



**Support Program for the Establishment of
an Afghan Parliament**



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An Afghan Parliament***

QUARTERLY REPORT

For the period October 1 – December 31, 2004

Task Order No. DFD-I-800-04-00128-00

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January 31, 2005

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Introduction/Overview

On September 29, 2004, SUNY/CID, along with its subcontractor, ARD, was awarded a USAID contract entitled Support Program for the Establishment of an Afghan Parliament. The estimated completion date for the Contract is September 30, 2007, which has an authorized expenditure limit of \$7,872,105. The purpose of the program is to strengthen the Afghan government's capacity to establish and develop a new parliament that is able to operate as a strong, independent and effective legislative, representative, and oversight body. The project has four objectives, each building logically upon the previous:

- 1) Conduct assessment of political, legal, and administrative environment for establishing the new Afghan parliament;
- 2) Provide technical assistance to parliamentary preparatory committee or process;
- 3) Design legislative strengthening strategy and program activities; and
- 4) Implement program to establish and develop a strong, independent, and effective parliament.

This report is the project's first Quarterly Report and represents the period October 1 – December 31, 2004 (but also includes some information from January 2005).

Over the first quarter, SUNY and its subcontractor ARD established the project in Kabul, fielded its Senior Legislative Technical Advisor in Kabul, sent a project start-up expert and assessment team to Kabul, established its office and residence and worked on several other start-up activities, participated in donor-coordination meetings, and began providing technical assistance to the Afghan Civil Service team responsible for establishing the parliament.

Part 1: Program Logistics

ARD consultant Stevens Tucker arrived in Kabul in October to work on establishing an ARD governance project in Afghanistan, and to work with SUNY on the parliamentary assessment. He also provided much useful assistance to SUNY in its start up efforts. Senior Legislative Development Specialist Jawad Risheq arrived in November, and Karen Glenski of SUNY arrived later to assist him with start-up logistics, such as opening a bank account, establishing the project office and residence, hiring staff, and several other administrative matters.

SUNY/CID was not able to reach agreement with proposed COP Rob Hager on his terms of employment, so we re-advertised and began another search for a COP. SUNY has identified some very well qualified COP candidates and proposed a candidate to USAID/Afghanistan in January 2005.

Fortunately, the COP delay has not seriously hindered project progress. Senior Legislative Technical Advisor Jawad Risheq has proven to be very effective, both on logistical and administrative matters, and on technical issues. His dual business and

legislative strengthening background has proven to be an ideal combination for getting the project up and running, establishing relations of trust and confidence with the Afghan team responsible for establishing the new parliament, and for beginning technical assistance. The project has also hired an Afghan administrative assistant, a project accountant, a civil society specialist, a translator, a gender specialist, and an IT specialist.

SUNY/CID rented an office and residence that Bearing Point no longer needed, and Bearing Point had offered to leave us the office furniture and equipment, saving USAID money, and the project, time. Recently, Rob Hager informed SUNY that Bearing Point now needed this furniture and equipment. This is contrary to the information we received from the Bearing Point COP. We are waiting for a resolution on this.

The project worked on several other administrative matters as well, including, obtaining information on local health services, procuring most of the equipment and furniture needed, and making repairs to the project residence.

Part 2: Progress On Objectives

Objective 1: Conduct assessment of political, legal, and administrative environment for establishing new Afghan Parliament. (Done)

David Ogle, Stevens Tucker, Afghan parliament expert Professor Nasrutullah Stanikzai, and Jawad Risheq conducted assessment interviews in November and December. John Johnson joined the team for the final portion of the assessment. SUNY sent the draft assessment to USAID January 22, 2005. CTO Sean Hall shared the document with participants in the UNDP January 24 Support to the Establishment of the Afghan Legislature (SEAL) local project appraisal committee meeting.

Objective 2: Provide technical assistance to parliamentary preparatory committee or process (Ongoing)

Jawad Risheq meets the Afghan CSC team responsible for establishing the parliament (the "Parliament Directors") several times each week. He has developed a relationship of trust with them (he even meets with them socially) and has provided the team with a good deal of technical assistance. Specifically, he has

- Worked with the team to revise the management structure for the main departments of parliament;
- Assisted them in finalizing job descriptions of staff for several departments, including Finance, Human Resources, Media and Public Relations and Parliamentary Affairs;
- Visited the old parliament building to identify basic needs of each department, and study and evaluate the office space available;
- Upon request of the Minister of Housing, and along with the parliament team, participated in meetings to discuss the project's role in providing IT technical assistance for the old parliament building.

Working closely with USAID, SUNY/CID wishes to respond to a CSC team need critical to their success in getting the parliament ready on time. At the request of the CSC team, the project wishes to pay to rent a parliament start-up office for 6 months. The office will house the CSC team and many of the new staff members hired over the next few months. Together with the CSC team we have tentatively selected office space, which they should begin using it in February.

Objective 3: Design legislative strengthening strategy and program activities (Ongoing)

Using recommendations from the Assessment and information from frequent meetings with the parliament directors, SUNY produced a draft 90-day activity plan and sent it to USAID on January 25. The primary objective of the project over the next 90 days will be to help the Secretariat Department Directors get the parliament ready to provide basic services to members as soon as they take office. There are four parts to the objective:

- Orient the Secretariat Department Directors in the functions and workings of parliaments;
- Assist the secretariat to hire and train basic staff to enable them to begin serving members as soon as they are elected;
- Provide for some of the critical infrastructure needs so that parliamentary staff can begin meeting, learning their jobs, and preparing for their move into the parliament building; and
- Provide some basic outreach assistance to the Secretariat and new key staff.

USAID is reviewing the draft 90-day plan, and has shared it with other parliamentary donors. During February, SUNY will next produce a full workplan for the project for presentation to USAID.

In preparing to deliver assistance to the parliamentary process, and later to parliament, SUNY/CID has also begun meeting with several Afghan organizations which might partner with us. These include the Afghan Women Network (gender training), deans of different faculties at Kabul University (IT training, legal training, research), and radio and TV stations (public affairs training).

Objective 4: Implement program to establish and develop a strong, independent, and effective parliament (Beginning)

SUNY has already begun providing assistance to help establish the parliament (see Objective 2, above), and is ready to begin implementing the 90-day plan mentioned above.

Donor Coordination

The project participates regularly in UNDP donor meetings, and we are working to coordinate our program of activities with those of the French – who are reviewing our 90-day plan. In addition, Jawad meets regularly with UNDP and with the French advisor to ensure smooth relations and coordination.

Part 3: Issues and Problems

Not reaching agreement with our proposed project COP was the major problem we faced in the first quarter. We responded in two ways:

- First, Jawad Risheq has acted as COP. He has managed project start up and substantive matters, and represented SUNY in donor and other meetings.
- We have initiated (and, we hope, completed) a COP search. We have proposed a candidate for the position, and hope to be able to send him to Kabul in February.

Part 4: Next Quarter Plans

The immediate objective over the next quarter is to get the COP in place and working. Proposed activities over the next quarter (which will be developed in coordination with the UNDP – French program) will likely include:

- An orientation program on parliamentary functions for the CSC establishing the parliament;
- A similar workshop for newly hired staff;
- A legislative study tour (allowing staff leaders to study professional parliamentary services);
- Preparation of manuals (e.g., parliamentary process, media relations, committees, procurement, parliamentary ethics);
- An analysis of furniture and equipment needs and costs;
- Providing some basic computer and furniture needs for the secretariat;
- Paying 6 months rent for the secretariat and the new staff;
- Purchasing some needed equipment and furniture for the secretariat;
- IT assistance to help parliament design their IT system;
- Assistance in developing needed databases; and
- Initial parliamentary orientation for civil society groups.