely available. More importantly, in response to requests from

core NNOs, the Officer will develop a moderated e-mail based information resource to which organizations can submit queries about specific problems, needs for information or other questions. This e-mail based approach is seen as an especially important information resource for Uzbek NNOs. While most now have access to e-mail, few have reliable access to the internet, either because of the availability and stability of service or its cost. The major responsibilities of the CASP I and T Officer will include:

1. Search out and review for relevance written documentation on advocacy from a wide range of sources;
2. Design and implement a readily accessible index of available advocacy resource materials and their sources;
3. Develop a CASP website and maintain it in consultation with CASP, Counterpart staff and consultants;
4. Manage information gathering and database for the CASP M and E system;
5. Manage system for collection of CASP success stories;
6. Establish and maintain a system for collecting information about media events related to CASP.

Selection and hiring of the I and T Officer will occur early in the third quarter. (Attachment XII-Job Description of Information and Training Officer).

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

CASP will look to the Counterpart Program of Civil and Society and NGO Development in the Central Asia Region for technical assistance in developing a simple and flexible Monitoring and Evaluation system that reflects achievements against the six indicators contained in the CASP proposal and identifies and articulates significant success stories. To begin this process of consultation, the CASP Program Director visited Counterpart's Almaty, Kazakhstan, offices in late February and held discussions with the Altyнай Kussainova, the XXXXX Monitoring and Evaluation XXXX and Deputy Director Ara Nazinyan, Deputy Director, who oversees the monitoring and evaluation function. Mr. Nazinyan was responsible for design and implementation of the CASP Assessment in late 2002 and so is familiar with the aims of CASP.

In these conversations it was agreed that Ms. Kussainova will visit Tashkent early in the third quarter of CASP implementation, after the I and T officer is hired and before the first advocacy grants are awarded, to finalize the design of the M and E system. Given the nature of CASP, it is expected that one of the most important elements of the system will be capturing relevant success stories that demonstrate a growing capacity and sophistication in conducting national level advocacy campaigns.

As was suggested in the first quarterly report, it may be necessary to change some impact indicators and to refine their definitions. One already has been changed at the request of USAID to reflect the real intent of CASP's media activities, broadening the term "publications" to include all forms of media promotion of CASP and its advocacy campaigns—especially electronic.

Another area in need of clarification is citizen involvement. Engaging constituencies in advocacy campaigns will be a major emphasis of the Campaign Training module and of the grant application but it is nonetheless clear that NNOs do not understand this concept and do not have effective skills in doing so. As the M and E system is designed, it may prove useful to change this indicator to better reflect a valid proxy for the kinds of changes sought by CASP.

### **III. ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACTS**

Of the activities carried out by CASP in the second quarter, three stand out as important factors in moving the CASP agenda forward. The first is, of course, the Launch Conference, which achieved its aims effectively. They were to bring the idea of CASP and its objectives, especially its focus on

national level advocacy, to the attention of a wide public in Uzbekistan, both in Tashkent and regionally. The second aim of the conference was to engage government officials so that they would begin to see the advocacy aims of CASP as valuable—rather than threatening—to their work.

The conference received wide media coverage and was attended by a large number of media representatives from throughout the country. This set the stage well for the subsequent work of CASP and will be reinforced in the coming months by efforts of CASP staff and core NNOs. Similarly, the willingness of Mr. Saidov to provide opening remarks at the conference set a tone of acceptance on the part of government that has so far enabled CASP to carry out its work in a supportive government environment. Likewise, the appearance of US Ambassador Herbst gave the imprimatur of the US government to CASP's aims and underscored the support of the US official community for the program. There can be little doubt that this atmosphere lent encouragement to the government officials who attended the conference and those that have involved themselves in subsequent working group activities.

CASP's second important achievement was the fostering of topic-based working groups that emerged from the conference. They are expected to lead directly to viable proposals for CASP advocacy grants. The working groups have provided a focal point for discussions of national level advocacy issues and, coupled with the anticipated grants and the issuance of the draft guidelines, an incentive for coherent and focused planning by NNOs. The March working group follow-up and the detailed plans for advocacy campaigns that emerged from them are an important forward step in national level advocacy and campaigns.

A third important achievement was the progress made in defining an effective training program relevant to the needs of CASP and of Uzbek NNOs. Selection of CASP trainers was one important part of this effort and the Scope of Work for training design was another.

#### **IV. ISSUES AND LESSONS LEARNED**

##### *Programmatic Tone*

In general CASP has continued to move smoothly in the second quarter and the momentum among core NNOs has accelerated. Current evidence that may have value for similar efforts elsewhere suggest that creation of the working groups was a valuable approach. Equally important was CASP's careful fostering of them through generous use of trained facilitators to guide their work and through the follow-up meeting that CASP supported. Experience to date suggests that this approach will be useful in coming months as CASP and NNOs prepared for the second round of grants.

Another valuable lesson is the inclusive, non-confrontational approach CASP has employed in encouraging government involvement in its work. Several government officials, most notably the head of the government's Center for Inclusive Education, who has lent her support to Umidvorlik's advocacy of inclusive education, have demonstrated their willingness to engage with the advocacy aims of core NNOs. For their part, NNOs seem clear about the importance of reaching out to government officials due at least in part, perhaps, to the tone set by CASP.

##### *Coalitions*

It is apparent that core NNOs are uncomfortable with the CASP requirement that advocacy campaigns be conducted in coalition with other organizations. They have been aware of this requirement since January. None has overtly resisted but it is certain that they would prefer to work alone in some cases. This anecdotal view was borne out in the March Working Group meetings where the two disabled groups were unable to find common ground on a topic they could support together and made separate feedback reports at the end of the day. Likewise, the economic group, though it made a unified report, expressed dissatisfaction that the concerns of all participants were not reflected.

Grant proposals, which will be presented in the third quarter, will give clearer evidence of how effectively applicants have formed viable and effective coalitions. Even more concrete evidence will emerge from implementation that follows. At present, CASP's attitude toward the coalition requirement is that it is a good policy that will advance NNOs' coalition-building skills and that it should continue to be a requirement of future grant solicitations. In a few months, the ways in which CASP can actively assist NNOs in working in coalitions will be clearer.

### *Administrative Issues*

CASP's close collaboration with the Counterpart NGO program and its co-location in the Counterpart/Uzbekistan offices in Tashkent enabled a quick start to the program and has allowed it to operate so far with minimal staff. This has resulted in budget saving that can be reprogrammed in substantive rather than administrative areas. The success of the Launch Conference was in large part owing to CASP's ability to draw heavily on Counterpart staff for logistic support.

However, the rebid of USAID's regional civil society activities and the possibility that Counterpart International will not be the implementing partner in the future, raises some doubts about the continued viability of this arrangement. Regardless of the outcome of the rebid, Counterpart has made arrangements to provide CASP with additional office space to accommodate its growing responsibility. This was essential as CASP had been occupying very cramped quarters for its first few months.

Thus, space *per se* is not the issue for CASP in the future but rather the availability of ancillary logistic services Counterpart has provided. These include financial backstopping, office management services, drivers, information technology support and general administrative assistance as well as the use of major office equipment such as photocopiers. In addition, of course, a grant management function will be necessary. To some degree the cost of these services if not provided by Counterpart would be offset payments currently being made to Counterpart. However, securing them outside the Counterpart umbrella undoubtedly will represent higher costs, which the CASP budget would have to absorb.

In any event, USAID has requested that CASP establish itself more clearly as a separate entity from the Counterpart NGO program as a way of clarifying the distinction between the two programs and affording full visibility to USAID as the sponsor of this important and—in the Uzbekistan context—innovative program. CASP staff have begun to effect this distinction more clearly and will take further steps in the future. A central aspect of this effort will be creating a logo for CASP and the accompanying letterhead and associated documents.

## **VI. ANTICIPATED ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT QUARTER**

Highlights of anticipated activities for the next quarter are:

- Create CASP Advocacy Campaign training module;
- Train CASP trainers in Campaign training module;
- Deliver new Campaign training module to core NNOs;
- Formal release of CASP Campaign Grant RFA;
- Constitute grant review committee for Advocacy Campaign Grants;
- Review and award grants;
- Plan first exchange visit outside Uzbekistan for CASP participants;
- Conduct a series of television talk shows in selected oblasts, highlighting NNO advocacy issues;
- Begin campaign implementation;
- Plan and implement strategy for CASP as distinct from the Counterpart NGO program.