

USAID Assistance to Afghanistan

June 4, 2004

Since late 2001, the United States Agency for International Development has responded swiftly and continuously to help rebuild Afghanistan, providing over \$2 billion in humanitarian and reconstruction assistance from 9/11 through the end of the current fiscal year. The first stage of assistance was humanitarian, averting famine in the winter of 2001 and 2002 through food aid, and restarting the economy through cash-for-work and food-for-work programs which also began the rebuilding of the country's infrastructure. As the humanitarian programs continued throughout 2002, USAID started programs to bring a sense of normalcy to the long-suffering Afghan people, rebuilding government offices, printing textbooks for the March 2002 school year opening, and converting the devalued currency to a new Afghani currency, among many examples. During this period, USAID worked with the respective Afghan government ministries and coordinated with other donors to design longer-term development and reconstruction programs to help Afghanistan start on a path toward stability, prosperity, and self-sufficiency.

Those longer-term development and reconstruction programs are now well underway. Below are the accomplishments and upcoming goals for those programs, organized by sector:

Infrastructure and Afghanistan's Ring Road

Years of unrest in Afghanistan, followed by Taliban rule, has left public infrastructure in ruin. All sectors of the economy struggle when poor roads prevent the transport of goods, or a shortage of clean water affects a community's health.

USAID is working to bring back the basics to Afghanistan. The beginning of the reconstruction of the Kabul-Kandahar-Herat Highway (Ring Road) revitalized entire villages. The reopened Salang Tunnel, high in the mountains, has cut more than two and a half days off common trips. These projects are key to the redevelopment of Afghanistan.

The Ring Road - The journey from Kabul to Kandahar was an arduous trip that required two days to travel; much of the road (surface) and several bridges suffered considerable deterioration, damage and lack of investment over the years, particularly during two-and-a half decades of civil war and hostilities. President Karzai stated that reconstruction of the country's principal road system is key to Afghanistan's economic recovery, as more than 35% of Afghanistan's population lives within 50 kilometers (31 miles) of the highway.

Today, the first step toward reconstruction of Afghanistan's national road system is complete. Phase I of the highway linking Kabul to Kandahar is open to traffic. As a result, people from Kabul to Kandahar enjoy better access to markets, healthcare, schools and jobs. At the national level, the highway has already begun to contribute to Afghanistan's improved economic growth, security and national unity.

The entire length of the Kabul-Kandahar highway is 482 kilometers (300 miles). USAID reconstructed 389 kilometers (242 miles) of the highway; the government of Japan funded the reconstruction of 50 kilometers (31 miles) of highway, and the remaining 43 kilometers (27 miles) did not require resurfacing.

Sector Objective: Reconstruct Afghanistan's major and rural roads, and improve economic growth, security, and political integration along the corridor linking Afghanistan's two largest cities-Kabul and Kandahar.

Accomplishments:

- The first layer of pavement for the Kabul-Kandahar Highway was completed on December 15, 2003

Current Activities and Goals:

- Constructing/repairing 36 bridges along the Kabul-Kandahar Highway
- Reconstruct/construct 1,000 kilometers of rural roads; contracting underway
- Begin construction of the Kandahar-Herat Highway in summer 2004

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- Providing emergency diesel fuel to Kabul
- Providing emergency generating plants for Kandahar, Lashkar-Gah, and Qalat

Agriculture and Rural Economy

Agriculture is a way of life for 70 percent of Afghanistan's people. However, instability, coupled with the region's four-year drought, devastated the country's food production capacity and impoverished farmers.

USAID is helping farmers re-establish production and become more profitable and efficient, by rehabilitating irrigation systems and providing tools, agricultural equipment, fertilizer, and seeds. Revitalizing agriculture is key to the growth of the Afghan economy.

Sector Objective: Enhance the food security and incomes of Afghanistan's rural population by increasing agricultural productivity and facilitate effective linkages between producers, processors and markets.

Accomplishments:

- Provided 5,000 metric tons of seed and 9,000 metric tons of fertilizer to 100,000 farmers in 13 provinces
- 7,000 kilometers of rural roads have been repaired
- Nearly 8,000 irrigation/water works projects have been completed

Current Activities and Goals:

- Revitalizing (Afghanistan's) Agricultural Markets Program (RAMP):
 - Irrigation projects affecting 301,000 hectares initiated since fall 2003; of these, projects affecting 150,000 ha now complete
 - Training Afghan women and farmers in poultry production and in using new technologies in 250 villages
 - Microfinance program underway; as of April 2004, loans disbursed to 675 borrowers and 1,050 loan officers trained
 - Vaccination/treatment of 350,000 head of livestock in spring/summer 2004
 - Constructing 140 market and collection centers by June 2004

Health

One of every four Afghan children dies before the age of five, and adults face an average life expectancy of only 46 years. The health status of the Afghan people is among the worst in the world.

USAID is working to improve the basic health and nutrition of Afghans, particularly women, children, and displaced persons. It is bringing basic services and health education to under-served communities, focusing on maternal and child health, hygiene, water and sanitation, immunization and control of infectious diseases. These programs, women are the primary recipients of services, as well as providers of healthcare.

Sector Objective: To increase access to health care across the country and rebuild Afghanistan's health care infrastructure.

Accomplishments:

- Rehabilitated 140 health facilities (clinics, birth centers, feeding centers, and hospitals)
- Provided funding to UNICEF to treat 700,000 cases of malaria
- Vaccinated 4.26 million children against measles and polio, preventing some 20,000 deaths
- Surveyed all health facilities and services-survey results provide key information for expanding basic health services and locating new clinics
- Funded NGOs to provide basic health services to more than 3.8 million people in 21 provinces starting in July 2002 through October 2003; program continues with basic health services now being provided to over 4.7 million people.
- Provide one-quarter of Kabul's water supply, focusing on the poorest districts
- Rehabilitated the water systems of Kandahar and Kunduz, which provide water to 700,000 people
- Increased access to safe water through sale, distribution, and advertising of benefits of Clorin, the water purification product (over 5,000 bottles sold by October 2003)

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Current Activities and Goals:

- 72 new clinics currently under construction-first completed April 2004
- REACH-Rural Expansion of Afghanistan's Community-based Health Care: REACH is a three-year program to improve the health of women of reproductive age and of children under the age of five by providing the Ministry of Health's basic package of health services to an estimated 11,000,000 people

Education

In 2000, only about 32 percent of school-age children were enrolled. An overwhelming 97 percent of the country's girls did not attend school, and eighty percent of existing schools were either severely damaged or destroyed at the end of Taliban rule.

USAID is working to bring Afghan children and teachers back to school with textbooks, school supplies, and training materials in hand. Pent-up demand for education is so great that more than two times the projected number of children showed up for school in March 2002. To meet this demand, 1,000 schools are being rebuilt or rehabilitated over the next three years.

Sector Objective: To provide primary education to Afghanistan's children through school reconstruction, teacher training, accelerating learning programs and textbook production.

Accomplishments:

- Built/Rehabilitated over 200 primary and secondary schools and teacher training institutes
- Supported the 2002/2003 Back-to-School campaign by printing 25 million textbooks
- Trained over 7,000 teachers
- Produced and distributed 30,000 teacher instructional material kits
- Provided a curriculum development workshop for the Ministry of Education, NGOs involved in the education sector, and critical donors
- Established an accelerated learning program to address the problems of retention of over-aged students and lack of access for out-of-school youth-130,000 students enrolled to date

Current Activities and Goals

- Providing food salary supplement to 55,000 teachers, valued at 26% of monthly income

Empowering Women

Despite 23 years of war, Afghan urban women enjoyed a long history of freedom before the Taliban assumed power. Women were government ministers and members of the country's highest legislative body. Under the Taliban, Afghan women were shunned from public life, often prohibited from working outside the home, and punished for showing their faces. Education was forbidden.

USAID is giving Afghan women the education, skills, and tools they need to obtain jobs, support their families, and integrate into the political and public life of this new stage in Afghanistan's history. The situation for women has improved markedly, but much work remains.

Sector Objective: A focus on Afghan girls and women has been integrated into our sector programs (education, health, agriculture, democracy and governance).

Accomplishments:

- Rehabilitated the Ministry of Women Affairs' building and established MoWA's first Women's Resource Center in Kabul
- Kindergartens constructed in 9 ministries-providing safe care for working women in Kabul

Current Activities and Goals

- Building 17 multi-service Provincial Women's Centers (5 complete or currently under construction)
- Accelerated health-focused literacy program underway in 13 rural provinces to enable 5,500 women to train

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to become community healthcare workers and community midwives

Economic Governance

For years, Afghanistan had a dysfunctional economy based on illicit drug trade and the business of war. A concerted effort must be made to re-establish a legitimate economy based on agriculture.

USAID is strengthening Afghanistan's economy by creating jobs in a variety of sectors, enabling Afghans to support their families and help rebuild their country. The private sector economy must begin to grow and offer people opportunities, or reconstruction will not succeed.

Sector Objective: Provide support to the TISA to formulate and implement economic governance measures that will lead to the sustained financing of public services and enhanced levels of private investment.

Current Activities and Goals:

- Strengthening Afghanistan's economy by creating jobs in a variety of agricultural, processing and micro-enterprise sectors, enabling Afghans to support their families and help rebuild their country.
- Working with the Ministry of Finance in developing a national budget, implementing streamlined customs reforms in Kabul and 4 other provinces, and in tax administration and the issuance of Tax Identification Numbers (TINs). TINs are now required in order for imports to enter the country
- Working with Afghanistan's Central Bank to establish national and international money transfer services; create and implement commercial banking regulation and licensing (three commercial banks established in Afghanistan to date); implement monetary policy (currency has maintained its value since introduction); and continue work with relevant ministries in trade reform and public utilities

Democracy and Independent Media

Years of corruption, brutality, and tyranny imposed upon Afghanistan by the Taliban reduced the country to political, economic, and social ruin.

USAID is funding programs that enhance the nascent government's credibility and provide it with the tools and technical assistance to govern effectively. Institutional strengthening will contribute to improved civil-military relations and the emergence of a robust civil society.

USAID is also working with the Afghan people and international organizations to rebuild communications and journalistic capacity. The goal is to inform and unite Afghanistan's people to help produce a peaceful, stable, and viable political transition and administration.

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Accomplishments:

- Provided critical financial and logistical assistance for the emergency Loya Jirga.
- Supported the Constitutional Loya Jirga (CLJ) through international advisors, registration of electors of delegates, printing/distribution of draft constitution, CLJ logistical support (CLJ site, civic education campaign, etc.)
- Rehabilitated four provincial courthouses, work beginning on an additional seven courthouses.

Current Activities and Goals

- Working with the United Nations to support voter registration for the June 2004 presidential elections
- Ongoing financial support to Judicial Reform and Human Rights Commissions.
- More than 325 local journalists trained and 31 radio stations supported with equipment and training